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## Q&A on the news

By Lori Johnston  
For the AJC

4:18 p.m. Sunday, June 26, 2011

**Q: Will the First Lady's extended family members reimburse the government for their portion of the trip to South Africa or will it be taxpayer-funded?**

**V. Kilpatrick, Atlanta**

**A:** Since the First Lady is on an official trip, the White House says she's permitted to take family on the plane at government expense, but hotels and meals of family members will be paid for by the Obamas, Mark Knoller, CBS News White House correspondent, told Q&A on the News. Daughters, Malia, 12, and Sasha, 10, and the First Lady's mother, Marian Robinson, niece Leslie Robinson, 15, and nephew Avery Robinson, 19, joined her on the trip.

**Q: The beautification of the ramps along I-85 in Gwinnett County with flowers and landscaping has really made that stretch of interstate so appealing. Was it funded by private or public funds, and who provides the regular maintenance of the grass, trees and plants?**

**Leon E. Collins, Stone Mountain**



**A:** Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District and the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District (CID) funded the landscaping, Connie Wiggins, executive director of Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful, told Q&A on the News. The CIDs, which are public-private partnerships, gained the support of property owners in their defined areas to access additional tax dollars. The dollars are leveraged with private and federal dollars to enhance improvements, she wrote in an email. The CIDs maintain the landscaping through contracts with private companies.

Lori Johnston wrote this column. Do you have a question about the news? We'll try to get the answer. Call 404-222-2002 or email [q&a@ajc.com](mailto:q&a@ajc.com) (include name, phone and city).

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