

GARCS' 21ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 21st Annual Conference of the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) was held last month on November 6-8, 2019 at the King & Prince Hotel on St. Simons Island. All twelve of Georgia's Regional Commission attended with staff and Councilmembers participating in training sessions over the three-day period. **Burke Walker**, NEGRC Executive Director, and seven staff from the NEGRC attended along with five NEGRC Councilmembers including: **Chairman Daniell** (Oconee), **Mayor Ferrelle** (Winterville), **Chairman Little** (Walton), Chairman and Council Chairman **Pittard** (Oglethorpe), and Private-Sector Representative **Lamar Houston** (Athens-Clarke).

At the conference, Commissioners **Christopher Nunn** (Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)) and **Robyn Crittenden** (Georgia Department of Human Services) provided information about their respective Departments and collaboration with the Regional Commissions for delivering services on a regional level. The conference's breakout sessions also included **Alicia Page**, NEGRC Comptroller, and **Carol Cofer**, NEGRC WIOA Director, whom lead sessions on financial management and workforce development, respectively. The GARC's Chairman, **Buddy Duke**, presided over the conference and provided its closing remarks. For conference information and to view the agenda visit the Georgia Association of Regional Commission's website at: www.garc.ga.gov



(L-R): Dodd Ferrelle, Burke Walker, John Daniell, and Billy Pittard at the GARC Conference



GARC Chairman Buddy Duke presiding at the 21st Annual GARC Conference

USDA "PROSPERITY SUMMIT" HELD IN ELBERTON

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conducted a "Prosperity Training Summit" in the NEGRC region on November 18, 2019 and hosted by Elbert County. The "Summit" provided an array of speakers on topics related to identified, regional issues including: Housing, e-Connectivity, Broadband, Workforce Development, Access to Capital and Healthcare. **Mike Beatty**, USDA Director of Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (USDA-OPPE) and **Joyce White**, State Director of USDA-Rural Development (USDA-RD), worked with **Burke Walker**, NEGRC Executive Director, in programming and coordinating the one-day training.

USDA targeted five (5) counties in the NEGRC for the training. All these counties participated with community leaders, local-government staff and elected officials including: **Chairman Billy Pittard** (Oglethorpe), **Chairman Lee Vaughn** (Elbert), **Chairman John Scarborough** (Madison), and **Mayor Kelly Girtz** (Athens-Clarke). Mayor Girtz, at the training, presented during the Housing program that included information about Athens-Clarke County's efforts in addressing affordable and diversified housing. **Mike Renshaw**, Barrow County Manager, and **Josh Hawkins**, Oglethorpe County Finance Director, also attended the day's sessions.

Overeight (8) staff members from USDA provided information on their program areas. During lunch, **Representative Tom McCall** (District #33) and **Dr. Andrea Daniel**, President of Athens Technical College, provided insights into their efforts to address topics presented at the Summit.

The continuation of the "Summit" will include the formation of "Prosperity Councils" or members from individual communities to help identify specific community needs. These needs, in turn, will be presented to USDA whom will provide further engagement and support to address the defined needs. For further information about the "Summit" or to inquire about a participation on a "Prosperity Council," contact **Burke Walker**, NEGRC Executive Director, at (706) 369-5650.



(L-R): Commissioner NeSmith (Athens-Clarke), Mayor Girtz (Athens-Clarke), and Chairman Vaughn (Elbert) confer during a break at the "Prosperity Summit"



(L-R): Burke Walker, Mike Beatty, and Mayor Girtz at the USDA "Prosperity Summit"

LAMAR HOUSTON SERVES 20 YEARS ON NEGRC COUNCIL

At the November NEGRC Council Meeting, **Lamar Houston** was recognized for his long-term commitment to regional planning and service to the NEGRC. Mr. Houston, whom represents Athens-Clarke County as a Private-Sector Representative, served on the NEGRC for twenty years in many capacities. He is a former Chairman of the Council and long-standing Private-Sector member on the Georgia Association of Regional Commission's (GARC) Board of Directors. He, most recently, served as Vice Chairman of the GARC and member of the NEGRC's Audit & Finance Committee.

Earlier this year, Mr. Houston announced his intention to retire from the NEGRC in both capacities after 20 years of service. At the November Council meeting, Mr. Houston was presented a plaque by Executive Director Burke Walker recognizing his outstanding leadership and commitment to the NEGRC and region. Best wishes to Mr. Houston and his wife Jane for well-deserved time off! Thank you for your outstanding service to our region.



(L-R): NEGRC Vice-Chairman Bill Palmer, Mr. Houston, and Burke Walker

GEORGIA RECONNECT WORKSHOP

The United State Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD) is providing a workshop on best practices for delivering broadband to rural communities. It will provide an overview of ways to develop broadband in rural areas and also funding from USDA-RD to deploy high-speed broadband in rural areas. It is particularly geared for communities that need broadband expansion in their communities.

The one-day workshop will be held on **December 5, 2019** from 10am-3pm in Forsyth, Georgia at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center located at 1000 Indian Springs Drive. Registration is required by **December 2, 2019** by calling (706) 552-2595 or online at **www.Eventbrite.com** and searching "Georgia ReConnect Broadband."

STORY MAPS: A TOOL FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Are you looking for a better way to inspire community engagement? Then ESRI's "Story Map" is what you need! Story maps are a great way to quickly build useful and attractive information that is all in one place. The story map acts as a stand-alone webpage, allowing you to highlight your project or initiative by incorporating interactive maps, surveys, presentations, videos, and much more. The story map can be embedded into a pre-existing website or posted on any social media platform.

Jasper County and the NEGRC are using a story map to distribute information and collect survey responses from the public for the County's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan update. The story map contains information about hazard mitigation as well as videos, surveys, and pictures. It allows Jasper County citizens to easily access information about the topic and seamlessly provide input. For more examples of how story maps can be used for your project or initiative, visit ESRI's story map library: <https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-storymaps/stories>.

To learn more or to request NEGRC assistance with creating a story map, contact **Jon McBrayer**, NEGRC GIS Specialist, at jmcbrayer@negrc.org or 706-369-5650.

NEXT GENERATION 911 SYSTEMS IN GEORGIA

During the recent Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) annual conference, **Susan Miller**, of the Georgia Geospatial Information Office (GIO), highlighted the need for a new Next Generation 911 (NG911) system and provided a status update about the development of a comprehensive NG911 system in Georgia.

NG911 is a nationwide, standards-based, emergency communications infrastructure, which enables voice and multimedia communications between a 911 caller and a 911 center, and on to responders in the field. It is imperative for the first responders to be able to get to a citizen in distress as fast as possible; because the current 911 system was built around the addresses of telephone landlines, it can fail to properly route emergency calls from cellular devices. This issue has steadily grown with the increased use of cellphones and the decreased use of landlines. NG911 was developed to address this issue by creating an improved, standardized system to enable first responders to accurately locate a caller, route their emergency call to the proper jurisdiction, and arrive in a timely manner.

The NG911 system will no longer operate based on phone line addresses. Instead, NG911 utilizes an address database created and updated with the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The updated system will allow first responders

access to more precise, location-based data to confidently make faster and better decisions. The GIO expects NG911 to be implemented statewide by 2025.

WORKSOURCE NORTHEAST GEORGIA BOARD, STAFF AND PARTNERS ATTEND WORKSOURCE GEORGIA ACADEMY

The staff of NEGRC's Workforce Development Division (WorkSource Northeast Georgia) attended the WorkSource Georgia Academy presented by the Technical College System of Georgia's Office of Workforce Development. The two-day conference was held at the Jekyll Island Conference Center on November 12th and 13th. A variety of workshops focusing on financial, administrative, case management, and partnerships topics related to the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programming and funds operated in 19 local workforce development areas in Georgia were offered to over 300 Academy participants. In addition to NEGRC Workforce Development Division staff, the Northeast Georgia Workforce Development Board Chair, **Joe Vogt**, attended and was a panelist on the local workforce board plenary session. **Carol Cofer**, Workforce Development Division Director, presented a workshop on Best Practices in Partnerships. Renee Spires, One Stop Operator Coordinator, attended as well as Daisy Woods, GDOL Covington Career Center manager.



NEGRC attendees at the WorkSource Georgia Academy including (L-R): Olivia Wintz, Renee Spires, Carol Cofer, Joe Vogt, Kim Meadows, Rhonda Keeter and Daisy Woods



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Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS
DECEMBER

6 th	9:00 a.m.	Senior Center Directors' Meeting	E. H. Culpepper Conference Room
17 th	10:00 a.m.	Aging & Disability Resource Connection	E. H. Culpepper Conference Room
19 th	8:30 a.m.	Aging & Disability Resource Connection	E. H. Culpepper Conference Room
25 th	8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	NEGRC Closed	



*Wishing you all a safe and
happy Holiday Season!*

NEGRC Council and Staff