

COMMISSIONER ANDY AINSLIE RECOGNIZED BY NEGRC COUNCIL

On November 17th, Morgan County Commissioner **Andy Ainslie** attended his final NEGRC Council meeting as an active Council member. Commissioner Ainslie has led a long and successful professional career in public service, including a career as a high school principal and school-system administrator. He has continued to be very active in the community, serving on various boards in local government and the agricultural community. His public service also includes serving 16 consecutive years on the Morgan County Board of Commissioners and 12 years as a NEGRC Councilmember. He served as Chairperson for the NEGRC's Nominating Committee and as Chairperson of the Planning & Government Services Committee for the past three years. Also for the past three years, he served as the NEGRC's Policy member for the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC), attending its bi-monthly Policy meetings.

Commissioner Ainslie leaves public office at the end of this month. The NEGRC appreciates his dedicated service and wish him the best in retirement.



NEGRC Council Chairman Bill Palmer (left) presenting a plaque to Commissioner Andy Ainslie in recognition of the long tenure with the NEGRC and contributions to Northeast Georgia.



Commissioner Ainslie (left) and NEGRC Council Chairman Bill Palmer (right).

GEORGIA SHIP PROVIDES ASSISTANCE DURING OPEN ENROLLMENT

Medicare Open Enrollment runs from Saturday, October 15, 2022, through Wednesday, December 7, 2022. During this time, adults aged 65 and older and qualified people with disabilities under age 65 can review their coverage options and make a choice that meets their health care needs.

Georgia SHIP, formerly known as GeorgiaCares, is a volunteer-based program that provides free unbiased information and assistance regarding Medicare and other related health insurance. The Georgia State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) is available all year, but especially during open enrollment, to help Medicare beneficiaries compare coverage options to ensure they are getting the best coverage that fits their needs and budget. Georgia SHIP-trained counselors offer free help to those on Medicare who are 65 or older, and to qualified people with disabilities under 65, so they do not have to pay someone to help them understand their benefits.

Georgia SHIP provides personalized counseling, education, and outreach to assist Medicare beneficiaries and answer questions about: Original Medicare, Medicare Health and Drug Plans, Medicare Supplemental Insurance, and financial assistance programs.

During open enrollment, people are usually inundated with mailings and phone calls. With information coming from so many sources, it can be difficult for Georgians to gather the facts needed to make an informed decision on which plan is right for them. Georgia SHIP certified Medicare Counselors will eliminate the guesswork through free, unbiased consultations. In the twelve-county planning and service area of the NEGRC, the Area Agency on Aging contracts with the Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA) to administer the Georgia SHIP program.

For more information, visit **ACCA at 135 Hoyt Street, Athens, GA 30601** or via telephone at **(706) 548-4556** or toll free at **1-866-552-4464** and ask for the Georgia SHIP program. A certified Medicare Counselor will help with prescription drug plan premiums, Medicare premiums, deductibles, and co-insurance, as well as co-pays for medication(s).

ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY AWARDED \$8.9 MILLION IN CDBG-CV FUNDS

The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACC) has partnered with the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia (FBNEG) to relocate and expand their facilities on Newton Bridge Road. On October 21st, Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner, Christopher Nunn, presented ACC and the FBNEG with a check representing the \$8.9 million the state has granted through Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds. The grant will cover approximately half of the \$17.3 million project. The project will allow the FBNEG to expand from 38,000 square feet to approximately 62,000 square feet to further assist their service capacity across a 14-county area in northeast Georgia. For questions regarding the CDBG funding program, please contact **Mark Beatty**, PGS Director, at **mbeatty@negrc.org** or **(706) 369-5650**.



Georgia Department of Community Affairs Commissioner, Christopher Nunn (left), discusses the importance of food systems and the Department's historic funding opportunity to support Food Banks across the state with Food Bank of Northeast Georgia Executive Director, Erin Barger.



Project partners and elected officials gather to accept a check awarded to the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County in the amount of \$8,895,322.

PLANNING AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES DIVISION HOST INAUGURAL CITY-COUNTY MANAGER MEETING

On October 27th, the Planning and Government Services Division hosted its inaugural City-County Managers' Meeting at the Wimberly Center in Winder, Georgia in collaboration with the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA). Ms. Becky Taylor, GMA Director of Federal Relations and Research, presented on federal-funding opportunities for local governments, and led a discussion about challenges local governments face when applying for federal funding. The input from the discussion will be used to draft testimony to reform the federal grants process for small to mid-sized cities. The meeting was established to give city and county managers a platform to discuss regional issues and share knowledge with one another. The NEGRC is committed to supporting our city and county managers and we appreciate all that they do for the communities across Northeast Georgia. For questions about the City-County Manager meeting, please contact **Mark Beatty**, PGS Director, at **mbeatty@negrc.org** or **(706) 369-5650**.



City and County Managers, NEGRC Staff, GMA Staff, and sponsors WGI and Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC).

NORTHEAST GEORGIA CAREGIVERS CELEBRATED

November is designated as National Caregiver Month. The Rosalyn Carter Institute (RCI) and the Northeast Georgia Care-Net celebrated caregivers across the state and in the 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 Statewide Caregiver of the Year recognition.

Northeast Georgia Care-Net celebrated and honored all nominees on November 11, 2022 during a virtual celebration. The NEGRC's Transportation Manager, **Charles Palmer**, was among the caregivers honored and celebrated. Mr. Palmer is a long-distance caregiver for his mother in Florida. Mr. Palmer has driven back and forth to Florida to support his mother through a recent illness. He attends medical appointments, ensures she still has access to quality-of-life activities, and has formed a care-team to support his mother in his absence. Mr. Palmer was announced as the Northeast Georgia Regional Caregiver of the Year during the virtual celebration.

On November 15, 2022, a surprise celebration was held at the NEGRC in which Charles Palmer was announced as the RCI State Family Caregiver of the Year. NEGRC Staff and RCI staff worked together to pull off the surprise celebration. Mr. Palmer received a certificate and letter signed by First Lady Rosalyn Carter. He also received a gift basket and a check for \$1,000.00. Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Executive Director, Burke Walker, presented Charles Palmer with a trophy and certificate on behalf of the local Care-Net.



Top: Family Caregiver of the Year, Charles Palmer and NEGRC Executive Director, Burke Walker

Left: The Rosalyn Carter Institute's Dr. Jennifer Olsen and Carrie Harris with Family Caregiver of the Year, Charles Palmer

NORTHEAST GEORGIA SENIOR HUNGER COALITION PARTNERS WITH HUMANA MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

The Northeast Georgia Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Senior Hunger Coalition recently partnered with Humana Medicare Advantage to host farmers' markets in Jasper and Barrow Counties on November 15 and 16, 2022. Humana sponsored the farmers' markets and provided participants with information on Medicare Open Enrollment. The Garden Market Farmers of Washington, Georgia supplied the produce, as a local grower.

The farmers' markets supplied access to locally grown fruit and vegetables to 100 senior citizens to supplement the produce needed for their Thanksgiving meals. These seniors were surveyed and reported limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables and often only eat fruit and vegetables offered through the Congregate and Home Delivered meals programs.

The Northeast Georgia Senior Hunger Coalition was formed in 2018 as part of the Georgia's State Plan and broader efforts to end senior hunger. Georgia's State Plan addresses senior hunger in the five focus areas: Today's Seniors, Impact of Senior Hunger on Health, Food Access, Food Waste and Reclamation, and Meeting the Needs of the Community.

The Northeast Georgia Senior Hunger Coalition realizes that all focus areas are important, but its focus area has been **Food Access** in Oglethorpe, Madison, and Elbert Counties due to the counties having a large radius and areas of food deserts. This year, the radius expanded to Jasper and Barrow Counties. The senior hunger coalition has produced literature to educate the community on senior hunger and to provide resources to aid clients with accessing food.

For those interested in assistance for seniors in need nutritional support, please contact the Senior Hunger Coalition through the **Aging and Disability Resource Connection** at **1-888-808-8020** or contact a local senior center.



We wish all of you a safe and happy Holiday Season!

NEGRC Council and Staff





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Athens, GA 30605

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Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS
DECEMBER

23rd & 26th

All Day

Closed for Christmas Holiday

