

“MARCH FOR MEALS” IN OCONEE

During the month of March, the Oconee County Senior Center will have its annual “March for Meals” campaign to bring awareness to the community regarding the importance of senior nutrition and to raise funds to support the senior nutrition program. The Oconee County Senior Center has numerous activities planned throughout the month of March.

The Senior Center’s goal is to raise \$5,000 in 30 days and it’s seeking the support of the community to achieve its goal. On March 24, 2023, from 11:30am-1:00pm, BBQ sandwich plates will be available for a suggested donation of \$10. Donations can be mailed or dropped off at the Senior Center, located at **3500B Hog Mountain Rd., Watkinsville, GA 30677** or you call the center at **706-769-3979** to make other arrangements.

DAS AND NEGRC’S AAA TO HOST STATE SENIOR HUNGER LISTENING SESSIONS

The Department of Human Services’ (DHS) Division of Aging Services (DAS) in conjunction with the local Northeast Georgia Senior Hunger Coalitions will host a listening session to gain input from key stakeholders and determine how the State of Georgia will address Senior Hunger in the next Senior Hunger State Plan. The listening session will be virtual and take place on **April 10th at 1:00 p.m.**

To ensure the listening sessions are meaningful and allow stakeholder opportunities to provide valuable feedback, DAS has partnered with Making Ideas Visible, LLC who will host and lead the listening session. Making Ideas Visible, LLC collaboratively designs and facilitate human-centered, immersive experiences that ignite creativity and guides those in attendance to clarity, alignment and cohesion while building a better future together.

The current Georgia 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**
- **Meeting the Needs of the Community**

To learn more about the Northeast Georgia Senior Hunger Coalition or Georgia State Plan please contact **Toshia Lewis** or **Katurah Patterson** at the NEGRC by phone at 1-888-808-8020. Toshia can be reached via email

at tlewis@negrc.org and Katurah can be reached via email at kpatterson@negrc.org.

NEGRC AND GMRC MEET AT THE FOOD BANK OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA TO DISCUSS POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS

On February 9, 2023, the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) met with the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) at the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia's (FBNEG) Athens distribution facility on Newton Bridge Road. The FBNEG serves 14 counties within the two Regional Commission areas and has two operational locations, one in Athens-Clarke County and one in the City of Clayton.



NEGRC, GMRC, and FBNEG staff in front of the Food Bank's Athens facility; from left (Mark Beatty, Burke Walker, Erin Barger, Patrick Larson, Heather Feldman, Laurin Yoder, Jacob Lambeck)

The three organizations discussed the Food Bank's role in both the Regional Commissions' areas, the conditions of food security in their respective counties, potential avenues for multi-regional and multi-state collaboration, and grant funding opportunities for the Food Bank to access. Currently, the FBNEG is underway with an expansion project in Athens-Clarke County to increase their service capacity by 42% and total facility size by 65%. That project is funded by Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus (CDBG-CV)

funds that were awarded in December 2021 and administered by NEGRC staff. The project is expected to be completed by April 2024.

The NEGRC looks forward to collaborating with GMRC in this multi-regional effort and providing support to non-profits in the twenty-four (24) county areas.

OCONEE COUNTY AND THE CITY OF ELBERTON CLOSEOUT CDBG PROJECTS

NEGRC Planning and Government Services (PGS) staff assisted in closing two Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects in early February, including Oconee County and the City of Elberton.

Oconee County received CDBG funding through the regular competitive funding cycle in 2020 for the expansion of their Senior Center. This project added approximately 2,500 square feet to the facility and provided teaching rooms, a large group exercise room, and ADA-accessible bathrooms and showers. This new space will serve the growing senior population in Oconee County for years to come. The NEGRC would like to acknowledge Oconee County staff **Merry Howard**, **Justin Kirouac**, and **Melissa Braswell** for their guidance and assistance throughout the project.

The City of Elberton received CDBG-RDF funding in 2020 for the rehabilitation and stabilization of the historic Bailey Building, located on the downtown square. This building is believed to be the oldest structure on the square, dating back to the 1840's. The Bailey Building had fallen into disrepair and was purchased by the Elberton DDA in 2017. The 6,000 square foot building is being repurposed to include two retail spaces on the ground floor and future apartments on the second floor. The NEGRC would like to acknowledge Elberton staff **Lanier Dunn** and **Cindy Churney** for their assistance throughout the project.

If you have any questions regarding the CDBG funding program and NEGRC assistance, please contact **Mark Beatty**, PGS Director, at **mbeatty@negrc.org** or **(706) 369-5650**.

FOOTHILLS/NEGRC BARROW WELDREADY GRADUATION



(Pictured: Kyle G. Bradford, Quinton Q. Bentford, Prince Akelyus Davis, Vanesa Garcia-Mondragon, Clayton L. Hurst, Aaron T. Kimelman, Hayden Pinkard, Reagan C. McColley, Nasir D. Stephens, Mason L. Still, Nathan B. Wolf, Lizeth Salazar and representatives from NEGRC/WorkSource Northeast Georgia and Workforce Innovators, Inc.)

Congratulations to the recent graduates of the Foothills Barrow/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 February 2023 graduates received certification in OSHA 10, Lean Six-Sigma White Belt, First Aid/CPR/AED, Basic Forklift Operation and American Welding Society (AWS Certification). Funding is provided through Foothills Charter Education High School and WorkSource Northeast Georgia through a U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC)/ Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant and a United Way of Northeast Georgia grant. Barrow County is one of four ARC counties in the NEGRC. For information on this

training and other training offered under the oversight of the Northeast Georgia Workforce Development Board, contact the **NEGRC Workforce Development Division** at **(706)369-5703**.

Detailed information about the DOL WORC/ARC program and specifics of the grant in the NEGRC can be found on ARC's website at www.arc.gov and the pages listed below:

- <https://www.arc.gov/workforce-opportunity-for-rural-communities-worc/>
- <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/DWGs/pdfs/worc2-ga-northeast-ga-regional-20.pdf>





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Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS MARCH

15 th	4:00 p.m.	Regional Plan Public Hearing	NEGRC
16 th	Noon	NEGRC Council Meeting	Trumps Catering
22 nd	9:00 a.m.	UOBWA Meeting	NEGRC