

## COMMUNITIES CONTINUE TO HOLD PLANNING SESSIONS/RETREATS

Northeast Georgia counties and cities continued to hold facilitated planning sessions and retreats during February and March. The Elbert County Board of Commissioners held its annual retreat on February 27<sup>th</sup> at Arrowhead Pointe at Lake Russell. The day-long event included discussion on topics including transportation, the court system, economic development, the hospital, and Bobby Brown Park. Special guests included **Rusty Haygood** of DCA, **Beth Eavenson** of the local development authority, ACCG staff member **Dave Wills**, hospital administrator **Brandon Clary**, and **Brent Cook** of GDOT.

On March 6<sup>th</sup> the Braselton Mayor and Council held its annual strategic planning session at the Town's Planning & Utility building. The session began with a review of activities undertaken in 2014. The agenda also included a discussion of priorities and goals for the next 12 to 18 months, along with long-term goals and objectives.

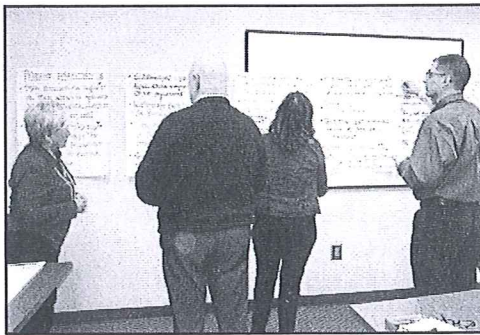
On March 7<sup>th</sup> the annual City of Elberton planning session was held at Arrowhead Pointe at Richard B. Russell State Park. Along with members of the Mayor and Council, staff department heads were also in attendance. Discussion topics included a financial overview and presentations on water/wastewater, natural gas, electricity, ElbertonNet, customer care and administrative services, public works, and economic and downtown development.

The Barrow County Board of Commissioners held its strategic planning retreat on March 20<sup>th</sup> at the Sims Career Academy. A review of the previous year's retreat items was undertaken, along with in-depth discussion of strategies related to the 5-Year Capital Improvement Program, budget priorities, long-term goals, various policies, and SPLOST 2018 referendum dates and plan.

The City of Jefferson held its annual planning retreat on March 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. A report on that session will be included in next month's newsletter.



Elbert County



Town of Braselton



City of Elberton





## COMMUNITY PROFILE: BOGART'S RECYCLING SUCCESS

The City of Bogart is not unlike many small communities where recycling programs can be a challenge to create, operate, and manage with a small staff and/or volunteer staff. The benefits of recycling are widely known as a means to divert disposables away from landfill space that is finite.

At the March meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Solid Waste Management Authority (NEGRSWMA) meeting at the NEGRC, Chairman **Brad Rickard** introduced Councilmember **T.L. Turman** to provide a presentation on how the City of Bogart has succeeded in creating a productive and efficient recycling program over a seven-year period.

For years, Bogart's recycling program was limited to collection centers that operated on 100% volunteer efforts and with limited hours of operation. Residents personally transported recyclables to the centers where they were segregated in designated dumpsters. Participation in this system of collection remained low, largely because of the requirement to transport and separate materials by individual residents.

In 2007, Mr. Turman was elected to City Council and sought to create an improved recycling program. Bins were initially purchased for residential use and collected by the City once a month in an adapted pick-up truck and trailer (see photo). While this system was an improvement (e.g., residents did not have to transport recyclables), it had limitations in terms of safety, labor, and equipment capabilities. Collected recyclables had to be delivered to a transfer facility and then sorted. During a six-month period, there were approximately 109 pickups with one ton of recyclables every two weeks.

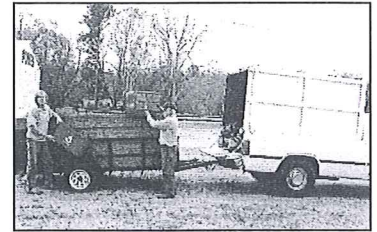
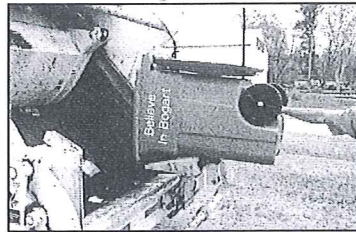
A second phase of recycling was envisioned when Turman met **Suki Janssen**, Athens-Clarke County's Waste Reduction Administrator, at a recycling event at the Classic Center in 2011. Janssen provided technical assistance to Turman that eventually led to Bogart partnering with Athens-Clarke County in implementation of a successful recycling program. This included recycling literature, education, and training. The most important aspect of this collaboration was the access and use of single-stream recycling, where materials did not have to be separated at a collection point.

The City later purchased 64 gallon carts, at no additional charge to residents, to enable this new phase. The results have been progressive and dramatic. In 2013, total tonnage for collection was recorded at 29 tons. This amount increased in 2014 to 33 tons and the City's goal for 2015 is 40 tons. The new system of collection and recycling also had related benefits in reduced landfill costs, citizen participation at 40-50%, and improved staff morale by eliminating the need to segregate materials.

During his presentation, Turman made note of several important contributing factors. One of these was the input from Mr. **Ira Rehmel**, an Oconee County employee at the Bogart facility that provided enthusiasm and input on expanding recycling efforts. Turman also remarked that leadership is key in these types of community efforts and any community can succeed where leadership is found. He also said that Bogart will continue to measure its results and hopefully continue to increase both citizen participation and collection tonnage.

The NEGRC's Planning & Government Services Division (PGS) provides administrative support to the Northeast Georgia Regional Solid Waste Management Authority. The Authority is involved in research, education, and best-practices assistance with its ten-county membership.

For information about the NEGRSWMA, please contact **Burke Walker** at the NEGRC at (706) 369-5650 or email: [bwalker@negrc.org](mailto:bwalker@negrc.org).



### REMINDER

The next meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council will be held on **Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup> at Noon at the Athens Holiday Inn**. Information on the meeting will be forthcoming.

## WINTERVILLE HOSTS TOURISM FORUM

On February 20<sup>th</sup>, the NEGRC and Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) offered a workshop entitled *Economic Development through Tourism: A Regional Forum* at the Historic Winterville Train Depot. The well-attended forum began with a welcome by Mayor **Emily Eisenman** who presented on the various activities Winterville is pursuing to attract tourism, including the town's successful annual Marigold Festival event. Morgan County Chairman **Andy Ainslie** spoke about upcoming tourism projects in his County and their success in attracting visitors with agritourism (agriculturally-based tourism) programming. Representatives from the NEGRC and GDEcD also spoke about their work with tourism in the Northeast Georgia region and resources that are available to communities for attracting visitors and developing tourism.



Going forward, participants indicated a desire to attend tourism themed workshops periodically and work as a region to benefit from the positive economic impact of the tourism industry. Forthcoming workshops and a Tourism Toolbox being developed by the NEGRC will be made available to communities in Northeast Georgia. For more information about the forum or to learn about tourism resources, please contact **Theresa Owen** at [towen@negrc.org](mailto:towen@negrc.org).



*Tourism Forum Participants*

## GEORGIA TRAIL SUMMIT RETURNS TO ATHENS IN JUNE - NEGRC PLAYS KEY ROLE

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) was an integral part of last year's inaugural Georgia Trail Summit, and the NEGRC's Planning and Government Services (PGS) staff have again played a key role in bringing the conference back to Athens. The popular educational event, to be held June 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the new Graduate Athens (former Foundry Park Inn), provides elected officials, staff, advocates, consultants, and others the opportunity to share knowledge of envisioning, planning, designing, building, maintaining, and programming trails for walking, bicycling, paddling, and horse riding.

The Summit agenda, which will soon be published in draft format, is split between conventional conference sessions (plenary and breakout), mobile workshops, and an "unconference" setting that allows registrants to propose and select topics for facilitated discussion based on demand. The major themes of this year's GTS are, "Building a Culture of Health on Georgia's Trails," "Trails are Transportation Solutions," and "Trails are Money Makers." The keynote speaker, Dr. Richard Jackson, is a medical doctor on the public health faculty at the University of California at Los Angeles who focuses on health communities. Registration for the entire GTS is \$90 including several meals, and the organizers continue to accept sponsorships (the base level of \$250 includes two complimentary registrations).

For additional information, please visit [www.georgiatrailsummit.com](http://www.georgiatrailsummit.com). To learn about sponsorship or Summit planning, please contact NEGRC Senior Planner John Devine, who serves on the GTS Executive Committee and Chairs the Host Committee, at [jdevine@negrc.org](mailto:jdevine@negrc.org).

## SETA SPRING 2015 CONFERENCE HELD

The Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) Spring Conference was held March 8-11, 2015 in Greensboro, N.C. There were over 530 attendees from throughout the Southeast. SETA is a professional development organization for workforce development professionals from the eight southeastern states.

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Workforce Development Division staff and NEGA WIA Service Provider staff attended the conference which offered over 48 different workshops on a variety of topics including board development, finance, case management, youth, and dislocated worker and special population services. The key focus of this conference was the transition to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which replaces the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) on July 1, 2015. The US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration's Deputy Assistant Secretary **Byron Zuidema** was the opening speaker and provided attendees with an overview of the state of workforce development issues as well as a briefing on the transition to the WIOA.

For information on Workforce services in Northeast Georgia, please contact Workforce Development Division Director **Carol Cofer** at (706)369-5703.

## HAYGOOD ADDRESSES NEGRC COUNCIL

**Rusty Haygood**, DCA Economic Development Field Services Region 5 Director, was the featured speaker at the March meeting of the NEGRC Council. Haygood, formerly a staff member at Middle Georgia RC and Oconee County Economic Development Director, worked tirelessly with state and local elected officials in the location of the Caterpillar facility on the Athens-Clarke and Oconee County line. He described his role at DCA along with various programs offered by that agency. He further advised as to how local governments may avail themselves of relevant opportunities. He addressed questions and comments from Council members and others in attendance.



*Rusty Haygood addresses NEGRC Council*



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**REGIONAL MEETINGS**  
**APRIL**

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8	10:00 a.m.	Joint Development Authority of NEGA	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
15	1:30 p.m.	Aging Advisory Council	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
16	Noon	NEGRC Council	Athens Holiday Inn
16	3:30 p.m.	Firefly Trails Advocacy Group	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room

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*Sincerely & Respectfully,*