

## "IT'S BETTER IN BRASELTON"

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

The Town of Braselton, incorporated in 1916, occupies 34 square miles and spreads into four counties – Jackson, Barrow, Hall, and Gwinnett. **William Harrison Braselton** bought 800 acres in 1876 and built a plantation on it. In 1887, his eight year old son, **John Oliver**, constructed a six foot by six foot merchandise house in the yard to sell items to the farmhands. After several iterations, the Braselton Brothers Store was a thriving business, serving residents of surrounding counties with groceries, dry goods, notions, shoes, and millinery and clothing, and was the site of the Town's first bank.

Braselton's success can be attributed to several factors. Excellent transportation access is provided by Interstate 85 and several important state routes. The Town has excellent water and sewer infrastructure, which is a great benefit to residents and businesses. Mayor **Bill Orr** and four Councilmembers focus on small town values and ensure positive smart future growth. Town Manager **Jennifer Scott** directs day-to-day activities and is a past winner of the Northeast Georgia Local Government Administrator of the Year Award.

In the early 1980's, the 3,500 acre Chateau Elan Resort and Winery was opened, and the Town has continued to expand as development moves north from Metro Atlanta. Panoz Auto Development, Mayfield Dairies, Haverty's Southeast Distribution Center, Mizuno, Whole Foods, Hitachi, Williams-Sonoma, PetCo, Year One, and Peachtree Tooling call Braselton home. Parks and rural space are important to Town residents also. In addition to the Braselton Town Park and a multi-use park along the Mulberry River, the Town is home to Thompson Mills Forest, Georgia's official State Arboretum. Many historic structures have been preserved. The Town Hall was built in 1909 and restored in the late 1990's. The Braselton-Stover House, built in 1918, is a popular site for weddings and receptions. A recent population estimate for the Town exceeds 10,200 persons.



Former Braselton Brothers Store



Town Hall



Library



Chateau Elan

## COMMERCE RECEIVES RURAL ZONE DESIGNATION

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, the City of Commerce was designated in the first round of the Rural Zone program. The designation, which lasts for five years, is aimed at improving Georgia's historic, rural downtowns. In order to qualify, cities must have a concentration of historic structures that need improvements, a plan for revitalizing their downtown, and a strong team willing to champion the program. The Rural Zone program is administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) (see link: <https://dca.ga.gov/community-economic-development/incentive-programs/rural-zones>).

The City of Commerce is a natural fit for the program. Commerce is a traditional railroad town, with its early 20th century commercial buildings lining the tracks. The City is committed to implementing its 2015 "Blueprint Strategy," which outlined a path to improving downtown through infrastructure

improvements, building rehabilitation, and aesthetic enhancements. The City benefits from dedicated and active community members, business owners, downtown development authority, city staff, Main Street, and elected officials who work together to ensure success. The designation will allow for Commerce to combine each attribute and leverage the program to recruit new businesses and encourage rehabilitation.

The Rural Zone program allows for business owners and building owners to take income tax credits for job creation, building rehabilitation, and building purchase. In order to be eligible, the business must create new jobs, and/or rehabilitate a historic structure located within downtown.

Applications for the second round of Rural Zone designations will be due in August 2018. Several workshops will be provided by DCA with one held on **April 19, 2018 from 1-3pm** at the Jackson EMC in Hull. For more information about the Rural Zone designation and the application process, please contact **Jordan Shoemaker**, NEGRC Project Specialist at [jshoemaker@negrc.org](mailto:jshoemaker@negrc.org) or (706) 369-5650.



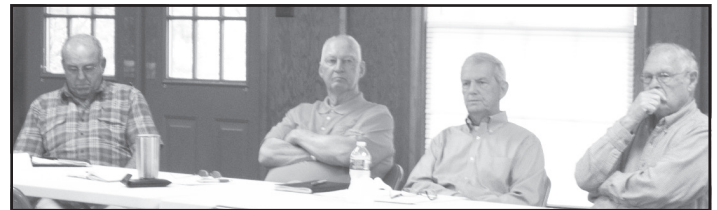
*Historic Oxford Building in Commerce*



*City of Madison*



*City of Winterville*



*Elbert County*

## PLANNING RETREATS HELD

Executive Director **Jim Dove** and Executive Assistant **Mott Beck** have facilitated planning retreats for three local jurisdictions in recent weeks. The Annual Planning Session for the City of Madison was held on Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup> at NEGRC headquarters. The first item on the agenda was in regard to the City Charter and responsibilities associated with the elected officials. This was followed by a discussion of Affordable and Homeless Housing, the matter of Planned Residential Developments (PRDs), Council Compensation, Traffic Concerns, Downtown Development Authority, use of the soon to be vacated middle school, and Emergency Management.

On January 31<sup>st</sup>, a Planning Retreat was held for the City of Winterville at its Community Center. After determining objectives/issues to be considered during the retreat, participants addressed the City's strengths and challenges before delving into specific initiatives to be addressed during the next 12-18 months. These included appointment of a City Attorney, efforts to complete the library, Comprehensive Plan/Service Delivery Strategy, SPLOST, Commercial District Revitalization, updating the Zoning Ordinance and other codes, and revenue stream enhancement.

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, the Annual Planning Retreat of the Elbert County Board of Commissioners was facilitated at Bobby Brown Park. Topics covered during the session included 2018 Elections and possible changes in Voting Districts, Revenue Collections, Single County T-SPLOST and local road challenges, Bobby Brown Park Master Plan, Economic Development, and County Financial Status. In addition to the BOC, the meeting was attended by other elected officials, local staff, and representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State Department of Natural Resources.

## POSITION AVAILABLE

### GIS TECHNICIAN – Newton County Water and Sewer Authority

#### JOB SUMMARY:

This position performs technical work in the updating and duplication of official Authority maps using Geographic Information System (GIS) software and Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment for field data collection and survey, and computer-aided design (CAD) and drafting.

#### Education and Experience:

- Associates degree from an accredited college or technical school in



Geography, Cartography, Public Administration, or a related field; and,

- Three years of related experience; or,
- Fulfills minimum requirements of education, training and experience, which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job.

#### **Knowledge of:**

- Principles and practices of mapping, graphics, GIS, Civil and/or Environmental Engineering.
- Computer applications related to the work.
- College-level mathematics.
- Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment, its operations and uses.

#### **Submit to:**

**Tracey Clark**, H/R Director at [tc@ncwsa.us](mailto:tc@ncwsa.us) or fax to (770) 786-4536 or apply in person **11325 Brown Bridge Road, Covington, GA 30016**.

## COMPLETES TRUCK DRIVER TRAINING

**Alexus Robson**, a 24 year old resident of Jasper County, recently completed CDL training at the Truck Driver Institute in Forsyth, where she earned her CDL license in only three weeks. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant paid for training and lodging while she completed training. Although Ms. Robson is small in stature, she is full of energy and motivation and comes from a family of truck drivers, including her mother. Ms. Robson is currently an over-the-road truck driver for Stevens Trucking, and has traveled coast to coast, occasionally working seven days a week. She states that she loves it, and is enjoying seeing the country. She is also enjoying the money she is making, and is able to save most of her paycheck. Ms. Robson thanked WIOA for giving her the opportunity for a career in an "in-demand" field. She also wants to encourage other independent females to consider going into this occupation.



For information on the WorkSource Northeast Georgia training opportunities, contact the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Workforce Development Division at **(706) 369-5703**. WorkSource Northeast Georgia programs are provided through the Northeast Georgia Workforce Development Board.

## NEGRC REGIONAL PLAN UPDATE UNDER REVIEW

On February 15<sup>th</sup> the Planning & Government Services (PGS) Committee of the NEGRC Council recommended the Update to the Regional Plan developed by NEGRC staff be transmitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for official review and comment. The Regional Plan Update brings the previous Regional Plan into conformance with newly developed requirements for regional planning which became effective on October 1, 2017. The updated Plan identifies region-wide goals and accompanying strategies to address them. These goals are based on the most common needs and opportunities local governments in the region face, such as the need to continue to develop a workforce with the education and skills required by existing and potential employers within the region and reliable and sustainable

funding to address critical transportation and other infrastructure needs. After review of the document by DCA, the next step is the Plan's adoption by resolution from the NEGRC Council.

A draft of the Regional Plan is available for review on the NEGRC's website at [http://www.negrc.org/resource-1.php?page\\_ID=1294242590](http://www.negrc.org/resource-1.php?page_ID=1294242590). Comments regarding the draft Regional Plan can be sent to **Justin Crighton**, NEGRC Planner, at [jcrighton@negrc.org](mailto:jcrighton@negrc.org).

## THANKS MOM & DAD FUND ANNOUNCES GRANT RECIPIENTS

On February 14, 2018, the **Thanks Mom & Dad Fund** announced its latest round of grants to fill service gaps and provide emergency services for vulnerable older Georgians. At a reception for donors, grantees and trustees at the offices of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, the 2018 grants were awarded to 61 nonprofit organizations serving seniors across the state.

Among the grants awarded, the **Thanks Mom & Dad Fund** issued 56 grants in partnership with the Georgia Department of Human Services to promote program innovation and improvements at local senior centers throughout Georgia. In the Northeast Georgia region, the following winners were:

- Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA)-Center for Active Living (Clarke County) ACCA will use grant funds to create a fitness room at the center. More equipment will be added for a greater variety of exercise choices.
- Walton County Senior Citizens Council (Walton County) Walton County received three grants that will be used to design and launch a Senior Center website. The funding will also be used for training staff and senior citizens on how to access and input information into the website. Computers will be available for the seniors to use in their three sites: Monroe, Loganville and Social Circle.
- Josephine B. Brown Senior Center (Newton County) The Newton County Senior Center will use grant funds to extend its hours of operation to 6:00 pm two days a week, and to offer more computer and exercise classes.

"The **Thanks Mom & Dad Fund** is pleased to make grants addressing significant unmet needs which make a tremendous difference in the lives of older adults and caregivers," said Maureen Kelly, President of the Fund®. "We remain committed to identifying and filling service gaps across the state."

**Toshia Lewis**, Area Agency on Aging staff, and representatives of Athens Community Council on Aging and Walton County Senior Citizens Council attended the awards presentation and reception for this year's recipients. Prior to the reception, over 75 people attended a workshop including best practices for writing grant applications with presentations from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta and the **Thanks Mom & Dad Fund**. The Fund is a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to honor parents, grandparents and mentors by supporting programs and services for older adults. Through ongoing fundraising and grant making, the fund seeks to engage the public in support for such programs through greater awareness and promotion of the vital services provided by agencies serving older adults. If you are interested in supporting the organization, please contact **(404) 410-6311** or visit [www.thanksmomanddadfund.org](http://www.thanksmomanddadfund.org).



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# Update

## REGIONAL MEETINGS MARCH

13	8:30 a.m.	Workforce Development Board	NEGRC Atrium
15	Noon	NEGRC Council	Athens Holiday Inn
15	3:30 p.m.	Firefly Trail Advocacy Group	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
20	2:00 p.m.	NEGA Emergency Medical Council	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
28	9:30 a.m.	Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room



*Sincerely & Respectfully,*