

## WATKINSVILLE – ARTLAND OF GEORGIA

Watkinsville is the County Seat and largest city located in Oconee County. According to the latest estimates, it is home to more than 2,800 residents. In 1802, Watkinsville, originally known as the Big Springs Community, was named after prominent Augusta Attorney Colonel **Robert Watkins**. It was founded on the dangerous western frontier between Creek and Cherokee territories. Eagle Tavern, believed to stand on the site of Fort Edward, opened in 1801 and currently serves as a museum commemorating the era of wagon and stage travel. The City first appeared in Clarke County records in 1791.

In 1802, **John Cobb** gave eight lots from his plantation to create the City, which was incorporated in 1806. It became the seat for Clarke County and remained so until 1872 when it was moved to Athens. Afterwards, a new county was formed, named after the Oconee River on its eastern border, and Watkinsville became its seat on February 25, 1875. The unofficial motto, "The Artland of Georgia", is shown on the wall of the community center, as designed by the late artist **Jim Shearon**. The Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation (OCAF) is located in Watkinsville near the Board of Education as part of the OCAF Center and Gallery. The City is governed by Mayor **Dave Shearon** and a five-person Council including **Brian Brodrick, Marcia Campbell, Connie Massey, Daniel Matthews, and Christine Tucker**.



Ashford Memorial Methodist Church



Murray House



Mainstreet



Eagle Tavern Museum

## NADO BOARD HOLDS SUMMER MEETING

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Board of Directors met June 2-4 in La Jolla, California. Executive Director **Jim Dove** has been elected to the Board by his counterparts in the Southeast for more than a decade. The organization embarked on a strategic planning process to guide efforts through 2030. The initial stage of the process involved review of emerging global issues and how they impact constituencies served by regional development organizations. Board members participated in breakout sessions to discuss various future scenarios and contributed input on NADO's outlook and direction. Results from the planning session are being compiled, and the process will move forward with involvement from NADO's national membership. Future IQ, based in Minneapolis, is leading the strategic plan and guided discussion at the aforementioned meeting.

## REGIONAL COMMISSION WELCOMES NEW EMPLOYEES

The Regional Commission is happy to welcome two new employees to the Planning and Government Services (PGS) Division. In June, **Monica Sagastizado** joined the PGS staff as a Project Specialist. Previously, she taught sixth grade earth science at Richmond County Schools and recently was an intern for the Office of Governor **Nathan Deal**. She is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Public Administration with a concentration in Planning and Economic Development at Georgia State University. She is originally from Long Island, New York and moved to Suwanee, Georgia when she was 16. Ms. Sagastizado received a B.A. in History from Georgia State University in 2013. She will be assisting the PGS staff on various projects for local governments. She can be reached at [msagastizado@negrc.org](mailto:msagastizado@negrc.org).



**Stephen Jaques** joined the PGS staff in June as a Project Specialist. He grew up in Lawrenceville and moved to Athens to attend the University of Georgia, graduating in 2013 with a Bachelor's in International Affairs. He is also a 2018 graduate of the University of Georgia's Masters in Public Administration program with a specialization in public management and local government administration. He interned with the City of Suwanee in the summer of 2017 doing various projects including land use studies, updates to strategic plans, and exploring means to protect a historic cultural asset within the city. He has a strong interest in urban planning, trails, and downtown revitalization. He will be assisting the PGS staff in completing various local and regional plans, researching data, and assisting in the building of great places throughout the region. He is married to **Mary Grace Jaques**, a speech language pathologist with the Clarke County School District, and they live in Athens. He can be reached at [sjaques@negrc.org](mailto:sjaques@negrc.org).



## REVENUE COMMISSIONER RILEY ADDRESSES MAY MEETING OF REGIONAL COMMISSION COUNCIL

Council Member **Tommy Lyon** presented Georgia Department of Revenue Commissioner **Lynne Riley** to the Council who provided an update on activities of that agency. Commissioner Riley indicated that the Department has approximately 1,200 employees and introduced Ms. **Iseeta Richardson** of the Athens Regional Office. She touched on many areas of interest, and advised that the Department is hard at work regarding tax reform efforts at the federal and state level. She explained that there are many opportunities at present to minimize corporate and individual tax burdens that will occur at the end of the year. She discussed H.B. 61, which is important in regard to internet sales tax. Also discussed was implementation next year of Ad Valorem Tax changes. She indicated there is considerable discussion about H.B. 55 – voters will decide in November if there is a new type of real property called Timberland. She discussed H.B. 661, which provides for a repository online of tax liens filed by the state. She also mentioned several new tax credits to be put in place or extended including Rural Hospital Credit, Student Scholarship Donation, Education Foundation, Railroad Track Maintenance, and High Technology Data Centers. Commissioner Riley outlined changes to the GATE Program which will provide for better accountability between the Departments of Agriculture and Revenue. She also referenced the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act which provides for revenues to be set aside for investment in outdoor facilities. She closed by indicating that her Department will be assisting local governments that vote to receive additional transit funding, and in the modernization of the automobile tag and title system. Commissioner Riley has visited with the Council on several occasions.

### REMINDER

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission **will not** meet in July. The next meeting will be held on **Thursday, August 16<sup>th</sup> at Noon at the Athens Holiday Inn**. Information on the meeting will be forthcoming.

## 2018 B.J. SMITH COMMUNITY SERVANT AWARD RECIPIENTS HONORED

The 13th Annual B.J. Smith Community Servant Award Ceremony, hosted by the Northeast Georgia Workforce Development Board (WDB), was held on Tuesday, June 5th in Ila. **B.J. Smith** served in many roles as a community servant. Prior to his active board involvement in Madison County, he served as a meteorologist with the National Weather Service beginning in 1972. He was stationed at the Athens Ben Epps Airport. While with the Weather Service, he had his first experience with the local area's summer youth work experience program serving as a worksite supervisor of JTPA summer youth participants. After retiring from the weather service in 1990 he joined the Northeast Georgia Private Industry Council, the predecessor to the Northeast Georgia Workforce Investment Board, as the Madison

County private sector representative. He was actively involved as a Madison County Chamber of Commerce Board member and worked on the economic development committee.

Mr. Smith felt that providing people with the tools necessary to ensure their own successes was the most beneficial form of assistance. After his passing in March 2005, the Workforce Development Board wanted to honor his commitment to community service as well as his memory. The B.J. Smith Community Servant Award was established in February 2006 with the first awards presented in June of that year. Including this year's winners, a total of 37 deserving youth have been awarded this scholarship in the Northeast Georgia region over the past 13 years.

The 2018 B.J. Smith Community Servant Award winners each receive a \$1000 college scholarship. This year's winners are:

**Mannika Collins** lives in Newton County and is a 2018 graduate of Newton County High School. Mannika will be attending Daytona State College, where she plans on pursuing a degree and a career in Nursing. Mannika has volunteered within her community at the Rockdale Medical Center Nursing Home, Homeless Shelter, Special Olympics and First Ladies of Newton. While attending high school, Mannika was active with the Lady Rams Basketball Team, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and National Society of High School Honors. Mannika also earned her Certified Nurse Assistant Certification through the Newton College and Career Academy.

**Alexis Johnson** lives in Oconee County, and is a 2018 graduate of Oconee County High School. Alexis will be attending the University of North Georgia, majoring in Elementary Education with an emphasis on Special Education. Alexis has volunteered at the Oconee County Library, local nursing homes, and organized food drives and blood drives. While in high school, Alexis was the Captain of the Oconee County High School Color Guard, an officer in the Warrior Marching Band, and a member of Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America. Alexis also earned 35 college credits from dual enrollment through Georgia Military College while in High School.

**Jayla Strong** lives in Greene County, and is a 2018 graduate of Greene County High School. Jayla will be attending Georgia College and majoring in Pediatric Nursing. Her ultimate goal is to go to Medical School and become an OB/GYN. Jayla has volunteered with the Annual Community Canned Food Drive, the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl, the Rotary Club of Greene County, the Shoes 4 Kids Drive and the Girl Scouts World Thinking Day. While in High School, Jayla served as Vice-President of her Senior Class and the head of Junior ROTC. She also participated in UGA Leadership and Youth Leadership Greene. Jayla also played on the high school basketball team for all 4 years. Jayla received 8 scholarships for college, including the African American Academic Award given to the top three African American students in their class.

These scholarships are presented to WIOA students currently enrolled in the WIOA In-School Youth program within the 12 county region. The scholarships will assist with books, fees, tuition and related expenses during the recipient's freshman year of college. These scholarships will be coordinated with other financial assistance the student may qualify for such as the Hope Grant/Scholarship.

For further information on the WIOA In-school Youth Program, please contact **Rima Sullivan**, NEGRC/ WIOA Youth Program Specialist, at **(706) 369-5703**.



(L-R) Johnson, Mrs. Smith, Strong, Collins

## BEWARE OF SCAMS

As summer is beginning, several scams are occurring in Northeast Georgia counties and cities. Citizens must be aware of suspicious calls, e-mails and social media contacts.

Several clients of Jackson EMC were recently scammed by someone that was able to send the business office in Jefferson an e-mail with instructions to pay a bill owed to a marketing firm by routing the money to a bank in Post, Texas. Jackson EMC covered the lost money and they are pursuing criminal charges in Georgia and Texas.

Someone identifying himself as an Internal Revenue Service agent contacted an individual indicating the person owed back taxes. Another person was contacted by someone saying she had won a big prize from Publishers Clearing House and needed to purchase a \$100 Green Dot card to pay a fee. Luckily both of these people recognized the scams and did not send any money.

Criminals are always coming up with new ways to trick citizens out of money. 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 additional information on local scams or to learn how not to become a victim of a scam, contact **Mark Franklin**, with the Northeast Georgia Elderly Legal Assistance Program, at **(706) 369-7147**.





305 Research Drive  
Athens, GA 30605

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSR. STD.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ATHENS, GA  
PERMIT NO. 502

# Update

## REGIONAL MEETINGS JULY

11	1:00 p.m.	NEGA Care-Net	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
18	1:00 p.m.	Aging Advisory Board	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
19	3:00 p.m.	Firefly Trail Advocacy Group	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
25	9:30 a.m.	Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room



*Sincerely & Respectfully,*