

CHAIRPERSON'S AWARD PRESENTED TO BLECHINGER

At the November 16, 2023 NEGRC Council meeting, Mayor **Linda Blechinger** (Auburn), and current Chairperson of the NEGRC Council, was presented the NEGRC's "Chairperson's Award." Chairperson Blechinger's term will end at the end of 2023 and the award recognizes her dedication and service as a NEGRC Council Officer for the past four years. For the past 18 years, Mayor Blechinger served the City of Auburn in various capacities and as both a Councilmember and Mayor.

Starting on January 1, 2024, Chairman **John Daniell** (Oconee) will ascend to NEGRC Chairperson with **Shane Short** (Walton) serving as Vice Chairperson. Also at this meeting, Mayor **Dodd Ferrelle** (Winterville) was elected to serve as NEGRC Secretary starting in 2024. Mayor Ferrelle was nominated by the NEGRC Nominating Committee, with Mayor **Kelly Girtz** (Athens-Clarke) serving as its Chairperson. Mayor Ferrelle was elected for his third term as Mayor for the City of Winterville last month.



Mayor Kelly Girtz, Chairperson of the NEGRC Nominating Committee, presents Mayor Blechinger the "NEGRC Chairperson Award."



NEGRC Chairperson Blechinger with "Chairperson's Award."



NEGRC Chairperson Blechinger, swearing-in Mayor Ferrelle as NEGRC Council Secretary.

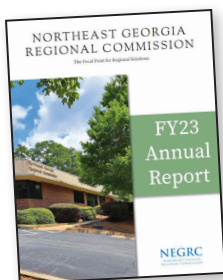


(Left to right). Mayor Blechinger, Mayor Ferrelle, and Wendy Bond (Winterville City Clerk).

Congratulations to Mayor Blechinger! Northeast Georgia greatly appreciates your contributions to our region.

NEGRC ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE

As 2023 comes to a close, the NEGRC is pleased to publish its fiscal year (FY) 2023 Annual Report. This report provides information about the NEGRC's programmatic divisions (i.e., Administration, Aging, Workforce, and Planning and Government Services) and their impact on the region and its 66 local governments.



In FY 2023, the NEGRC provided \$15.6 million in programs and services throughout Northeast Georgia. Through these expenditures, the annual report gives the results—in numbers—of these funds related to people served, job training, and project-planning assistance. It is intended to provide a quick snapshot of how the NEGRC contributes to advancing the region's livability and prosperity.

The report is available on the NEGRC's website at www.negrc.org. Printed copies will be directly mailed to all the NEGRC's local governments. The NEGRC and its 35 dedicated staff look forward to continuing to serve our region throughout the New Year. Please email **Julie Ball**, NEGRC Executive Assistant, if you wish to receive a copy by email at jball@negrc.org.

SENATE COMMITTEE CONVENES IN NORTHEAST GEORGIA

Georgia's Senate Joint Study Committee on Service Delivery Strategies (SDS) convened in Braselton on November 20, 2023 to hear testimonies about SDS in Georgia. The Committee is co-chaired by Senator **Frank Ginn** (47th) and Representative **John LaHood** (175th). Also, serving on the Committee is **Kurt Ward**, Mayor of Braselton.

The meeting was attended by two NEGRC Councilmembers: **Linda Blechinger**, NEGRC Council Chairperson, and **Pat Graham**, Chairman of Barrow County Board of Commissioners. Also attending were **Burke Walker**, NEGRC Executive Director and **Mark Beatty**, NEGRC Director of Planning & Government Services.

During the meeting, Mark Beatty provided information to the Study Committee on Regional Commissions and their capacity to provide GIS mapping assistance. GIS mapping is an important tool in identifying service areas and locations of infrastructure (e.g., 911, water and sewer, etc). The presentation provided examples of GIS maps and needed content or "standardization" for SDS purposes.

The well-attended meeting also included presentations from other state organizations including the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (**DCA**), Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (**ACCG**), and Georgia Municipal Association (**GMA**) whom offered information on their involvement and participation with SDS.



Mark Beatty presenting to the Committee.

PLANNING & GOVERNMENT SERVICES DIVISION HOSTED MOBILE WORKSHOP AT THE GEORGIA BIKE-WALK-LIVE SUMMIT

On November 18th, the NEGRC's Planning & Government Service (PGS) staff led an interactive, mobile workshop for the Georgia Bike-Walk-Live Summit in partnership with the Georgia Department of Transportation. Participants utilized wheelchairs to conduct an audit of select sidewalks on North Thomas Street

in downtown Athens. This informative mobile workshop served to draw attention to wheelchair accessibility while also teaching how to collect data and implement solutions to improve active transportation conditions for all people living in the community.



Participants from all corners of Georgia getting ready to complete the Wheelchair Accessibility Audit Mobile Workshop at the Georgia Bike-Walk-Live Summit.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR GEORGIA TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE BANK (GTIB) FUNDING

The Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (GTIB) is a low-interest loan and grant program administered by the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA). **SRTA is pleased to announce that funding will be available in 2024! Loan and grant applications will be accepted from November 1, 2023 through January 25, 2024.**

Please visit <https://srta.ga.gov/gtib-2/> to review program requirements and download an application. When applying, please keep in mind that loans will receive priority for funding, as will projects for which both a loan and grant are requested. When applying for both a loan and a grant, preference will be given for projects requesting a loan that is larger than the grant. If you have any questions, please contact **David Cassell**, Strategic Programs Administrator, at dcassell@srta.ga.gov.

NORTHEAST GEORGIA CAREGIVERS CELEBRATED

November is designated as National Caregivers Month. The Rosalyn Carter Institute and the Northeast Georgia Care-Net celebrated the caregivers of Northeast Georgia. On November 8, 2023, a celebration was held at Trumps Catering to honor the Caregivers of Northeast Georgia.

Arthurene Davis was named Family Caregiver of the Year. Mrs. Davis was the caregiver for her husband of 55 years, who had

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a spinal cord injury with complications after a fall down a flight of stairs. Mrs. Davis advocated for her husband to receive advanced physical therapy and ensured he had the best quality of life until his passing in September 2023.

There were two nominations for Paraprofessional Caregiver of the Year. **Marjorie Kelley**, a home care aide, was nominated for going above and beyond to care for the clients on her workload. She communicates well with the families and agencies to ensure everyone knows what is happening with the clients. She has even researched medications to understand how certain medications work. Secondly, **Kimberly Camacho**, a home care aide, was nominated for going above and beyond to care for her clients. She is not afraid to go into challenging conditions to clean and organize a home so that the client can receive the necessary care. After careful consideration of the two strong candidates, Kimberly Camacho was named the Paraprofessional Caregiver of the Year.

Bob Welsh was named the Volunteer Caregiver of the Year. Mr. Welsh is the Chairman of the Greene County Senior Center Advisory Council and Chairman of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Aging Services Advisory Council. Mr. Welsh advocates for the Greene County and Northeast Georgia Planning and Service Area seniors. Mr. Welsh is a volunteer for the home-delivered meals program, volunteer firefighter, and trainer. Bob does not stop until the work is done.

The mission of the Northeast Georgia Care-Net is to provide ongoing assessment of community resources, identify and remedy gaps in services, share information and resources among agencies, develop strategies for complementary professional and family caregiver activities, offer caregiver education, and, most importantly, advocate for Caregivers. If you need resources or are interested in becoming part of the Care-Net, please contact **Toshia Lewis** at 1-888-808-8020 extension 103 or tlewis@negrc.org.

2023 Northeast Georgia Caregiver of the Year Nominees and Winners



2023 Northeast Georgia Care-Net Caregivers of the Year pictured with RCI Program Specialist, Carrie Harris (left) and Northeast Georgia Caregiver Coordinator, Toshia Lewis (right).

Volunteer Caregiver Category



Bob Welsh, Volunteer Caregiver of the Year pictured with Area Agency on Aging Director Peggy Jenkins

Family Caregiver Category

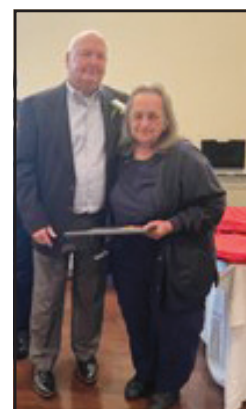


Arthurene Davis, Family Caregiver of the Year pictured with Bob Welsh

Paraprofessional Caregiver Category



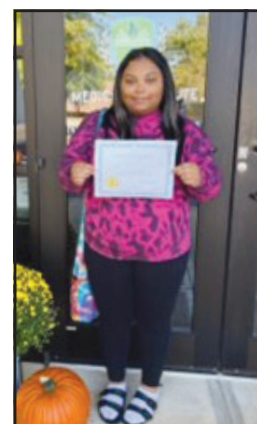
Kimberly Camacho, winner



Marjorie Kelley, nominee

ADEN-ALICIAH COMPLETES PAID EXTERNSHIP/WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM THROUGH WIOA

Congratulations to **Aden-Aliciah** for passing her Certified Medical Assistant exam! Aden-Aliciah attended the Medical Institute of Northeast Georgia. After completing her paid externship/work experience program through WIOA (WorkSource Northeast Georgia) at the NEGRC, Aden-Aliciah accepted a job offer from her externship site at Athens Eye Doctors and Surgeons. Best of luck to Aden-Aliciah!



Aden-Aliciah holding her certificate for Medical Assistant

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REGIONAL MEETINGS DECEMBER

25th & 26th

All Day

Closed for Christmas Holiday

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

NEGR Council & Staff

