

GARC HOSTS EXHIBIT AT GMA CONVENTION

The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) hosted its annual convention in Savannah from Friday, June 23rd through Tuesday, June 27th. The convention included local government trainings, policy meetings, and many opportunities for networking. The Annual Business Meeting was held on Sunday afternoon and included adoption of the 2018 Legislative Policies and Election of District Officers. Installation of officers was held at the Monday Awards and Installation Luncheon. Auburn Mayor and NEGRC Councilmember **Linda Blechinger** was installed as GMA Second Vice President. The Parade of Flags, where municipalities from across the state were able to “show the local colors and stripes” was a huge hit, as always. Other highlights included sessions on workforce development, current and future technology, downtown loan programs, and probation services. Retiring GMA Executive Director **Lamar Norton** was honored at the event.

The Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) participated in the conference’s Exhibit Hall with representatives available at its booth from seven RCs, including **Burke Walker** of NEGRC. The booth was open on Saturday and Sunday with numerous Northeast Georgia officials visiting. Some of our Council members stopping by included Mayor **Fred Perriman**, Council Member **Joel Seymour**, Chairperson **Pat Graham**, Mayor **Linda Blechinger**, and Mayor **Charles Ivie**.

For information about GMA, please visit www.gmanet.com.



Mr. Walker and Heather Feldman of GMRC



GARC Exhibit

SIX COUNTIES SCHEDULED FOR PIMS

Each year the NEGRC’s Planning & Government Services Division (PGS) schedules meetings with six of its member counties to review and discuss local planning efforts. These meetings, or Plan Implementation Meetings (PIM), require the attendance of the chief-elected official and other relevant staff (e.g., manager, planners, etc). One purpose is to review the comprehensive plan’s work agenda and offer NEGRC assistance in implementing the various activities, projects, etc.

For FY18, the NEGRC will schedule meetings with the following six counties: **Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, and Walton**. Last month, each chairperson and mayor received a letter from Burke Walker, Director of PGS, announcing the need to schedule these meetings. In most cases, the PIM meetings are coordinated by the county to include the municipalities. Sometimes they are scheduled over

the lunch hour to accommodate schedules and always in the host jurisdiction. They also can be scheduled before or after other meetings (e.g., mayors' meetings) for convenience.

For these six counties, this is the second time for the PIM meetings; many chief elected officials are already familiar with their format. The NEGRC, for its part, is required to meet with all of its local governments every other year in coordination with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). It is generally a good opportunity to update communities on various programs, tools and best practices for achieving community goals.

PGS staff will follow-up with these counties to discuss scheduling of the PIMs this month. If your local government has questions on these meetings, or would like to assist PGS staff in making their arrangements, please contact **Burke Walker**, Director of Planning & Government Service, or **John Devine**, NEGRC Principal Planner, at (706) 369-5650 or email bwalker@negrc.org and jdevine@negrc.org, respectively.

STATEWIDE TRAILS MAPPING INITIATIVE TO BEGIN

In September, the Planning & Government Services (PGS) Division will begin work on cataloging and mapping all hard-surface trails for walking and bicycling in Northeast Georgia. Requested by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and falling under the annual planning contract with that agency, this project is one component of a statewide undertaking involving all of the Regional Commissions (RC).

In Phase I, lasting six months, each RC will research, map, and create datasets for every concrete, asphalt, gravel, and other similarly surfaced trail in its service area. Datasets will include information such as implementation status (planned, under construction, operational, etc.), length, and permitted uses (cycling, walking, horseback riding, etc.). The NEGRC is currently working with GDOT to develop a uniform geodatabase that all RCs will use to ensure consistency and quality statewide.

At GDOT's invitation, the NEGRC will then process, compile, and map the various RCs' trails to create a single, statewide map that can be used for planning, needs assessment, tourism promotion, and education. This Phase II work will be conducted from March to August 2018, and the NEGRC will provide GDOT with an online map that may, at GDOT's discretion, be shared with local governments, state departments, and stakeholders such as nonprofits, chambers of commerce, and individual trail users.

This work is related to a project conceived by the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions' Economic Development Committee that, over the course of the last year, explored the potential for a statewide trail map. The GDOT mapping initiative represents further implementation of this effort.

PGS staff will begin contacting communities to inventory trails and generate data in Fall 2017. If your local government currently maintains trails data, whether in GIS or another format, or to obtain

more information, please contact Mr. Devine, AICP, at jdevine@negrc.org.

NEW MEDICARE CARDS

The Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is readying a fraud prevention initiative that removes Social Security numbers from Medicare cards to help combat identity theft, and safeguard taxpayers' dollars. The new cards will use a unique, randomly-assigned number called a Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI), to replace the Social Security-based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN) currently used on the Medicare card. CMS will begin mailing new cards in April 2018. On May 30, 2017, CMS kicked-off an outreach campaign to inform Medicare beneficiaries and healthcare providers about these changes well in advance and have the information they need to make a seamless transition.

Personal identity theft affects a large and growing number of seniors. People age 65 and older are increasingly the victims of this type of crime. Incidents among seniors increased to 2.6 million from 2.1 million between 2012 and 2014, according to the current statistics from the Department of Justice. Identity theft can take not only an emotional toll on those who experience it, but also a financial one: two-thirds of all identity theft victims reported a direct financial loss. It can also disrupt lives, damage credit ratings and result in inaccuracies in medical records and costly false claims. CMS is committed to a successful transition to the MBI for people with Medicare and for the health care provider community.

For more information, go to www.cms.gov/medicare/ssnri/index.html. For one-on-one counseling sessions or community education events in the Northeast Georgia region, contact the GeorgiaCares Program at 1-866-552-4464 (Option 4).

ADRC HEALTHY COMMUNITIES SUMMIT

The Department of Human Services Division of Aging Services (DAS) held its annual Healthy Communities Summit on June 7th through 9th at the Augusta Marriott. NEGRC Area Agency on Aging staff attending included **Peggy Jenkins**, **Toshia Lewis**, **Katrina Ogbe**, **Katurah Patterson** and **Nikki Simmons**.

The focus of the conference was to promote community focused collaboration. The keynote speaker was **Carolyn Phillips**, Director of Tools for Life with the Georgia Assistive Technology Program at Georgia Tech. Among conference highlights were presentations by **Kathy Floyd**, with the Georgia Council on Aging, on engaging local officials. There were several sessions held during the three days including presentations by **Gwen Bergen**, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, on optimal mobility. **Walter Coffey**, with LeadingAge Georgia, conducted a session on living fully with dementia. **Elizabeth Head**, with the Georgia Department of Public Health, conducted a session on the tough conversation about driving and **Anna Ayers**, with the Division of Aging Services – Forensic Special Investigation Unit, conducted a session on moving forward by addressing at-risk adult abuse at the local level through At-Risk Adult Crime Tactics (ACT) Trainings. Panel discussions on collaboration between AAAs and Behavioral Health Providers, concentrating on

caregiving and housing - eligibility, payment sources and services were held also. Provider staff, from several senior centers in the region, were also able to attend the summit.

For additional information on the summit, visit <https://aging.georgia.gov/adrc-healthy-communities-summit>.

SUMMER 2017 WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA) WORK EXPERIENCE

Ninety-nine youth from the WIOA In-School Youth Program participated in the 2017 Summer Work Experience program. There were a total of 82 worksites in our 12 county area, which included non-profit agencies, local government worksites, and some private sector businesses. New worksites included Athens Community Council on Aging, Greene County Habitat for Humanity, and Jackson County DFCS. There were additional efforts made to develop worksites that provided exposure to specific career interests of the students, such as Clinical Laboratory Services, Prior, Daniel and Wiltshire Law Offices, Our Family Health Center, and Right at Home Healthcare. The Work Experience activity operated for a 5 week period from June 5th through July 8th. Participants worked up to 30 hours per week for the 5 week period, and were paid \$7.25 per hour. Of the 99 participants, 75% of the students had never worked before. During the school year, these students participated in Job Readiness training workshops, and were able to apply what they learned during the Work Experience program.

During the Summer Work Experience Program, the NEGRC employed three summer monitors to assist with the orientations, job placements, check delivery and monitoring of worksites. **Hugh Rockwell** and **Lindsey Brooker**, Master of Social Work students from the University of Georgia, worked as summer interns for the program this year. Cedar Shoals High School Guidance Counselor and ACTION Case Manager **Shamikia Barnes**, also assisted with the program. The program was supervised by **Rima Sullivan**, WIOA Youth Program Coordinator and **Eileen Brown**, WIOA Youth Program specialist. Ms. Brown recently graduated from the University of Georgia's Master of Social Work program, and worked as a WIOA Summer Monitor last year.

For further information on the Youth Services offered by the NEGRC Workforce Development Division, please contact Ms. Sullivan, Youth Program Coordinator, **(706) 369-5703**.



(L-R) Brooker, Brown and Rockwell



Summer Work Experience Participants

REMINDER

The next meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission will be held on **Thursday, August 17th at Noon at the Athens Holiday Inn**. Information of the meeting will be forthcoming.

BEWARE OF SCAMS

As the summer continues, several scams are occurring in Northeast Georgia and surrounding counties. Residents must be aware of suspicious calls and efforts to sell items over the internet.

Recently, residents of Jackson and Oconee counties lost money to scam artists during attempts to sell vehicles over the internet. An Oconee county resident was trying to sell a vehicle to someone out of state. He was contacted by a person purporting to be from Texas, who agreed to pay the purchase price of the vehicle along with a shipping fee of \$2,000. The alleged Texan sent a check for \$3,700 which was cashed by the seller, who then sent \$2,000 by MoneyGram to a location for shipping. The next day the seller discovered the check was bad, and he now owes money to the bank.

Two other persons in Jackson County were targeted by scam artists using a scheme alleging their grandchildren were in trouble and needed funds. If a citizen receives such a call, they should contact the individual or a family member to confirm if the person has indeed been arrested or is in need of money.

Criminals are always developing new ways to trick residents out of their savings. Don't become a victim of a fraudulent transition over the internet or phone. If you receive calls such as these, do not send cash, purchase a prepaid debit card, or give out personal credit/debit card and bank account numbers. If you feel the call is not legitimate, hang up and call the local law enforcement agency. Victims of scams can also contact the Federal Trade Commission at **1-877-282-4357** to report the activity.

For more information on local scams, or to learn how not to become a victim of such, contact **Mark Franklin**, with the Northeast Georgia Elderly Legal Assistance Program, at **(706) 369-7147**.



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Athens, GA 30605

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Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS AUGUST

17	Noon	NEGRC Council	Athens Holiday Inn
17	3:00 p.m.	Firefly Trails Advocacy Group	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
21	8:30 a.m.	WIOA Youth Committee	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
22	8:30 a.m.	Workforce Development Board	Atrium



Sincerely & Respectfully,