

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

As we close out this year, I'm proud of the many accomplishments the NEGRC and staff made over the last twelve months and across Northeast Georgia. We also owe considerable gratitude to our Councilmembers, agency partners, and others whom supported our organization and its operations throughout the year.

Like so many of our member local governments, our organization has maneuvered through this year's many challenges and unpredictable circumstances. One of the losses for our organization this year was the passing last month of our NEGRC Councilmember, **Mayor Rick Berry** of Lexington. Mayor Berry was a great community leader, successful local businessman in "Goodness Grows", and active member of the NEGRC Council and its Program-of-Work Committee. Our sympathies to Mayor Berry's family. We also will miss **Paul Chambers** of AT&T who announced his retirement last month. Paul is a true friend to our organization and someone whom served dutifully on our Workforce Development Board for many years. We wish him the best in retirement.

As we look to a new year, we will welcome several newly-elected officials from across our region. As we did earlier this year in March, the NEGRC will host a "Newly-elected Officials" orientation and training. This educational session is intended to familiarize the region's new leaders with our organization, its services, and how we can collaborate on both a local and regional level. We expect to hold this meeting early in 2022 with a "hold the date" announced in January. This two-hour training is also open to other, exiting local government officials and staff interested in learning new details about the NEGRC and its three programmatic divisions.

Finally, on behalf our NEGRC Chairperson **Bill Palmer** and our staff, I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

## DDAA BOARD HOLDS WINTER MEETING

The Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) held its annual winter board meeting on November 15-16 in Cookeville, Tennessee. This meeting included the elected board members from the 13-state Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) region with **Burke Walker**, NEGRC Executive Director representing Georgia. Also representing Georgia was **Heather Feldman**, Executive Director of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, who serves as the DDAA's Second Vice President. During the two-day meeting (in-person and virtual), the DDAA Board heard presentations from **Gayle Manchin**, ARC's Federal Co-Chair, **Karen Fabiano**, ARC Program Manager, and **Mirielle Burgoyne** of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO). **Brandon McBride**, ARC Executive Director, also presented information about the five-year extension and reauthorization of ARC by Congress through October 21, 2026.

As a business meeting, members also considered several items related to the annual budget, implementation of the DDAA's adopted Strategic Plan and its priorities, and planning for the annual conference. One of the primary items of interest that was discussed is the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA) legislation (visit: <https://www.naco.org/resources/legislative-analysis-counties-infrastructure-investment-jobs-act>) that offers enhancements to ARC's existing programs while also benefitting Local Development District (LDDs) (or Regional Commissions). The NEGRC serves four ARC counties in **Barrow, Elbert, Jackson, and Madison**.



Burke Walker, Karen Fabiano, and Heather Feldman (l-r)



DDAA Board of Directors at their winter meeting representing the 13 ARC states

## NORTHEAST GEORGIA CAREGIVERS CELEBRATED

November is designated as National Caregivers' Month. The Rosalyn Carter Institute (RCI) and the Northeast Georgia Care-Net celebrated caregivers across the state and in the NEGRC region. The local Care-Net received nominations for Family, Paraprofessional, and Volunteer Caregivers. A winner was selected in each category and sent to RCI as nominees for the State Wide Caregiver of the Year recognition.

Northeast Georgia Care-Net received four nominations for Family Caregiver. Vickie Gasaway was nominated for caring for her mother. Janice Knight was nominated for caring for her late husband and caring for the community as a whole. Lakesia Robinson was nominated for caring for her mother. Lastly, Lillian Ward was nominated for caring for her brother. **Janice Knight** was selected as Northeast Georgia Family Caregiver of the Year.

There were two nominations received for Paraprofessional Caregiver of the Year. First, D'Meke Colbert, Owner for Suitable for the People Health Services. Mr. Colbert is often providing direct care and identifying resources for the clients served by his organization. Secondly, **Katherine Weaver**, Social Services Director at Winder Health and Rehab was also nominated. Ms. Weaver is very professional, advocates for the residents, communicates well with community partners, and often follows up with a client after the client discharges from the nursing home. Ms. Weaver was selected as Northeast Georgia Paraprofessional Caregiver of the Year.

Ms. Weaver was also announced as RCI Paraprofessional Caregiver of the Year. Ms. Weaver was surprised on November 3, 2021 when announced as the state winner. Nursing Home Administrator, Katy Callaway worked with NEGRC Staff, RCI, and Senior Link to pull off the surprise celebration. Ms. Weaver received a certificate and letter signed by First Lady Rosalyn Carter. She also received a gift basket that included a check for \$1,000.00. NEGRC Executive Director, **Burke Walker**, presented Ms. Weaver with a trophy and certificate on the behalf of the local Care-Net.

The Northeast Georgia Care-Net serves the twelve counties of the Northeast Georgia region: Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Elbert, Greene, Jackson, Jasper, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe and Walton counties.

The mission of the Northeast Georgia Care-Net is to provide ongoing assessment of community resources, identify and remedy gaps in services, share information and resources among agencies, develop strategies for complementary professional and family caregiver activities, offer caregiver education and, most importantly, advocate for Caregivers.

Coalition members include leaders and advocates from community agencies, private corporations, churches, family caregivers, para-professional caregivers, and volunteer caregivers who provide ongoing information, assistance, counseling, training and support groups for caregivers throughout Northeast Georgia. There are no membership dues for individuals or organizations to join the Northeast Georgia Care-Net. If you are in need of resources or interested in becoming part of the Care-Net network, please contact the Caregiver Coordinator, **Toshia Lewis**, at 1-800-474-7540 ext. 103 or [tlewis@negrc.org](mailto:tlewis@negrc.org).

## 2021 NORTHEAST GEORGIA CAREGIVER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES AND WINNERS

### Family Caregiver Category



Vickie Gasaway



**Janice Knight\***  
Regional Family  
Caregiver of the  
Year



Lakesia Robinson



Lillian Ward

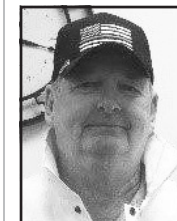
### Paraprofessional Caregiver Category



D'Meke Colbert



**Katherine Weaver\***  
State and Regional  
Caregiver of the Year



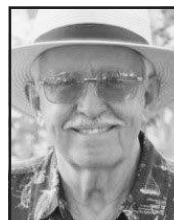
Bob Welsh



**Marie Glenn\***

### Volunteer Caregiver Category

### Regional Volunteer Caregiver of the Year



Jim Stephens

### \*\*\*State and Regional Winner\*\*\*

### RCI Caregiver of the Year Pop-up Celebration for State Winner Katherine Weaver





## FOOTHILLS/NEGRC BARROW GRADUATION

CONGRATULATIONS to the recent graduates of the Foothills/WorkSource Northeast Georgia WeldReady course that was held at the Foothills Barrow County Campus. This collaboration was between Foothills Charter Education High School, the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission/WorkSource Georgia and Workforce Innovators, Inc. The training provided 10 weeks of instruction in welding and related employment preparation. The November graduates received certification in OSHA 10, Lean Six-Sigma White Belt, CPR, First Aid, AED, Basic Forklift Operation and American Welding Society (AWS Certification). Funding is provided through Foothills Charter Education High School and WorkSource Northeast Georgia. For information on this training and other training offered under the oversight of the Northeast Georgia Workforce Development Board, contact the NEGRC's Workforce Development Division at **(706) 369-5703**.



## CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON THE REHABILITATION OF ELBERTON'S HISTORIC BAILEY BUILDING

The **City of Elberton** received \$750,000 in funds from the Community Development Block Grant Redevelopment Fund in 2020 for the stabilization and rehabilitation of the 6,500 square foot John P. Bailey Building, located on the town square. It is believed to be the oldest surviving structure located in downtown Elberton. Although the exact date of construction is unknown, the first floor of the structure is estimated to have been built around the 1840's. At some point between then and 1885, a second story was added to the building. In the 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps the "Masonic Hall" is listed as occupying the second floor, while two general merchandise stores occupied the first floor.

The building had fallen into disrepair in recent decades and was purchased by the City of Elberton's Downtown Development Authority in 2018. Construction began on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and is expected to last until mid-summer 2022. Once completed, the building will be structurally sound and rehabilitated to offer two new commercial spaces for downtown Elberton; apartments will be added to the second floor in a later phase of construction.



*Elberton's historic Bailey building*

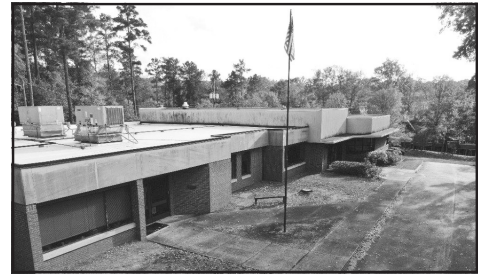
The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC), the City of Elberton, and Carter Watkins Associates Architects, Inc. have collaborated in developing, submitting, and administering the grant. Specifically, NEGRC staff assisting with the project are **Mark Beatty, Senior Community Planner**, and **Lydia Joffray, Historic Preservation Planner**. This collaborative effort will introduce opportunities for new businesses and positions for low- to moderate-income residents in Elberton and aligns with the NEGRC's strategic goals to identify and pursue opportunities to attract businesses or industries.

## NEGRC PGS DRONE ANNOUNCEMENT

In August, the NEGRC's Planning and Government Services (PGS) Division acquired a drone to assist with projects. The DJI Mavic Pro offers a perfect balance between ease-of-flight and professional imagery. The drone will assist staff members with documenting changes of land use, surveying and documenting construction projects funded by federal and state grants, increasing our Geographical Information Systems (GIS) capabilities, and improving the quality of images used in documents.

As of now, our staff is not using the drone for commercial purposes. Two staff members are certified to fly the drone under a recreational provision, but the NEGRC hopes to have multiple staff members certified to fly the drone for commercial purposes by Spring 2022. Once our staff is certified, we will be able to use the drone to improve the services we continue to offer to local governments. Any questions about applicable drone uses through the NEGRC should be directed to **Jon McBrayer, NEGRC GIS Planner**, by email at [jmcbayer@negrc.org](mailto:jmcbayer@negrc.org) or via phone at **706-369-5650**.

*An image of NEGRC's offices taken with the new drone*



## CONSTRUCTION NEARS ON NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN COVINGTON

In 2020, the **Housing Authority of the City of Covington** received \$600,000 in funds from the Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP) for the construction of five new single-family homes. These homes will be offered to low- to moderate-income residents whose income qualifies under local thresholds set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Interested homebuyers will be required to complete a screening process administered by the Housing Authority and must live in the homes for at least five-years. Construction of these homes is expected to begin in early-December 2021 and will take approximately one year to complete.

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) and the Housing Authority of the City of Covington have collaborated in submitting and administering the grant, while Brad Construction Company II is offering design and build services. NEGRC staff assisting with the project are **Mark Beatty, Senior Community Planner**, and **Stuart Swinea, Project Specialist**. This project will benefit the City of Covington by facilitating urban infill and creating housing for low- to moderate-income residents for years to come.



305 Research Drive  
Athens, GA 30605

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

*Update*

**REGIONAL MEETINGS**  
**DECEMBER**

23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>

All Day

Closed for Christmas

31<sup>st</sup>

All Day

Closed for New Year's

