

BECK RECOGNIZED BY NEGRC COUNCIL

At the June meeting of the Council of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, Executive Assistant **Mott Beck** was recognized for "25 Years of Dedicated and Exemplary Service." Ms. Beck joined the staff as Administrative Assistant on July 17, 1989 and was quickly given additional duties and responsibilities. In addition to providing administrative assistance to the Executive Director and Council, Ms. Beck is responsible for matters related to the buildings and grounds and supervises the staff Receptionist. She edits the monthly newsletter, assists with facilitation of retreats throughout the region, serves as Secretary to the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority, and assists with other duties far too numerous to mention. Ms. Beck resides in Jefferson with her husband, and has two daughters, six grandchildren, and a great grandson. As stated by Executive Director Jim Dove at the Council meeting, "Mott has the skill set, talents, and abilities that enable her to do an outstanding job for the organization and for me personally."

Also at the June meeting, following Council approval of Director Dove's evaluation, Personnel Committee Chair **Emily Eisenman** presented him with an award for "Outstanding Dedication, Commitment, and Leadership" to the organization.



GMA CONVENTION HELD IN SAVANNAH

The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) held its 2013 Annual Convention on June 20 – 24th at the International Trade and Convention Center in Savannah. Over 1,500 city officials and others gathered to map out legislative plans for the upcoming year, discuss issues affecting Georgia's cities, and to network with other city leaders. This year's theme for the convention was "**Excellence by Design**". The Municipal Training Institute was held on Saturday, followed by the Opening General Session on Sunday. Sessions included Changing Community Demographics and Best Practices, Housing Solutions for Cities: A Key Element to the Economic Development Strategy, Council-Staff Relations, Economic Development Process, Ethical Conduct in the Administration of Public Duties, Strengthening Your Community by Strengthening Your Children and Families, and Water Management – An Introduction for Local Governments.

Joel Seymour, Associate Member of the NEGRC Council from Elbert County, serves as President of the 5th District, and Nicholson Mayor **Ronnie Maxwell** serves as First Vice President. Athens-Clarke County Mayor **Nancy Denson**, Auburn Mayor **Linda Blechinger**, and Elberton Mayor **Larry Guest** are Directors-At-Large, and Monroe Mayor Greg **Thompson** serves on the Municipal Training Board. Ms. Blechinger also serves on the Legislative Policy Council.

Ms. Beck represented NEGRC at the meeting and managed the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) exhibit.

CITY OF ARCADE HOLDS PLANNING RETREAT

City of Arcade officials held a Planning Retreat, facilitated by Executive Director **Jim Dove** and Executive Assistant **Mott Beck**, on July 2nd at the Arcade City Hall. Participants included Mayor **Doug Haynie**; Council members **Bentley, Bone, Gammon, Hays, and Smith**; Planning Commission members **Cox, Lavender, and Smith**, and City Administrator **Debby Mockus**. Focal points included development of a Mission Statement, identification of strengths and challenges, and several discussion items such as future development, quality of life, and marketing of the City. City officials, working in tandem with NEGRC staff, will utilize retreat output as they embark on an update to the Comprehensive Plan.



MORGAN COUNTY YOUTH GAIN EXPERIENCE AND A PAYCHECK

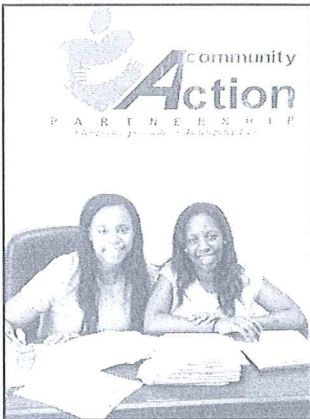
Nia Kimmins and **Dacia Kitchens**, students at Morgan County High School, spent five weeks this summer discovering the responsibilities and benefits that come with being employed. As members of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) In-School Youth Program, Nia and Dacia worked as a Customer Service Assistant and Clerical Assistant at the Action, Inc. offices. They learned new skills, such as effective interaction with co-workers, valuable organization skills, and a general knowledge of office procedures. They also developed an understanding of what it means to be employed.

The WIA program, administered by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission under the oversight of the Northeast Georgia Workforce Investment Board, includes youth in the twelve-county region which includes Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Greene, Jackson, Jasper, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Walton Counties. To qualify, these youth must meet income eligibility requirements and have at least one other barrier. Throughout the twelve counties, 180 youth worked at local government worksites, non-profit agencies, and some private sector businesses this summer. The youth worked up to five weeks and up to 30 hours per week. They were paid minimum wage through the WIA. The program continues throughout the school year, and students work with case managers who ensure they are on track in school with grades, attendance, and behavior. The youth also attend workshops that help them with money management, leadership, work skills, and career pathways.

With Georgia having one of the highest teen unemployment rates in the country, the experience these youth gained likely would not have been possible without the WIA Program. Nia, Dacia, and the

other 178 youth who participated in the WIA Summer Youth Work Experience developed practical skills that will benefit the students and their communities in the future.

For further information on WIA services for youth, adult, or dislocated workers, please contact the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Workforce Development Division at (706) 369-5703.



PGS DIVISION WELCOMES NEW STAFF

The NEGRC's Planning & Governments Services Division (PGS) recently welcomed two new staff members for the position of Planner.

Justin Crighton joined the PGS staff in April. Among previous experience are several planning positions including Regional



Planner, Senior Planner and Interim Planning Director for the CSRA Regional Commission in Augusta. Mr. Crighton, more recently, served as an intern with the NEGRC during his graduate studies at UGA. Originally from Southwest Missouri, he holds a B.S. in Community and Regional Planning from Missouri State University and a Master's of Environmental Planning and Design from the University of Georgia. He and his wife live in Athens where she works as an elementary educator. Mr. Crighton will primarily work in the area of local and regional planning; assisting communities with developing comprehensive plans, preparing special plans, and assisting with land development regulations. His contact information is (706) 369-5650 or email: jcrighton@negrc.org.



In June, **Theresa Owen** also joined the PGS staff as a Planner. She previously worked for the NEGRC as an intern in 2011 while enrolled in the University of Georgia's Master of Environmental Planning and Design Program. While an intern, she focused primarily on the Safe Routes to School program and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects. Ms. Owen graduated with a Master's Degree in 2012. She then worked at the College of Environment and Design's Cultural Landscape Lab at UGA, where she helped with adaptive management and planning efforts for important cultural resources. After growing up in Aiken, South Carolina, she moved with her family to Vienna, Austria where she attended high school. Ms. Owen received a B.A. in Anthropology from the College of William and Mary in Virginia. She will assist local governments in several areas including transportation efforts related to bicycle and pedestrian planning, Safe Routes to School and Rural Transit. She will also assist communities in the development of their local comprehensive plans and related planning efforts. Ms. Owen's contact information is (706) 369-5650 or email: towen@negrc.org.

ARC PRE-APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED

In Northeast Georgia; Barrow, Elbert, Jackson, and Madison Counties are designated as Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) counties. These counties and their municipalities are eligible to participate in ARC's programs (visit: www.arc.gov). One of these programs is the annual matching grant program for economic development projects. Most NEGRC ARC counties are eligible for 50% match for potential projects that meet one or more of ARC goals including:

1. Increase job opportunities and per capita income in Appalachia to reach parity with the nation.
2. Strengthen the capacity of the people of Appalachia to compete in the global economy.
3. Develop and improve Appalachia's infrastructure to make the Region economically competitive.
4. Build the Appalachian Development Highway System to reduce Appalachia's isolation.

In Georgia, the ARC program is provided through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) (**visit: <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/economic/financing/programs/arc.asp>**) in administrative partnership with the Regional Commissions. ARC's Economic Development Grant Program is intended to assist in the creation of jobs by funding infrastructure improvements, selective planning activities and asset-based or tourism development. The grant application process involves a two-part process with a "pre-application" submission and, if approved, a second "full application." This year, **pre-applications are due to DCA on August 30, 2014.** Results of pre-application reviews are usually announced in December followed by submission of full applications for selected projects.

The NEGRC's Planning & Government Services (PGS) staff provides assistance in the development and preparation of ARC pre- and full applications. In most, if not all, projects, applicants are encouraged to contact the NEGRC to discuss a potential project to determine eligibility, competitiveness, and coordinate tasks for completing the application process.

Georgia contains 37 ARC designated counties within five Regional Commissions. ARC Economic Development Grant applications are reviewed collectively on a competitive basis. Potential projects that meet the ARC's four goals, share Georgia's ARC statewide strategies and result in strong job growth typically score the highest and receive funding. As the pre- and full application process occurs over several months, potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the NEGRC early to begin and discuss a project's development and subsequent application process.

For additional information about ARC or to discuss a potential project, please contact **Burke Walker**, Director of Planning & Government Services, at **(706) 369-5650** or email: **bwalker@negrc.org**. For information on DCA's ARC Statewide Program, contact **Saralyn Stafford** at **(404) 679-3166**.

COMMUNITY PROFILE: CITY OF AUBURN

Over the past few years, the Planning & Government Services Division staff has worked closely with the City of Auburn in several program areas intended to provide for community and economic development. Auburn is located in western Barrow County and, at the time of the last U.S. Census, the City had a population of just under 7,000 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Demographic Profile Data (DP-1)). As the City is located in the far western portion of the NEGRC region, Auburn is poised to experience growth emanating from the metropolitan Atlanta region. As a result, it is taking measures, like those described below, to develop in a manner that will best serve its residents and businesses while accommodating future growth.

The City of Auburn was accepted into the three-year Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) program in late 2010. NEGRC Project Manager **Nina Kelly** was an active participant on the Auburn GICH team with Mayor **Linda Blechinger**, City Planner **Larry Lucas**, City Administrator **Ron Griffith**, and other local stakeholders through the City's "graduation" 2014. Primary goals for the team

included increasing quality rental housing and offering more housing options for older adults in the City. In late 2013, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) awarded tax credits for Autry Pines, a 64-unit apartment development for people 55 years and older. Autry Pines will be the first multi-family development in Auburn since the early 1980s.

Auburn was one of only two (the other being Athens-Clarke County) communities in Georgia to receive the WaterFirst Community designation in 2013. To achieve this coveted designation, Auburn addressed issues including stormwater planning, water supply protection, conservation, wastewater treatment, and water reclamation and reuse. As a result of this effort, the City will be able to apply annually for water-related CDBG projects and receive lower interest Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA) loans. Officials are also currently engaged in discussions with representatives from the City of Winder about sharing the water supply reservoir that Auburn plans to develop at a deactivated pit in an existing rock quarry.

The City of Auburn adopted an urban redevelopment plan in 2012 and received Opportunity Zone designation from DCA for the Downtown Overlay District in 2013. Since the Opportunity Zone designation, the percentage of downtown businesses utilizing the Georgia Jobs Tax Credit has increased from 53% to 85%, and commercial spaces that were previously vacant have been occupied.

The Auburn Downtown Development Authority has made significant progress in the DCA Main Street Start-Up Program on its way to achieving Classic Main Street status. Achievements thus far include development of a work plan, by-laws, and a budget, as well as the appointment of a Main Street Manager and Board of Directors.

NEGRC's Planning & Government Services Division is currently assisting the City with a CDBG Redevelopment Fund application to DCA for the rehabilitation of the former Perry Rainey Institute dormitory at 16 College Street. Dubbed Auburn Center, the rehabilitated building will ultimately house an event space named Oak Leaf Hall, classroom space for GED classes and testing facilitated by Lanier Technical College, a bistro, an arts center, and co-working space for budding small business entrepreneurs.

The City of Auburn distributes a monthly newsletter and regularly posts updates, photos, and events on its Facebook page; links to both are available through the official City website at **www.cityofauburn-ga.org**.

For information on these programs and/or PGS assistance, please contact Mr. Walker at (706) 369-5650 or email: **bwalker@negrc.org**.

REMINDER

The next meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council will be held on **Thursday, August 21st at Noon at the Athens Holiday Inn**. Information on the meeting will be forthcoming.



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Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS
AUGUST

5	10:00 a.m.	Regional Tourism Study Group	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
15	10:00 a.m.	Senior Center Directors	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
21	Noon	NEGRC Council	Athens Holiday Inn
21	3:30 p.m.	Firefly Trails Advocacy Group	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room

Sincerely & Respectfully,