

NEGRC PRESENTS ANNUAL AWARDS

Each year, the NEGRC's Council and its Awards Committee, presents two awards: the "**Local Government Administrator of the Year**" and the "**Robert L. and Betty Williford Distinguished Northeast Georgian**" awards. These two awards were presented at the May 19th NEGRC Council meeting.

The award recipients were selected by an appointed NEGRC Awards Committee including Councilmembers John **Daniell** (Chairman), **Dodd Ferrelle**, and **Terry Lawler**. This year's recipient of the "Local Government Administrator of the Year" is **Jean Spratlin**, Athens-Clarke County Clerk.

In presenting the award, **Burke Walker** NEGRC Executive Director, said "This award, created in 1994, recognizes exemplary service to a local government within the Northeast Georgia region." Jean Spratlin is noted for her service to a local government for 48 years, with 38 of those years as a city and county clerk. She has served 10 mayors and many council members and county commissioners dating from 1974. During her tenure, she also transitioned from the City of Athens to the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County in the clerk position. **Mayor Kelly Girtz** formally presented the NEGRC's award plaque to Ms. Spratlin during the NEGRC's meeting.

The award recognizes an individual who serves as a model for professionalism, leadership and integrity from the area's twelve county and fifty-four city member local governments.



Jean Spratlin (right) receiving NEGRC's "Local Government Administrator of the Year" award from Mayor Kelly Girtz.



Mayor Girtz and Jean Spratlin at the NEGRC meeting.

The second award was presented by **Chairman John Daniell** to **Barbara and Bill Cabaniss** of Oglethorpe County. The award is presented annually to an individual who supports regional cooperation and contributed to the advancement and quality-of-life of the region. Chairman Daniell noted, "This year's award is unique; it is presented to two recipients. Both of these individuals embody the spirit and dedication to their community envisioned in the award."

The Cabanisses have served in many leadership positions including Rotary of Oglethorpe County, Commercial Bank, Athens Technical College Board, Economic Development Authority, Regional and Local Library Boards, Board of Education and two terms as a Town of Maxeys City Councilmember. Through these efforts, and others, they have made a lasting impact on their native home of Oglethorpe County and northeast Georgia in the areas of regional infrastructure, education, and tourism & recreation.

The award is named after the Willifords who themselves were strong advocates and supporters of the NEGRC and state and regional partnerships. They lived in Elberton, Georgia where Mr. Williford was a newspaper publisher and influential in the development of the Richard B. Russell Dam. Mrs. Williford, a graduate of Vanderbilt University and the University of Georgia, devoted most of her life to literacy and as an educator. Their daughter, **Nancy Stangle**, continues their legacy by participating each year in the awards and candidate nominations.

Congratulations to this year's awardees!



NEGRC Awards Committee Chairman Daniell, Barbara, and Bill Cabaniss (L-R) after receiving the "Robert L. and Betty Williford Distinguished Northeast Georgian Award."



Bill Cabaniss addressing the NEGRC Council with Barbara Cabaniss (right).

GOVERNOR KEMP SIGNS CAREGIVERS ACT INTO LAW

Georgia's Council on Aging (GCOA) Coalition of Advocates for Georgia's Elderly (CO-AGE) identified the Georgia Caregivers Act as one of the most pressing issues for older Georgians across the state. Throughout the 2022 legislative session, GCOA, CO-AGE which includes the Georgia Association of Area Agency on Aging (G4A), AARP and the Georgia Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, worked closely with advocacy partners and legislators particularly Representative Lee Hawkins of District 27 who advocated for the Georgia Caregivers Act

Bill. This Bill was sponsored by Rep. Hawkins, Rep. Mack Jackson, Rep. Sharon Cooper, Rep. Katie Dempsey, Rep. Houston Gains, Rep. Rick Jasperse and Sen. Dean Burk are also commended for their support.

The Georgia Council on Aging and the G4A are pleased to announce that on May 4, 2022, Governor Brian Kemp signed the Georgia Caregivers Act, House Bill 1304, into law. This law requires hospitals to provide patients with the opportunity to identify lay caregivers to provide aftercare once they are discharged. Identified lay caregivers are then educated by hospital staff on how to properly care for their loved one. Right then and there, the caregiver can decide if they can handle the aftercare or if other arrangements need to be made.

The Care Act is already in effect in 40 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. According to the National Alliance for Caregivers and AARP, approximately 39 million individuals (over 16% of Americans) serve as a caregiver or care partner for an adult. Family caregivers are sometimes expected to perform increasingly complex medical and nursing tasks and often feel ill prepared to take on this important role. The Georgia Caregivers Act provides specific guidance for ensuring that family caregivers are guaranteed a proactive role, along with hospital staff, in providing the best home care for their loved ones.

The official press release from the Governor's Office can be read at the following website <https://gov.georgia.gov/press-releases/2022-05-06/gov-kemp-signs-legislation-healthier-georgia>.

JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL CAREER FAIR

As the Jefferson Middle School Connections teachers were planning for a meaningful way to help their middle school students absorb career development information, they realized that middle school students learn best by hands-on immersion. With that awareness, the Jefferson Middle School Connections teachers organized a career fair highlighting various local industries. This career fair was held on May 16th. Approximately 1,000, sixth, seventh and eighth grade students and their teachers participated.

A crowd favorite was the *Manufacturing Technology Mobile Industrial Maintenance Lab* provided through WorkSource Northeast Georgia with demonstrations led by Workforce Innovators, Inc. Students were exposed to a variety of stations that teach critical skills such as engineering and welding. Mrs. Mulvey, a teacher at the Middle School shared, "students that never understood about welding and therefore never considered welding as a career before were really excited to see that as a possibility". A seventh grade student had an opportunity to experience welding using the simulator. Her teacher, Mrs. Thompson, selected her to participate in the activity, as she shared that as long as she had known this student, she had always expressed an interest in becoming a welder. She recalled how her student's face lit up when she volunteered her for the simulator. The student said "I was so excited I was just shaking that I couldn't believe I got to try it! I want to tell everyone about this!" The administration was very grateful for the opportunity for the lab to be available for students

to experience, noting these opportunities are what brings the future to life for students and propels them into exploring careers further in high school. Holly McShane, Academic & Career Plan Coordinator for the Jefferson City Schools, shared that these experiences are a catalyst for students to enroll in high school pathways and dual enrollment programs in high school to earn industry credentials and be work force ready upon graduation.

For information on the welding and industrial mechanical trailers and other training available through the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's WorkSource (WIOA) programming, please contact the **NEGRC's Workforce Development Division at (706) 369-5703.**



Jefferson Middle School students pictured in front of the Manufacturing Technology Mobile Industrial Maintenance Lab.

GEORGIA GEOSPATIAL ASSOCIATION (GGA) FLIGHT DAY

On May 17th, NEGRC GIS Manager, Jon McBrayer, attended a Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) flight day hosted by the Georgia Geospatial Association in Marietta, Georgia. The seminar had presenters from Marietta GIS who facilitated discussion about drone safety, updated rules and regulations, implementing local government drone programs, and sUAS mapping software. After the seminar, the attendees took to the sky and flew several different types

of drones in a controlled area. Does your local government have an interest in drones or implementing a sUAS program? Contact **Jon McBrayer, NEGRC GIS Manager, at jmcbrayer@negrc.org or by phone at (706) 369-5650.**



GEORGIA OUTDOOR TRAILS AND RECREATION SUMMIT 2022

On May 14-16 the Trust for Public Land hosted the first Georgia Outdoor Trails and Recreation Summit since 2019. The Summit focused on best-management practices for biking, hiking, kayaking, and walking trails and economic development that is associated with these types of initiatives in Georgia. One of the main resources shared by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was

the recently completed Georgia Plan for Outdoor Recreation (SCORP) 2022-2026. This document can be accessed on Georgia DNR's website: <https://gastateparks.org/SCORP>.

NEGRC staff attended several sessions to learn about initiatives and funding opportunities from state and local levels. If you would like to learn more about lessons learned and upcoming funding opportunities for recreational facilities, please contact **Mark Beatty, PGS Director, at mbeatty@negrc.org or (706) 369-5650.**



NEGRC'S NEW PHONE SYSTEM INSTALLED

Last month, a new RingCentral™ phone system was installed at the NEGRC headquarters by Business Telephone Systems of Athens. The direct, cloud-based system replaces a much older phone system and incorporates many new features for improved customer service. One feature is that *all* staff now have direct-line numbers so callers can avoid delays in transferring from the receptionist. The system also allows for remote access to calls via computer, laptop/tablet, or smartphone.

For callers that prefer to reach a receptionist and or Administration, that option remains available by calling either (706) 369-5650 (as in the past) or directly to **Amber Bailey** at (706) 395-8951 or **Julie Ball** at (706) 364-3875.



New phones during preparations for installation at the NEGRC by Business Telephone Systems of Athens.



305 Research Drive
Athens, GA 30605

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Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS
JUNE

16th

Noon

NEGRC Council Meeting

Trumps Catering