

## NEGRC ANNUAL AWARDS PRESENTED

The NEGRC presented its two annual awards at its May 18, 2023 Council meeting. Nominations for these two awards were requested in March from Councilmembers and reviewed by a NEGRC Awards Committee comprising Oconee County **Chairman John Daniell**, Chair, **Mayor Dodd Ferrelle**, Vice-Chairman (Winterville), and **Mr. Terry Lawler** (Greene County).

This year's NEGRC's "**Local Administrator of the Year**" award was presented to **Logan Propes**, City of Monroe Administrator. **Burke Walker**, NEGRC Executive Director, presented the award. In his remarks, he noted Mr. Propes has served as Monroe's City Administrator for the past five years and previously held finance director positions for a county and city. He earned a B.S. in Political Science and a Master's degree in Public Administration from North Georgia College. During the past five years, Propes helped the City's downtown grow and redevelop, which attracted over 200,000 visitors last year. The City also realized a 20% increase in sales tax revenue and an increase in the City's reserves by 300% under his guidance.

The NEGRC's "**Robert L. and Betty Williford Distinguished Northeast Georgian**" award was also given and presented by **Mayor Dodd Ferrelle**, Vice-Chairman of the NEGRC Awards Committee. This award is given to recognize an individual or individuals who made a difference in the quality-of-life in the region and served as leaders for regional cooperation.



Mayor John Howard (left), Logan Propes (center), and Burke Walker (right).



Nancy Stangle (center) providing remarks with Mayor Dodd Ferrelle (left).

During the award's presentation, **Nancy Stangle**, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Williford, provided remarks on the legacy of the award and her parent's dedication to education, communities, and the advancement of Northeast Georgia.

This year's NEGRC "Robert L. and Betty Williford Distinguished Northeast Georgian" award was presented by **Mayor Dodd Ferrelle** (Winterville) to **Mike and Martha Jones** of Greene County. The Joneses had long careers as educators in the Waycross, Georgia school district before retiring to Greene County. In retirement, they continued to support youths by hosting events, sponsoring building improvements, and most importantly, emphasizing a balance in sports and academics to students. Mr. Jones re-entered public service in retirement when he was elected the Greene County Board of Education's Chairman from 1996-2001. The couple's commitment



Commissioner Dee Lindsey (left) and Nancy Stangle (right) with the plaque awarded to Mike and Martha Jones.

to their communities is emphasized by the fact that they contributed as much in retirement as they did during their professional years.

Commissioner **Dee Linsey** of Greene County accepted the award on the Joneses' behalf. The award will be presented to Mr. and Mrs. Jones at the June meeting of the Greene County Board of Commissioners.

Congratulations to this year's recipients and for your contributions to Northeast Georgia!

## LOCAL BIKE SAFETY AT THE 2023 ATHENS TWILIGHT CRITERIUM

NEGRC staff partnered with Georgia Safe Routes to School and Piedmont Healthcare to provide bike safety resources in the Safe Kids Athens Zone at the Athens Twilight Criterium on April 22, 2023. North Lumpkin Street was closed to provide space for tabling and events focused on youth safety and engagement throughout the day. Resources included bike law brochures, "See or Be Seen" safety material, and free helmet giveaways and fittings for youth.

The Planning & Government Services (PGS) Division receives annual funding from the Georgia Department of Transportation for bicycle and pedestrian planning activities such as this event. Services include creating complete streets and trails plans, technical assistance for local

bike advocacy groups and initiatives, user counter rentals, and safety trainings. If you would like to learn more about the services offered by PGS, contact **Mark Beatty** at [mbeatty@negrc.org](mailto:mbeatty@negrc.org) or **(706) 369-5650**.



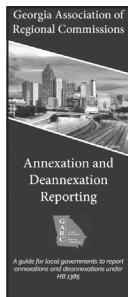
Staff from the Planning & Government Services Division and Area Agency on Aging tabled at the 2023 Athens Twilight Criterium with Georgia Safe Routes to School on April 22, 2023.

## REQUESTING GIS ASSISTANCE FROM YOUR REGIONAL COMMISSION

On April 26th, the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) released a new tool for local governments to use when requesting GIS assistance for annexations or deannexations. This tool was created in response to the updated annexation reporting requirements under HB 1385. The new law requires all local governments that annex or deannex property after July 1, 2022, to submit a digital GIS file of the parcels to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the Office of Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment. Local governments that do not have GIS capabilities can request assistance from their district Regional Commission to create the required shapefile.

GARC Annexation Hub Link: <https://georgia-annexation-reporting-garc.hub.arcgis.com/>

Once a local government completes the assistance request survey embedded in the Annexation Hub, an email notification will be sent to the Regional Commission with all applicable information so that GIS staff can begin creating the shapefile. This new tool creates a standard operating procedure for Regional Commissions to assist local governments with the new requirement and streamlines the request process. For Northeast Georgia, questions may be directed to **Sara Kaminski**, Community Planner, at [skaminski@negrc.org](mailto:skaminski@negrc.org) or **(706) 369-5650**.



Cover page of the GARC Annexation Hub. Informational brochures can be provided upon request and available at the NEGRC offices.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING TRAILERS BUSY IN MARCH AND APRIL AT LOCAL SCHOOLS' CAREER DAYS

The WorkSource Northeast Georgia/NEGRC mobile industrial mechanical training trailer was busy in March and April at Middle and High School Career Days in Newton, Walton, Morgan, and Jackson

Counties. Over 1,300 students at Monroe Area High School, Eastside High School, Jefferson Middle School, and Morgan County High School had an opportunity to hear about careers in the advanced manufacturing sector and practice with a welding simulator.



Newton County, Eastside High School Career Day



Jackson County, Jefferson Middle School Career Day



Walton County, Monroe Area High School Career Day



Morgan County High School Career Day

For further information on this or other workforce development programming available through the WorkSource Northeast Georgia/NEGRC Workforce Development Division, please call **(706) 369-5703**.

## MADISON COUNTY WELDREADY GRADUATION

Approximately 40 people attended the Madison Foothills Education Charter High School WeldReady graduation ceremony on Thursday, May 11, 2023. Our 'hats off' to the seven young men who recently completed the intensive 9-week Foothills Education Charter High School WeldReady program! We are so proud of the students: Ja'den Arnold, Dakota Brooks, David Eckel, Jr., Samuel Gurley, Levi Haney, Caden Jones, and Dylan McClure.

The Foothills WeldReady program positions students to earn American Welding Society certifications that align closely with local employer needs. All seven students passed and received the American Welding Certification. Other certifications earned are OSHA 10, CPR/AED/First Aid, Forklift, and Lean Six Sigma White Belt, as well as professional skills training. Each student also earned 1 CTAE credit towards graduation requirements.

This program is a collaboration between Foothills, Workforce Innovators, Inc., and the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission/WorkSource Northeast Georgia. The goal is to prepare workforce candidates for jobs through intense short-term skills training. They work with employers and staffing agencies to understand the local workforce needs and then prepare students through short-term skills training to meet those needs. This group represents the third WeldReady Cohort at the Madison County Foothills campus.

Funding for this cohort was provided through a USDOL ARC WORC grant to NEGRC.



Left to Right (second row): Sid Jessup (Northeast Georgia Regional Commission) Dr. Sheila Dunham (Foothills-Madison Site Director), Ginni Edwards (Foothills Madison Career Specialist), Carol Rayburn-Cofer (Workforce Development Director-Northeast Georgia Regional Commission), Pete McGill (Workforce Innovators, Inc.), James Jarrell (Workforce Innovators, Inc.), Dr. "J" Robert Johnson (Motivational Speaker/Instructor) and Irene Munn (Foothills Regional Career Pathways Coordinator).

## NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION – AREA AGENCY ON AGING HIRES DEMENTIA CARE SPECIALIST

The Northeast Georgia Area Agency on Aging received funds to hire a new position to serve as the subject matter expert for dementia in the region. After a thorough interview process, the NEGA AAA selected Katrina Ogbe to serve in this new role. Katrina Ogbe has been with the Northeast Georgia Area Agency on Aging for six years. She has worked as an Options Counselor and a Transition Coordinator with the Nursing Home Transitions Program.

Katrina has spent the last six years providing one-on-one assistance to individuals who are ending a short-term stay at a hospital or rehabilitation facility and have barriers to safely returning home. She has been the contact for these clients once they have returned to the community. She ensures they have the items they need and are connected to other programs and services in the community to help them remain independent in the home. For example, she has aided with connecting clients to contractors to make home modifications, such as building a ramp so that they can navigate their homes safely.

In addition, she has assisted caregivers with navigating resources to support loved ones living with dementia.

Katrina became interested in the position because of her work with clients through Nursing Home Transitions, but also due to personal experiences. Her mother was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia six years ago. Katrina is a long-distance caregiver for her mother, who lives in North Carolina. Katrina and her family work together to support her and ensure she maintains a quality of life while remaining in the community.

As the Dementia Care Specialist, Katrina will provide support to Persons with Dementia (PWD) and their care partners in the Northeast Georgia region. In addition, she will provide education and training to the Area Agency on Aging staff and other community partners. The goal of the outreach efforts is to spread awareness about dementia in the surrounding communities, to increase knowledge about dementia, and to reduce stigma about the disease. Katrina is looking forward to making connections in the community and is excited about making a difference in the lives of people with dementia and their care partners.

To learn more about the Dementia Care Specialist services or to connect with the Dementia Care Specialist, please contact **Katrina Ogbe** at [kogbe@negrc.org](mailto:kogbe@negrc.org) or **1(888) 808-8020**.



Katrina Ogbe, Dementia Care Specialist (right), receiving a certificate for dementia-care training.

## ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM

The Economic Development Administration (EDA), in partnership with the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), is offering a new Economic Recovery Corps (ERC) program. The ERC program is a multi-year collaborative initiative designed to accelerate recovery in distressed communities and regions. It connects "host" organizations (e.g., Regional Commissions, local governments, and non-profit organizations) with the talent and capacity needed to advance new ways of doing economic development. The program aims to promote economic resilience and transformative change and build the next generation of economic development leaders.

Host organizations apply to IEDC for placement of a "fellow" that is an experienced and mid-career professional to assist with advancing locally driven initiatives. IEDC pays the fellows a salary of \$75,000 per year, and there is no cost to the host organization.

This program is particularly well-suited for local governments ready to advance a local or regional economic development strategy. It will place 65 fellows nationally based on a competitive application process that begins with an "Expression of Interest" due by June 30, 2024. An informational webinar by IEDC will be provided on June 7 at 4 pm. Fellows will begin in January 2024 and complete in June 2026. For information and application information, visit: [www.iedconline.org/ERC-Hosts](http://www.iedconline.org/ERC-Hosts).

For information about, or assistance with, EDA programs, contact **Mark Beatty**, NEGRC PGS Director, at **(706) 369-5650** or email: [mbeatty@negrc.org](mailto:mbeatty@negrc.org).



305 Research Drive  
Athens, GA 30605

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

# Update

## REGIONAL MEETINGS JUNE

15<sup>th</sup>

Noon

NEGRC Council Meeting

Trumps Catering

**REMINDER! NEGRC NEWSLETTER GOING ELECTRONIC JULY 1<sup>ST</sup>**

Please email your name, title, and current email address to: [frontdesk@negrc.org](mailto:frontdesk@negrc.org)  
to subscribe to electronic "Update."