

2021-22 ARC LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS OFFERED

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is beginning its third year of providing its Appalachian Leadership Institute intended for current and emerging leaders in economic-development serving in Appalachia. The extensive nine-month training includes a curriculum that focuses on skill-building, best practice reviews, mentoring, and networking. The training is conducted over six sessions or seminars with each occurring over multiple days between October and July 2021-2022 and within Appalachia.

This program is competitive. It requires the submission of an application by candidates that is **due on May 1, 2021**. Based on the applications, approximately 40 Fellows are selected each year. Participating Fellows will learn how to:

- Design effective economic development project proposals
- Integrate community assets into long-lasting economic development strategies
- Identify resources available to spur economic development
- Locate and access investment capital from a variety of public and private sources
- Prepare competitive applications for public grant opportunities
- Use expanded leadership skills to create strong coalitions

ARC underwrites the costs of the training and travel. More information about the program is available at www.arc.gov/leadership. For additional information about ARC programs in Northeast Georgia, contact **Eva Kennedy**, NEGRC PGS Director, at ekennedy@negrc.org or (706) 369-5650.

"BE PRO BE PROUD" GEORGIA IN WALTON COUNTY

Representatives of Newton and Walton Counties toured the "Be Pro Be Proud" Georgia trailer last month. This 78-foot traveling trailer provides over 1000 feet of onboard interactive space with 12 highly interactive stations which utilize tools currently offered by companies across technical-career professions. The instructional lab provides a hands-on method to expose the future workforce, parents, teachers and other community members to the 15 types of careers including manufacturing, welding, and robotics available in their communities. In addition to interactive activities, information is also provided on the number of jobs in these high demand occupations as well as available training for the jobs. Representatives from the Newton and Walton Counties Economic Development Offices were in attendance, as well as Social Circle Mayor **David Keener**, TCSG Commissioner **Greg Dozier**, representatives from Georgia Piedmont Technical College and Athens Technical College, Social Circle City School representatives, and **Javier Montalvo**, NEGA Workforce Development Board member, as well as representatives from a number of local employers. **Carol Rayburn Cofer**, NEGRC Workforce Development Division Director, was also in attendance. Financial sponsorship of the "Be Pro Be Proud" initiative in Northeast Georgia was provided through WorkSource Northeast Georgia funds administered by the NEGRC.



For further information on this and other workforce development activities in the NEGRC, please contact **Carol Rayburn Cofer**, (706) 369-5703.

View of "Be Pro Be Proud" trailers that provide 12 instructional and interactive stations

THE FUTURE OF BROADBAND IN OGLETHORPE COUNTY

On July 30th, 2019, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs certified Oglethorpe County as a Broadband Ready Community. Oglethorpe was the first local government to be certified as such in the state. Since then, twelve other municipalities and counties have achieved

the certification, including Elbert County. The Broadband Ready certification is a part of a much larger development within the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative (GBDI), housed at the Department of Community Affairs. The purpose of the GBDI is to coordinate and establish broadband programs to increase economic, education, and social opportunities for Georgia citizens and businesses.

The state's broadband initiative works to prepare local governments for broadband development by way of incorporating broadband planning and preparatory measures into a local government's permitting process and comprehensive plan. As local governments position themselves for broadband development, the likelihood that their communities attract a broadband provider and receive federal or state funding for broadband projects increases.

In December of 2020, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released the auction results from Phase I of their **Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF)**: Oglethorpe County was among the 180 bidders that were awarded a total of \$9 billion in contracts for Phase I. RDOF is aimed at bridging the digital divide in the nation, working to bring high-speed, fixed broadband services to rural homes and small businesses. Oglethorpe County and two local broadband providers, Charter Communications and Windstream Services, will receive over \$3 million over the next 10 years to bring fixed broadband services to 1,194 locations in the county.

All of the winning bids have been marked with strict provisions as to infrastructure buildout timelines, service delivery requirements, and service cost provisions for consumers. The RDOF Phase I bid provisions can be read here: <https://www.fcc.gov/auction/904/factsheet#deployment>. Windstream and Charter have committed to bring fixed broadband services to Oglethorpe that exceed minimum requirements. Phase I results show that gigabit, low latency, fixed broadband is what both providers intend to bring to Oglethorpe (<https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/maps/rdof-phase-i-dec-2020/>).

We now look to Phase II of RDOF: of the \$16 billion set aside for RDOF, only \$9 billion was allocated to bidders during Phase I. At this time, \$4.4 billion is planned for award during Phase II, which will target locations in Census Blocks that are partially served, as well as locations not funded in Phase I. Announcements as to when the Phase II auction will begin are not known at this time.

For more information on Georgia's Broadband Ready program, contact **Eva Kennedy**, NEGRC Director of Planning & Government Services, at: ekennedy@negrc.org.

2021 LOCAL REDISTRICTING PROCESS & CENSUS DATA

At the February 2021 Northeast Georgia County Managers' meeting, Gina Wright, Executive Director of the Georgia Office of Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment, presented on the upcoming local redistricting process in Georgia. Ms. Wright covered how cities and counties will complete the redistricting process, and how they can request free State assistance. Redistricting is performed

every 10 years, following the decennial Census; redistricting is expected to begin in the fall of this year. **The webinar broadcast can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/NEGRC-2020Redistricting>.**

Due to the delayed Census 2020 data collection during the pandemic, the reapportionment and redistricting cycle will also be delayed. 2020 Census data for Georgia is expected to be released in the fall of 2021. The redistricting and reapportionment process will follow the release of the 2020 Census data.

Local governments often use in-house GIS staff to assist with the redistricting process; for those that require outside assistance, the State Reapportionment Office is offering technical assistance at no cost to local governments (upon request). The NEGRC is also available to assist (see contact info, below). **The first step in the redistricting process is for county governments (municipal governments should refer to their official charter for guidance) to request one of their state senators or representatives sponsor their map.** If the local government chooses not to use the Reapportionment Office for assistance, the map must still be submitted to the Office for technical review prior to local adoption. After certification of the map, the local body adopts the new map and notifies their sponsor that it is ready for legislative approval. The map is not considered official until the legislature and governor have passed and signed legislation approving the map. City Councils can redistrict under the principle of Home Rule, but all other local maps must be approved by the State. Cities should consult their charter to ensure compliance.

For questions about 2020 Census data or for NEGRC technical assistance with redistricting, contact **Jon McBrayer**, NEGRC GIS Specialist, at jmcbrayer@negrc.org.

COVID-19 VACCINATION EFFORTS IN NORTHEAST GEORGIA

Over the last couple of months, several agencies have been working together to ensure that those eligible—including the Senior Citizens—receive the COVID-19 vaccination. The Northeast Georgia Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Georgia Division of Aging Services (DAS), Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), Local Health Departments, Local Senior Centers, and other agencies have worked together to ensure the Senior Citizens of Northeast Georgia who desired to receive the COVID-19 vaccine are able to do so.

The Georgia Division of Aging Services, Georgia Department of Public Health, and Georgia's Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) held virtual meetings to determine how the agencies could work together to ensure that the Senior Citizens in Georgia received the COVID-19 vaccine. Issues such as being able to register online, long waits when calling in, and lack of transportation were discussed. The agencies came up with a plan that the Georgia Department of Public Health would reach out to the local public health to encourage partnerships with the local AAAs to ensure that the Senior Citizens receiving Older American Act services received the vaccine. Also, Coordinated Transportation was presented as an option to alleviate transportation concerns. Senior Citizens who do not have transportation can contact the local **AAA at 706-583-2546 ext. 206** or Senior Centers

for transportation to COVID-19 vaccination sites. The transportation can also be used to transport Public Health officials and others who will administer the vaccine.

The group also discussed the need to get the COVID-19 vaccination to homebound Senior Citizens and their caregivers. A homebound senior is someone that is unable to leave their home or would experience distress in doing so. The AAAs and/or its service providers contacted all homebound clients to determine if they had already received the COVID-19 vaccine, if they wish to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, if they are able to get to a vaccine site, and if there is a caregiver present. If the client reported that they were interested in the vaccine but were not able to get to a vaccination site, the AAA and/or services provider asked the client if they would like the vaccine brought to their home. If the client said "yes", the client was asked to give permission to share their contact information with public health so that public health could call and schedule an appointment for the vaccine to be brought to the home. The caregiver was also asked if they desired to receive the vaccination in the home. The AAA gathered this information and sent it to DPH to coordinate with the local health departments to schedule times to provide the vaccine in the homes of the homebound clients and caregivers who consented to in-home vaccination.

The group also discovered that there were various efforts and partnerships already going throughout the state of Georgia. In the Northeast Georgia Region, partnerships had been formed with local senior centers, local public health departments, EMS, Medlink of Georgia, Augusta University/UGA Medical Schools, local hospitals, and other primary care providers. These partnerships led to pop-up clinics throughout the region. The Senior Citizens of Northeast Georgia were assisted as needed with finding locations, scheduling appointments, and transporting seniors to appointments.

On the day of their appointments, the senior citizens were assisted as needed with completing the COVID-19 vaccine consent form and understanding other literature provided about the COVID-19 vaccine. The Northeast Georgia AAA and all of its partners are committed to removing any barriers that prevent any Senior Citizen, their caregivers, and others from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

If you or someone you know is still in need of the COVID-19 vaccine, please contact the **Northeast Georgia Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-474-7540** for further assistance.



Photos of senior citizens and caregivers receiving the COVID-19 vaccine at the pop-up clinic at Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA)

WINTERVILLE NAMED A TREE CITY OF THE WORLD AND CELEBRATES CHANDLER PARK

Winterville was recently named a "Tree City of the World" by the Arbor Day Foundation. This distinction makes Winterville the fourth city in Georgia to earn the title, joining Decatur, Macon and Sandy Springs. The Tree Cities of the World program was established by The Arbor Day Foundation and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States (FAO). This title was created to recognize cities around the world that are committed to developing and preserving their woodland areas. Winterville has recognized the significance and the many advantages of having trees within the community. These benefits include lower energy costs, stormwater management, and erosion control. Large trees along streets and in residential areas contribute to increased home values and faster sells. One large, healthy tree can create enough oxygen for eighteen people in a single day. It's possible that in a fifty-year span a tree can produce an estimated \$32,000 in oxygen and \$62,000 worth of air pollution control. The Tree Cities of the World program hopes to encourage cities to create more green spaces in their urban areas by recognizing the cities that are excelling at it. On February 20, 2021, Winterville Arbor Day was celebrated by the City of Winterville and the Winterville Tree Commission in cooperation with the Georgia Forestry Commission. At the ceremony Winterville Mayor **Dodd Ferrelle** read a proclamation, a tree was planted in Pittard Park, and tree seedlings were given away by the Georgia Forestry Commission. Congratulations to Winterville and Mayor Dodd Ferrelle!

On March 24, 2021, the City also celebrated a ground breaking for Chandler Park dedicated to George Chandler, the beloved Wintervillian. The commemorative park is adjacent to City Hall with construction expected to be completed in the fall. Winterville Councilmembers, Mayor **Kelly Girtz**, and many other officials attended the groundbreaking including **Burke Walker**, NEGRC Executive Director. A dedication is planned for the fall, after the park's completion.



Photos by Marigold Solutions

Top: Mayor Ferrelle (second from right), the Chandler family, and others breaking ground at Chandler Park



Left: Executive Director Walker (left) and Mayor Ferrelle (right) at the ground-breaking event



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Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS

APRIL

15th

11:00 a.m.

NEGRC Council Meeting

Telephonic