

OCONEE COUNTY COMPLETES SENIOR CENTER EXPANSION

On September 7th, NEGRC staff participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the expansion of the Oconee County Senior Center. Approximately 2,500 square feet of space was added to the Senior Center, including improved restrooms and space for exercise, education, art, and community gatherings. This project originated from a need to alleviate the overcrowding of the Senior Center and the lack of space for programming. Oconee County was estimated to have the 7th highest 65-and-older population growth projection in Georgia and estimated to be the 5th fastest growing county in the state. With an expected 18% of Oconee's population 65+ by 2022, it was essential for the County to focus on building the programs and infrastructure necessary to support its senior residents.

This project was funded by Oconee County and through a \$750,000 grant through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The CDBG grant was awarded in 2020. Mark Beatty, NEGRC Director of Planning & Government Services, assisted with the project. If you would like to learn more about funding opportunities through the CDBG program, please contact **Mark Beatty** at mbeatty@negrc.org or (706) 369-5650.



Senior Center Director, Merry Howard (center-right), and Oconee County Commissioner, Amrey Harden (center-left), cut the ribbon signifying the grand opening of the newly expanded Senior Center. Project partners included in the ribbon cutting include Carter Watkins Associates, Bayne Development, Oconee County Board of Commissioners Thomas, Horton and Saxon and the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission.



A new exercise room will provide space for group activities such as pilates, yoga, calisthenics, and other physical health programs.

REGIONAL PLAN UPDATE SCHEDULE

The NEGRC's Planning and Government Services Division (PGS) has begun the process of updating the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan. This document is required to be updated every five years and follows the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning (Chapter 110-12-6). The NEGRC uses this document to guide our efforts of regional service as they relate to planning topics supported by our annual DCA contract. The plan will identify both short- and long-term strategies with the goal to enhance the region's prosperity and competitiveness, improve the quality-of-life for all residents, and establish a framework for regional coordination and cooperation.

The process was started with a regional hearing on September 9th at the NEGRC headquarters. There will be several opportunities to participate and provide input for the plan, including an online survey which has been shared with all local government chief-elected officials and select staff. Additionally, there will be three input meetings on the following dates:

1. **October 25, 2022** at 2:00 p.m. | Bobby Snipes Water Resource Center, 780 Barber St, **Athens**, GA 30601
2. **November 15, 2022** at 2:00 p.m. | City of Monroe City Hall, 215 N. Broad Street. **Monroe**, GA 30655
3. **December 6, 2022** at 2:00 p.m. | City of Greensboro Festival Hall, 201 N Main St, **Greensboro**, GA 30642

For questions regarding the Regional Plan update, please contact Mark Beatty, NEGRC Director of Planning & Government Services (PGS), at mbeatty@negrc.org or (706) 369-5650.

GEORGIA ANNEXATION LAW AMENDMENT

The Georgia General Assembly's HB1385 became effective on July 1, 2022. This law governs how annexation (and de-annexation) of the territory is documented and recorded with the State. HB1385 requires municipalities that have (de)annexed territory to file a report identifying any property annexed with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office of the General Assembly, and the appropriate county-level government. The requirement to file with the Reapportionment office is new. As a component of this report, the municipality must include a digital shapefile (i.e., a GIS file) of the (de)annexed area. This data is also a new requirement.

To assist local governments in meeting the requirement to provide a GIS file when (de)annexing territory, the law now also requires Georgia's Regional Commissions to assist any municipality in producing the required file if the local government, itself, lacks the ability to complete that task on its own.

Please be aware that, as a result of this new legislation, the statute now provides that no annexed area shall be added to the state map until such report has been properly submitted to the Department of Community Affairs and the Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office of the General Assembly.

To file your annexation report with DCA, you must use the web-based, password-protected reporting system (<http://apps.dca.ga.gov/annexations/>). Note that faxed and mailed (de)annexation reports are no longer being accepted. Failure to properly report annexations and de-annexations will prevent the territory from being moved in both state and federal records—this could impact the collection and distribution of tax dollars, delineation of electoral districts, legal authorization to conduct local government services in the affected territory, and a variety of other important functions.

Any local government that has attempted to file an annexation report since July 1, 2022 without the required GIS file, notice to the Reapportionment Office, and/or other necessary materials should understand that no such filing is considered complete and valid until these requirements have been met. If you need assistance, please reach out via the email addresses below or directly to the NEGRC Planning and Government Services Division.

For assistance filing annexation materials with DCA (including issues related to your password), please email GIS@DCA.GA.GOV.

For assistance filing annexation materials with the Reapportionment Office, please email ANNEXATIONS@LEGIS.GA.GOV.

For assistance producing the required GIS file(s), please contact Jon McBrayer, NEGRC GIS Planner, at jmcbayer@negrc.org or (706) 369-5650.

For more information on this topic, please visit DCA's annexation webpage at: <http://www.georgiaplanning.com/annex.htm>.

"ESSENTIAL" RECORDS WEBINAR OFFERED FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The **Georgia Department of Archives** will offer a one-day webinar on "Preparedness for Essential Records" scheduled for **Oct**

11th from 9am-4pm. It is available to local government officials and staff that oversee governmental records and their retention. County/city managers, county/city clerks, and administrative staff are the intended audience for the training.

Local government records, documents, and materials are potentially susceptible to natural and man-made disasters. Disasters that can potentially damage records and their repositories are best protected by prior planning. Guidance and procedures will be covered in-depth during this webinar.

The Georgia Department of Archives assists local governments in the management of existing records through technical information and workshops. The agency is part of the University System of Georgia and also serves as a repository for records and documents.

To register for the webinar, visit the Georgia Department of Archives website at: www.georgiaarchives.org.

AUBURN BREAKS GROUND ON WATER TREATMENT FACILITY AND RESERVOIR

The City of Auburn held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new water-treatment facility on September 15th. The project seeks to improve Auburn's water quality and supply by implementing a regional water supply program in partnership with the City of Winder which will provide 1.59 million gallons per day (MGD) of reliable and safe drinking water to both cities' water systems.

The project will alleviate the impacts of COVID-19 and provide resilience to future pandemics and public health emergencies. COVID-19 impacts on the City of Auburn and associated problems of COVID-19 included: 1) inadequate water supply during public health crisis due to water demand increase from quarantine and enhanced cleaning demand; 2) reliance on other water suppliers to provide safe and reliable drinking water; 3) risk for professional licensed operating staff shortage during an outbreak for the region; and 4) lack of businesses in the city, lack of a diversified workforce, and lack of workforce with essential critical infrastructure jobs. The City of Auburn was awarded \$3,242,500 from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget through the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds in order to fill the gap in funding of this critical infrastructure for the city and the region. The NEGRC Planning and Government Services (PGS) staff assisted the city with grant preparation and submission. For information on grant writing assistance, contact **Mark Beatty**, NEGRC Director of Planning & Government Services.



Top: Groundbreaking ceremony with Mayor Blechinger (center) with other City officials and staff.

Right: Mayor Linda Blechinger provided remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony.

MAXEYS HISTORIC DISTRICT LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The City of Maxeys Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service on September 2, 2022. The designation recognizes the agricultural community that developed because of the Athens Branch of the Georgia Railroad line, laid between Union Point and Athens in the 1840s. Maxeys became a thriving town with a variety of stores, offices, residences, warehouses, schools, and churches. While the rail line through the community is no longer active, the historic commercial buildings and residential areas are still present. The establishment of the A.T. Brightwell Scholarship in 1962 is largely responsible for the renewed prosperity of the town.

The Maxeys Historic District is also considered significant in the area of architecture for its collections of historic buildings dating from the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries. Community landmarks that are representative of the city's historic nature and included in the National Register District are the Maxeys Depot (1840), the A.J. Gillen Department Store (1907), Green Acres Dairy (1840), Maxeys Christian Church (1894), and Harmonia Baptist Church (1960).

The National Register recognition is the culmination of over a decade of hard work from numerous community members, including the Maxeys Historic Interest Group. Included in this group were **Barbara** and **Bill Cabaniss** of Maxeys, whom were recipients of the NEGRC's 2022 "Distinguished Northeast Georgian award" presented at its May 19, 2022 Council meeting. The NEGRC's Historic Preservation Planner, **Lydia Joffray**, assisted the Maxeys Historic Interest Group with the nomination. More information about the district can be found on the National Register online database under identification code SG100008047.

For assistance with Historic Preservation Planning, contact **Lydia Joffray**, NEGRC Historic Preservation Planner, at ljoffray@negrc.org or (706) 369-5650.



The Green Acres Dairy house (c. 1840) is located at the north edge of the new National Register District, straddling the city limits. While the dairy and the historic house are now owned separately, the dairy is still operational.

PARTNERING TO OFFER TRAINING IN ELBERTON WITH PILGRIM'S PRIDE POULTRY

The NEGRC's Workforce Development Division partnered with Pilgrim's Pride Poultry in Elberton to provide an electrical training event for 15 Pilgrim's Pride employees to assist them in upskilling in

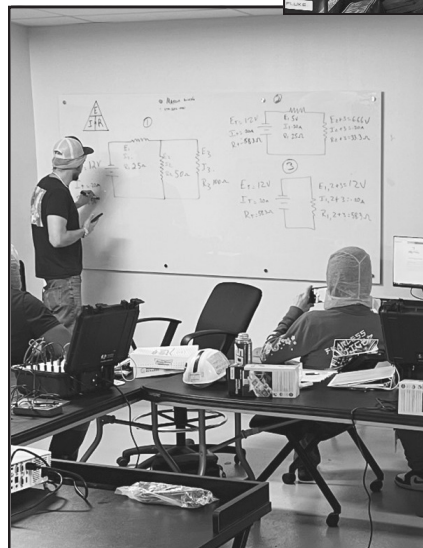
the electrical, motor, and PLC content areas. The Electrical training consisted of arc flash, lockout tag out, fluke meter testing, ohms law, schematic reading, motor controls, and plc troubleshooting. Team members received hands-on lab training provided by Workforce Innovators, Inc. utilizing trainer Randy Cook, a certified master electrician and instructor for the Smithsonian Institute. "This training has helped team members develop real-world troubleshooting techniques and skills they can carry with them throughout their careers," says Marcus Winston, Pilgrim's Training Superintendent.

Training was provided through a U.S. Dept. of Labor's ARC/WORC grant received by the NEGRC's WorkSource Northeast Georgia to provide workforce development activities in the **Appalachian Regional Commission** (ARC) counties of Barrow, Elbert, Madison, and Jackson.

The NEGRC also serves as a Local Development District (LDD) in partnership with ARC and its four-member counties. Workforce training, in fact, is an investment priority for ARC and their grants "invest in both sides of Appalachia's workforce ecosystem – the education and training needed to get Appalachians on the job, and the support services to help them remain on financially sustaining career pathways and contributing to the Region's growth." To learn more about ARC's Workforce priorities and impacts on investment visit: www.arc.gov and, for investment strategies, <https://www.arc.gov/investment-priority/building-appalachias-workforce-ecosystem>.

For information on this or other workforce development services available through the NEGRC Workforce Development Division's WorkSource Northeast Georgia funding and programming, please contact NEGRC Workforce Development Division at (706) 369-5703.

William Servin, William Wideman, and Jacob Foy during the training.



Emory Mabry (at board) participating in training exercises in Elberton.



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Athens, GA 30605

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Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS
OCTOBER

11 th	8:30 a.m.	Workforce Development Board	NEGRC
20 th	Noon	NEGRC Council Meeting	Trumps Catering
25 th	2:00 p.m.	Regional Plan Hearing	Athens
27 th	10:00 a.m.	County & City Managers Meeting	Winder