

**NEGRC  
 DESIGNATED AS “AGE-FRIENDLY” REGION**

On January 25, 2024, NEGRC received designation as an “Age-Friendly” region from AARP. AARP Georgia held a presentation and celebration ceremony on March 14, 2024 at the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC). The NEGRC is the 9<sup>th</sup> “Age-Friendly” region in the state of Georgia. The NEGRC and its member counties now have “Age-Friendly” designations with AARP and World Health Organization Global Network for “Age-Friendly” States and Communities.

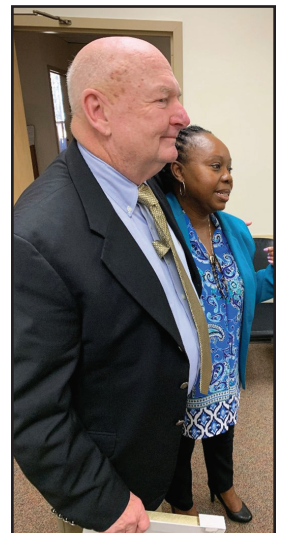
To receive an Age-Friendly designation towns, cities, counties, and states must plan and prioritize their work around 8 “Domains of Livability.” The 8 Domains of Livability include:

- outdoor spaces and buildings;
- transportation;
- housing;
- social participation;
- respect and social inclusion;
- work and civic engagement;
- community and information; and
- community and health services.

At the ceremony, each of the NEGRC counties received an “Age-Friendly” certificate presented by Kay Sabetta of AARP Georgia. During the ceremony, Bob Welsh, Chairman of the NEGRC’s Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Advisory Council, made remarks to attendees, noting the important work the AAA provides for the region’s elderly and disabled. For more information on AARP Georgia and the designation of NEGRC, visit: [www.aarp.org/ga](http://www.aarp.org/ga).



Attendees at the ceremony include (l-r): Kay Argroves and Kay Sabetta of AARP Georgia, Burke Walker, NEGRC Executive Director, John Daniell, NEGRC Council Chairman, Janice Knight, ASAC Secretary, Peggy Jenkins, NEGRC AAA Director, Michele Kelley, NEGRC AAA Asst. Director, Bob Welsh, ASAC Chairman, Julie Ball, NEGRC Exec. Assistant, and Toshia Lewis NEGRC AAA.



ASAC Chairman Bob Welsh (left) and Kay Sabetta following Chairman Welsh’s remarks.



(Above from l-r): Burke Walker, NEGRC Executive Director, John Daneill, NEGRC Council Chairman, Kay Sabetta, AARP, Peggy Jenkins, NEGRC AAA Director

## NEGRC ATTENDS DDAA/NADO 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCES

Last month, the Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) held its joint, annual-training conference in Washington, DC. from March 10-13, 2024. **Burke Walker**, NEGRC Executive Director and **Mark Beatty**, NEGRC PGS Director, attended the conference. As part of the DDAA conference, a DDAA Board meeting was held prior to the start of the conference, attended by Burke Walker who serves on the DDAA Board of Directors.

The DDAA is an organization that supports Georgia and other twelve states that comprise the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) area. NADO is a national organization that is membered by over 500 Regional Commission across the county. The conference included many informative sessions that included NEGRC partners like the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and U.S.D.A Rural Development.



Mark Beatty and Burke Walker (L-R) during DDAA's Opening Session

Part of the conference included Capitol Hill visits that Burke Walker and Mark Beatty participated in by meeting with Senators Warnock and Ossoff's staff. The meetings were scheduled prior to the conference to discuss Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) opportunities for the NEGRC. The same meeting was held with Representative Collins' office upon returning to Georgia, coordinated by Greg Ziesenhene.



(l-r) Burke Walker, Mark Beatty, and Erin Butler at Senator Warnock's Office.

For more information about the DDAA and NADO, please visit: [www.appalachiandevelopment.org](http://www.appalachiandevelopment.org) and [www.nado.org](http://www.nado.org).

## PGS DIVISION WELCOMES SPRING PLANNING INTERN

The Planning and Government Services (PGS) Division has welcomed a new Planning Intern for the spring semester, **Beck Pirkle**. Beck will be assisting the PGS team with preparing for a regional housing forum through data analysis and with the update of the Northeast Georgia Regionally Important Resources (RIR) Management Plan. This project will allow Beck to get hands-on community planning experience. Along with interning at the NEGRC, Beck is currently pursuing a double major in Geography and International Affairs at the University of Georgia. Welcome to the team, Beck!



Beck Pirkle, Planning Intern

## SURVEY REQUEST: NORTHEAST GEORGIA GEOSPATIAL STRATEGY

The NEGRC's Planning & Government Services (PGS) Division has begun a regional effort to identify geospatial data needs within our twelve-county service area. As a result, staff will create a Geospatial Strategy to guide us towards better serving the local governments of Northeast Georgia with GIS

and data services. The NEGRC is requesting local governments participate in an input survey so that we can learn more about their capabilities and needs.

A stakeholder group of GIS professionals met at the NEGRC office in March to discuss needs and opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing. Participants included members of local governments, adjacent regional commissions, ESRI, and private consultants.

The NEGRC is requesting local governments to participate in an input survey so that we can learn more about the capabilities and needs of our local governments. This survey should take 5-10 minutes to complete.

**Link to survey:** <https://arcg.is/nKjuG>

**Respond by:** 4/19/2024

**Who should participate:** Elected officials, local government staff, and GIS professionals interested in how GIS & data can make local governments operate more effectively and efficiently.

## PGS STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY

The NEGRC's Planning & Government Services Division (PGS) had a staff-development day/walk to learn about project development workflows and strategies to accomplish trail development. The example used was the Firefly Trail, starting at Dudley Park in Athens. This trail results from decades of collaboration with the NEGRC, local governments along the route, and local non-profits. The 39-mile rail trail is still underway in its conversion from an abandoned rail line to a publicly accessible multi-use trail.

Projects such as these are multifaceted and complex. They require patience and knowledge of multiple professions to successfully implement the community's goals. If you have a trail idea for your community, contact the PGS Department to schedule a consultation.



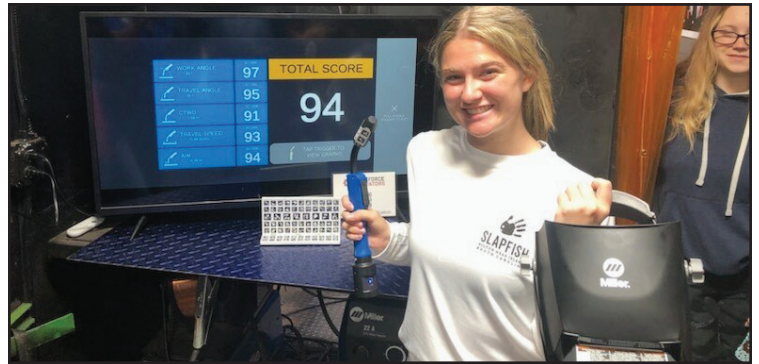
PGS walking over the Peter Street bridge along the Firefly Trail. The bridge was completed in 2023 through the Athens-Clarke County TSPLOST program and links the eastside of Athens to downtown with an at-grade multi-use trail.

## NEGRC WELDING TRAILERS PARTICIPATE IN 'CAREER DAYS'

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's WorkSource Mobile Welding Training Trailer visited the Monroe Area High School's Career Day. Over 400 9th-12th graders had an opportunity to tour the 53' x 8 bay welding trailer and learn about welding as a career. Students had an opportunity to use the welding simulator and try their hand at welding.

The trailer will visit other schools' Career Days in the region during April.

For information on this and other WIOA/WorkSource Northeast Georgia (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) programs, please contact NEGRC Workforce Development staff at **(706) 369-5703**.



Monroe Area High School students attend Career Fair on NEGRC Mobile Welding Trailer

# Update

## REGIONAL MEETINGS

### APRIL

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17 <sup>th</sup>	1:30 p.m.	Aging Services Advisory Council	NEGRC
18 <sup>th</sup>	Noon	NEGRC Council Meeting	Trumps Catering