

ELBERTON – GRANITE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

This is the fourth in a series highlighting municipalities in the region. A similar effort devoted to counties appeared in the past.

The City of Elberton originally called Elbertville and named for Revolutionary War hero General Samuel Elbert, is the subject of this month’s municipal spotlight. Incorporated on December 10, 1803, Elberton is located near the state border with South Carolina, 33 miles east of Athens and 110 miles east of Atlanta. Known as *The Granite Capital of the World*, Elbert produces more granite monuments than any other city on the planet. The first commercial quarry and manufacturing plant opened in 1889. The local high school stadium is known as the Granite Bowl and seats 20,000. Legendary settlers, including “**Old Dan Tucker**”, the subject of an American folk tune, Revolutionary War heroine **Nancy Hart**, and Governor **Stephen Heard** called Elberton home.

Elberton Mayor and NEGRC Council Member **Larry Guest** is recognized as an effective leader and serves alongside a five-member City Council. Councilmember **Bobby Hunt** has enjoyed a long affiliation with NEGRC, having served as a former Board Member. Retired Elberton Councilmember **Joel Seymour** is a Past Chairman of NEGRC. **Lanier Dunn** is a seasoned City Manager and responsible for day-to-day operations of the City.

The City also operates Elberton Utilities, a comprehensive utility system which includes electric, gas, water, sewer, cable television and internet services; and Elberton Public Works, which provides solid waste and street cleaning services and is responsible for City cemeteries. Main Street Elberton promotes development in the downtown area. City officials are extremely proud of the Elberton Theatre, which reopened in 2001 after extensive renovations and hosts numerous productions annually, and the recently rehabilitated and reopened Samuel Elbert Hotel.

Since 1950, Elberton has served as headquarters of the Southeastern Power Administration (SEPA), a division of the U.S. Department of Energy. SEPA markets power generated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers across the southern U.S.



Samuel Elbert Hotel



Elberton Theatre



Courthouse



Downtown Signage



DCA Representative Beth Evenson and son

NINE COMMUNITIES DESIGNATED AS RURAL ZONES – NEW TOOLS AVAILABLE TO HELP REVITALIZE RURAL DOWNTOWNS

The State has designated the communities of Bainbridge, **Commerce (in the Northeast Georgia Region)**, Cornelia, Fitzgerald, Jonesboro, Nashville, Perry, Springfield, and Toccoa as Rural Zones, a new program enacted by the legislature in 2017. Portions of each community – primarily historic downtown areas – are now zoned to allow for tax credits to eligible businesses that create jobs and stimulate economic activity in these communities.

“The Courthouse square and historic downtown has been the lifeblood of Georgia’s rural communities,” according to DCA Commissioner **Christopher Nunn**. “The purpose of the Rural Zone is to encourage small business investment and job creation to help preserve these small town assets and stimulate economic activity in the community.”

Rural Zones focus on jobs creation and private investment in designated areas. The program includes three tax credit incentives: a Job Tax Credit, Investment Credit, and Rehabilitation Credit.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) partners with communities to create a climate of success for Georgia’s families and businesses through community and economic development, local government assistance, and safe and affordable housing. Using state and federal resources, DCA helps communities spur private job creation, implement planning, develop downtowns, generate affordable housing solutions, and promote volunteerism. DCA also helps qualified low- and moderate-income Georgians buy homes, rent housing, and prevent foreclosure and homelessness.

For additional information on Rural Zones or other programs offered by DCA, visit the website at www.dca.ga.gov.

GTIB FUNDS AVAILABLE

The Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (GTIB) program, managed by the State Road and Tollway Authority, provides grants and low interest loans on a competitive basis to accelerate transportation project delivery. Since 2009, \$106 million has been awarded via five rounds of funding - \$83 million in grants, \$23 million in loans. Applicants must be local governments (city, county, regional commission), community improvement districts, or state government entities (two or more may apply together). Projects must be motor fuel tax eligible, and costs can be related to preliminary engineering, right-of-way, and construction.

Investments are usually related to projects that:

- Address critical local and state transportation needs including economic development and mobility.
- Demonstrate a high degree of local commitment.
- Include innovative transportation solutions.
- Are close to the start of, at, or under construction.
- Demonstrate a high degree of feasibility.

The program is fast, predictable, and reliable from application to reimbursement. Historically, grants are more competitive than loans – 44% of grant applications have been successful as opposed to 81% of loan applications. In the most recent round of awards (June 2017), the minimum award was \$31,000, the maximum award was \$1.7 million, and the average award was \$1 million.

GTIB will accept loan and grant applications through March 22, 2018, with awards expected to be announced in June. New policy allows LMIG funds to serve as match and repayment source for loans if a project addresses select bridges. Further information is available at www.srta.ga.gov/gtib or by calling Strategic Programs Administrator **David Cassell** at (404) 893-6108.

2017 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM

Rima Sullivan, WIOA Youth Program Coordinator, recently attended the 2017 Youth Development Symposium in Chicago. This conference is organized by the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals. There were approximately six hundred youth-focused workforce professionals from across the country at this year’s conference. Attendees included Workforce Development Board Members, Community College employees, America’s Job Center representatives, and Youth Program Coordinators.

The purpose of the Symposium is to learn new strategies, network with peers, and share best practices in youth programs. Thirty different workshop sessions were offered in five learning tracks, which also included three general sessions. Sixteen exhibitors presented materials and information geared towards improving program productivity.

This year’s conference workshops included “The Art of Motivating Youth to Succeed”, “The Workforce System under WIOA and Trends Impacting Youth Programs”, “Case Managing with a Focus on Soft Skills”, and “Partnering to Support Successful Outcomes for Youth with Barriers to Employment”. **Christine Quinn**, one of the keynote speakers, is the Regional Administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. She presented useful information about workforce program development, with a focus on customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, and effective management of resources.

For further information on youth programs offered through the Workforce Development Division, contact Ms. Sullivan at (706) 369-5703 or e-mail rsullivan@negrc.org.



Rima Sullivan

NEGRC'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT LUCA TRAINING SESSION

The Planning and Government Services (PGS) Division of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, in partnership with the US Census Bureau and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, hosted a local government training session on January 11th, 2018 to prepare for the upcoming Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA). The target audience included staff, consultants, and interns who will be actively involved in the LUCA review process (**LUCA provides local governments the opportunity to review and update the Census Bureau's residential address list for each county and municipality**). The session was well attended with over thirty local government representatives participating in the half-day training.

We are thankful for our communities' dedication to the upcoming LUCA review process: all twelve Northeast Georgia counties and numerous municipalities within those counties have registered to participate in the upcoming LUCA review period, set to begin in February 2018. Results from the 2020 Census will directly affect Georgia's political representation and the allotment of Federal funds to Northeast Georgia's communities; it is essential that Northeast Georgia's residents are properly counted.

For questions or to request NEGRC's assistance with LUCA, please **contact Eva Kennedy**, NEGRC Planner, at ekennedy@negrc.org or **(706) 369-5650**.



LUCA Training Attendees

REMINDER

The next meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council will be held on **Thursday, February 15th at Noon at the Hilton Garden Inn**. Information on the meeting will be forthcoming.

LT. GOVERNOR'S CAREER ACADEMY STUDENT OF THE YEAR LEADERSHIP AWARD

Congratulations to **Deonte Sandoval** on his selection as one of three finalists for the Lt. Governor's Career Academy Student of the Year Leadership Award. Mr. Sandoval was enrolled in the Clarke County School District's Athens Community Career Academy in the Culinary Arts Program with dual enrollment at Athens Technical College. When he graduated from Cedar Shoals High School in May 2017, he graduated with 49 college credits in the Culinary

Arts Program through dual enrollment at Athens Technical College. With assistance from NEGRC's Northeast Georgia Workforce Development Board, Mr. Sandoval utilized Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds to complete his Culinary Arts Associate Degree in December 2017.

For further information on Workforce Development programs, contact the NEGRC Workforce Development Division at **(706) 369-5703**.

Lt. Governor Cagle and Deonte Sandoval



MONTICELLO RETREAT HELD

At the request of Mayor **Bryan Standifer**, Executive Director **Jim Dove** and Executive Assistant **Mott Beck** facilitated a retreat for the Monticello Mayor and Council and senior staff on January 13th at the City Hall. The purpose of the retreat was to provide an array of information for the elected officials regarding ongoing efforts and potential needs and goals associated with the various departments. This information is vital to the Mayor and Council as it becomes involved in the budget preparation process for the next fiscal year. In addition to the Mayor, Councilmembers participating included Mayor Pro Tem **Stone Workman** and **Cynthia Miller, Jenny Murphy, Larry Thurman, and David Wease**. City Manager **Doug White** and department heads **Lathaydra Sands, Waymon Cody, Monte Roper, Ronnie Stovall, and Michael Boykin** were present to provide input and address questions and comments. The meeting was very worthwhile and should prove beneficial for everyone in attendance.



Retreat Participants



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REGIONAL MEETINGS FEBRUARY

13	8:30 a.m.	WIOA Youth Council	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
15	Noon	NEGRC Council	Hilton Garden Inn
15	3:00 p.m.	Firefly Trail Advocacy Group	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
21	1:00 p.m.	NEGA Solid Waste Management Authority	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room



Sincerely & Respectfully,