

NEGRC TOURISM MARKETING AND PROMOTION GUIDE 2020

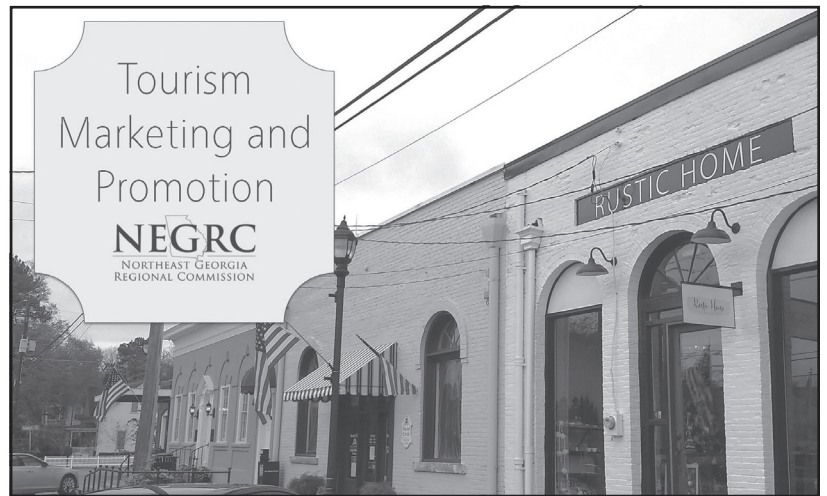
The NEGRC's Planning & Government Services Division (PGS) has developed a guide aimed at assisting local governments with establishing, improving, or expanding their tourism programs. ***The Tourism Marketing and Promotion Guide*** highlights best practices and provides additional resources available to communities in Georgia.

Tourism is a vital industry to the State of Georgia's economy. According to the **Georgia Department of Economic Development**, tourism generates \$63.1 billion in revenue annually and drives business growth through the promotion of unique and community-based experiences. Despite the prominent role of tourism in the state's economy, marketing local tourist attractions can present challenges to small governments due to staff-time and cost restraints. This guide introduces available services, support, and low-cost methods for tourism promotion in local communities. The guide also identifies key considerations for county and municipal governments in prioritizing local tourism initiatives or efforts.

The Northeast Georgia Regional Plan (2018) Work Program identifies a regional need to improve tourism promotion and marketing within Northeast Georgia. The NEGRC Tourism Marketing and Promotion Guide was developed in an effort to help address that need and promote economic-development opportunities throughout northeast Georgia.

The *Tourism Marketing and Promotion Guide* is available through our website, at <https://negrc.org/planning-government-services/community-economic-development/>.

The Tourism Guide is intended to serve as a tool and resource for local governments.



WALTON COUNTY RECEIVES MEALS ON WHEELS GRANT

Walton County's Senior Citizens' Council, a private, non-profit organization, has served home-delivered and congregate meals (at senior centers) to its clients since 1970. However, at no time has there been such a substantial increase in the need for these services until now. The COVID-19 pandemic has created social isolation and potential life-threatening illnesses for the vulnerable aging population.

At the beginning of the fiscal year in July 2019, Walton County served monthly meals through its three sites totaling approximately 2,400 congregate meals and 2,072 home-delivered meals. By comparison, the same sites provided 3,291 congregate and 2,614 home-delivered meals in the month of May 2020. Even with the dramatic increase in meals served, the waiting lists continue to grow. In an attempt to meet these growing needs and find funding to support them, **Vickie Gasaway**, Walton County's Executive Director for Senior Services, has sought and successfully received help for the county's seniors. One of the new funding sources she obtained was from the Meals on Wheels America Association. Walton County received \$25,000 from the first round of the COVID-19 Response Fund in which a total of seven grants totaling \$155,400 were awarded. Meals on Wheels America continues to live out their mission "to empower local community programs to improve the health and quality of life of the seniors they serve so that no one is left hungry or isolated." Gasaway said that, "This grant will enable us to further meet the nutritional needs of our seniors to whom we otherwise would not be able to serve."

For information about the NEGRC's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) services, contact **Peggy Jenkins** at (706) 369-5650 or email: pjenkins@negrc.org.

DOVE RECEIVES WHISMAN “VISION” AWARD

The Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) named **Jim Dove** to receive its 2020 “John D. Whisman Vision Award.” The award is presented annually to an individual who best supports intergovernmental cooperation through the ARC, state, and local-development district partnership.

Typically the award is presented annually at the March DDAA annual conference in Washington, DC but due to the COVID-19 pandemic this year’s conference was cancelled; postponing the award’s formal presentation. At the DDAA’s “virtual” business meeting in May, the award announcement was made by Jim Baldwin, Immediate Past President of the DDAA, and a long-time peer of Dove. On July, 16, 2020 the actual Whisman award was presented in-person to Dove by Heather Feldman, DDAA Secretary and Executive Director of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and Burke Walker, Georgia DDAA Board member and Executive Director of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission in Athens. The award presentation was made at the historic Jackson County Courthouse in Jefferson, a location that received ARC support in past years.

Dove retired as Executive Director of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission on June 28, 2020 after serving for over 30 years. During his tenure, he promoted the ARC program within northeast Georgia’s member ARC counties that include: Barrow, Elbert, Jackson, and Madison.

Dove also previously served as President of the DDAA in 2016 and as a long-time board member of the DDAA.

ARC is a state-federal partnership program that includes 13 states in Appalachia. In Georgia, there are 37 designated ARC counties spread across 5 Regional Commissions. ARC and its programs delivered through the Regional Commissions assist local governments and community efforts directed to economic opportunities, workforce development, critical infrastructure, natural & cultural assets, and leadership & community capacity. In 2019, ARC provided \$4.3 million in support to Georgia in these areas that resulted in \$11.6 million in leveraged private investments.



The Whisman Award was presented to Jim Dove (center) from Heather Feldman (left) and Burke Walker (far right) at the historic Jackson County Courthouse. Also pictured with Jim Dove is his daughter, Jamie Dove, who attended the presentation ceremony.

OH THE PLACES THEY MAY GO!

The NEGRC’s WorkSource Georgia staff enjoy following the accomplishments of program participants after they graduate from the WIA/WIOA programs. One shining example of a former participant is **Shaquira McGrath**. She recently appeared on *America’s Got Talent* show where she was voted by its judges to move on to the next level in the season. Shaquira started singing at the age of two and continues to perfect her musical talents.

Shaquira McGrath was a 2012 graduate of Clarke Central High School in Athens. While enrolled in high school, Shaquira was part of the WIA/ACTION High School Youth program for two years. A resident of Oglethorpe County, Shaquira was very involved with her community and was awarded the *B.J. Smith Community Servant Award/Scholarship* by the Northeast Georgia Workforce Development Board during her senior year. Shaquira went on to graduate from Kennesaw State University with a degree in psychology.

A clip of her *America’s Got Talent* performance is available for viewing on YouTube™ at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtKW7wyaJa4>. Good luck to Shaquira in the next level of competition and continued success!



Shaquira McGrath, a former participant in the NEGRC’s WIOA Youth Program and current contestant on *America’s Got Talent*.

For information about the NEGRC’s *WorkSource Georgia* programs, contact **Carol Cofer** at (706) 369-5650 or email: ccofer@negrc.org.

NEGRC CENSUS RESPONSE RATES ABOVE THE STATE’S, BUT . . .

Census 2020 is well underway and Census representatives are beginning on-the-ground efforts to help ensure a complete count. There is still time for residents to respond online (**2020census.gov**). Disasters like the COVID-19 pandemic emphasize the importance of our communities being properly counted to ensure we receive appropriate state and federal funding allocations. Currently, Census response rates in the region are among the highest in the state.* However, an estimated **40% of Northeast Georgia households still have not responded**.

Northeast Georgia’s Current 2020 Census Self-Response Rates by county (compared to 2010 Census response rate):

- Barrow: 67.1% (2010: 75%)
- Clarke: 56.0% (2010: 73%)
- Elbert: 54.7% (2010: 77%)
- Greene: 54.2% (2010: 68%)
- Jackson: 65.5% (2010: 76%)
- Jasper: 58.1% (2010: 77%)
- Madison: 58.9% (2010: 81%)
- Morgan: 58.5% (2010: 74%)
- Newton: 63.1% (2010: 75%)
- Oconee: 67.6% (2010: 82%)
- Oglethorpe: 57.3% (2010: 76%)
- Walton: 66.6% (2010: 77%)



Georgia: 57.9% | National Self-Response Rate: 62.1% | Regional Average: 60.6%

For questions about the 2020 Census or for information on available state and Census Bureau Complete Count resources, contact **Eva Kennedy**, NEGRC Director of Planning & Government Services, at ekennedy@negrc.org.

*Visit the Census 2020 Response Rates Map (at 2020census.gov/response-rates) for an up-to-date, closer look at response rates for your community.

NEGRC AWARDED EDA CARES ACT FUNDING



The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) will receive US Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant funding to support short- and long-range economic recovery and resilience efforts throughout the region over the next two years. The EDA's CARES Act Recovery Assistance program is intended to support Economic Development Districts' (EDDs) and Indian Tribes' efforts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and/or respond to economic injury as a result of coronavirus. The NEGRC's Recovery & Resilience initiative will begin with the development of a regional COVID-19 economic impact analysis, in partnership with the Georgia Tech Center for Economic Research. The impact analysis will serve as a foundation for a short- and long-range recovery and resilience plan that will complement the region's existing Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS, available here: <https://tinyurl.com/negrcceeds2017>).

NEGRC staff will be actively engaging public, private, and non-profit stakeholders throughout the region to identify key needs, recovery strategies, and techniques to build and improve resilience. NEGRC staff will continue to provide grant writing and other technical assistance to member, local governments throughout Northeast Georgia.

If you are interested in being involved in development of the Northeast Georgia COVID-19 Recovery & Resilience plan or would like to request assistance with a community or economic development project, contact **Eva Kennedy**, NEGRC Director of Planning & Government Services, at ekennedy@negrc.org.

NEGRC STAFF EARNS CERTIFICATION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, NEGRC staff were encouraged to pursue on-line professional, training opportunities in addition to their regular job responsibilities. **Kim Meadows**, NEGRC Workforce Development Division Manager, started pursuing the Certified Business Engagement Professional Certification through Business U, Inc. even before shelter-in-place and physical distancing mandates. During the remote-working period, Kim successfully completed the certification coursework and recently received her "Business Engagement Professional Certification."

Business U, Inc. commented on Kim's accomplishments in her certification letter that stated:

"It is our absolute pleasure to inform you that Kim Meadows has successfully completed Business U's accredited Certified Business Engagement Professional (CBEP) course. As you might have heard from Kim, this was not an "easy" accomplishment. It took a dedicated approach to the work that earned Kim her well-deserved certification and CBEP designation.

We would also like to take this opportunity to highlight some of Kim's accomplishments to achieve the learning outcomes for certification. For example, Kim mastered the course's foundational concepts such as how to use a transformational engagement approach to expand her reach to businesses as well as build long-term relationships with employers resulting in expanded opportunities for job seekers. During the final consultation, Kim further demonstrated a wide range of skills that she gained focused on delivering a compelling elevator pitch; providing business insight during a consult with an employer; using a needs assessment to identify an employer's key pain points; and tapping into a broader solutions portfolio to keep companies competitive.

Business U is honored to add Kim Meadows to its selective list of Certified Business Engagement graduates. Well done, Kim!"

Congratulations to Kim on obtaining this certification and advancing her skills to serve employers and job seekers in the NEGRC region.

Kim Meadows, NEGRC Workforce Development Division Manager





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REGIONAL MEETINGS AUGUST

6 th	10:00 a.m.	GARC Full Board Meeting	Macon, GA
11 th	8:30 a.m.	Workforce Development Board	Telephonic
20 th	11:00 a.m.	NEGRC Council Meeting	Location TBD

Please check the NEGRC website for the latest information concerning meetings in August or call the NEGRC at (706) 369-5650.