

NEGRC STAFF PARTICIPATE IN ARC GRANT WORKSHOP

Staff from the Washington, D.C. office of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) recently visited Georgia to present two workshops for potential applicants and grant writers for ARC grants. **Chris Brazell**, ARC Infrastructure Program Manager, provided the first workshop in Lavonia on June 24th at the Historic Lavonia Depot. The workshop was coordinated by **Annaka Woodruff**, Georgia ARC Program Manager with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The training was the first of its kind in recent years for Georgia's Regional Commissions and others involved in ARC grants.

Four NEGRC staff attended the workshop to learn specifics on preparing ARC grant applications, including **Burke Walker**, NEGRC Director of Planning & Government Services; **Jim Moneyhun**, NEGRC Project Administrator; **Jordan Shoemaker**, NEGRC Project Specialist; and **Allison Roland**, NEGRC Project Manager. The workshop provided guidance on grant eligibility for ARC grant applications, as well as instructions on the preparation of grants. The half-day workshop, more directly, provided information to be used in the upcoming Georgia ARC pre-application grant cycle.

The NEGRC works in partnership with ARC as a "Local Development District (LDD)." Part of this assistance is to ensure ARC funds are used effectively and efficiently within the region. It also supports assistance from the NEGRC in development of ARC grant applications to its local governments. This year's grant "pre-applications" are due to DCA on, or before, August 31, 2015. Eligibility for these grants is limited to Barrow, Elbert, Jackson, and Madison Counties and their municipalities. Development of pre-applications is already underway for several NEGRC communities.

ARC overall provides flexible funding that can be used to support a range of public infrastructure, community development, and planning related projects. Proposed projects must address one of ARC's national goals as well as Georgia's ARC strategic objectives.

For further information on ARC grant applications, contact Mr. Walker at (706) 369-5650 or e-mail at bwalker@negrc.org.

Workshop Participants

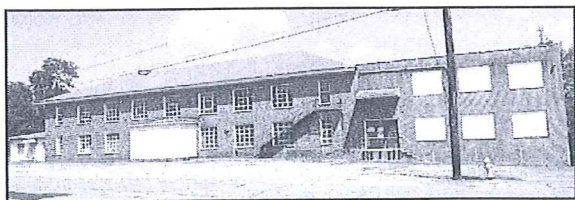


AUBURN RECEIVES DCA GRANT

In June, the City of Auburn received notification of a \$500,000 award of Redevelopment Fund Program (RDF) grant funds from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The RDF grant funds will be used in conjunction with a \$130,000 contribution from the City and an anticipated \$196,000 in-kind contribution from the Georgia Department of Corrections for Phase I rehabilitation of a building that has come to be known as the Auburn Center. The building, located at 16 College Street, was constructed in 1902 and served as a dormitory for the Perry Rainey Institute until it was modified for use as a textile facility in the 1950s. The Auburn Center will ultimately be segmented into five operations: GED/ESL classroom space; Oak Leaf Hall, an approximately 2,000 square-foot event venue; the Georgia Piedmont Arts Center (GPAC), a non-profit art instruction organization; the O-Zone, a co-working business office space; and a privately-owned small café/coffee shop.

Phase I of the rehabilitation will focus on stabilization of the building for safe occupancy and completion of both the Oak Leaf Hall event venue and the GED/ESL classroom space. Phase II focuses on rehabilitation of the remainder of the building and includes the O-zone, which will be a series of transient type leasable office/meeting spaces, classroom and studio space for GPAC, and a proposed café/coffee shop.

The primary goals of the project are to eliminate blight on an area basis and support the creation of two full-time permanent jobs, both of which will be provided for low- to moderate-income individuals. The project will also benefit approximately 100 students annually through the Lanier Technical College adult education classes to be offered at the Auburn Center upon completion.



Auburn Center

The Redevelopment Fund program is extremely useful for projects that require improvements in traditional downtown areas and particularly single or detached commercial buildings that have multiple spaces. Auburn is the fourth successfully awarded RDF developed by PGS staff. PGS staff is able to assist local governments with numerous downtown efforts including: development of Urban Redevelopment Plans (URPs), concept development of projects identified in the URPs, and application preparation for potential

projects. Communities without Downtown Development Authorities or other formally established organizations may also wish to consult PGS staff on their potential formation.

For information about the Redevelopment Fund (RDF) program or to discuss a potential project, contact Mr. Walker. Information about PGS, its staff, and current news is available on the NEGRC website at www.negrc.org by clicking on the PGS tab.

GMA CONVENTION HELD IN SAVANNAH

The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) held its 2015 Annual Convention on June 26th – 30th at the International Trade and Convention Center in Savannah. Over 1,500 city officials and others gathered to map out legislative plans for the upcoming year, discuss issues affecting Georgia's cities and to network with other city leaders. This year's theme for the convention was **"Creative Impact"**. The Municipal Training Institute was held on Saturday morning, followed by the Opening General Session on Saturday afternoon. Sessions included Critical Issues Course: Arts and Tourism, Public Development and Implementation, Recreation and Parks – Building Communities, Environment and Natural Resources, Public Safety, Revenue and Finance, Leveraging Public Investment in the Arts, and Please Recycle...Your Buildings – Adaptive Reuse in Your City. Executive Assistant **Mott Beck** represented NEGRC at the meeting and managed the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) exhibit.

Created in 1933, GMA is the only state organization that represents municipal governments in Georgia. It is a voluntary, non-profit that provides legislative advocacy, education, employee benefits and technical consulting services to its members. The current membership totals 521 municipal governments, accounting for more than 99% of the state's municipal population. A 63-member Board of Directors, composed of city officials, governs GMA. Program implementation is charged to the Executive Director and staff of 91 full-time employees.

REMINDER

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council will meet on **Thursday, August 20th at Noon at the Athens Holiday Inn**. Information on the meeting will be forthcoming.

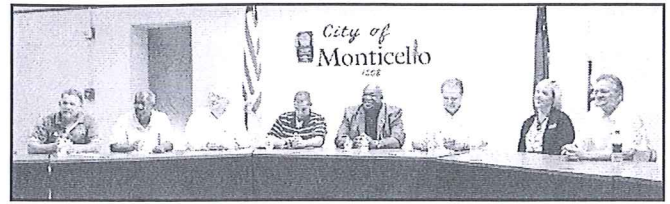
JASPER COUNTY CHAMBER SPONSORS TOWN HALL MEETING

The Monticello-Jasper County Chamber of Commerce sponsored **"Our Community – A Town Hall Meeting"** on June 23rd in the Visitors' Center. This event was organized to feature Jasper County and the City of Monticello and the many services they provide. All of the County and City departments were invited to have exhibits where employees were available to visit with attendees and answer questions.

After an hour of meet and greet, the Town Hall meeting began with an hour where citizens had a chance to ask questions and voice concerns. The panel of City and County elected officials included Commission Chairman **Gene Trammel**, Commissioners **Carl Pennamon**, **Bruce Henry** and **Doug Luke**, Mayor **Bryan Standifer**, Mayor Pro-Tem **Bobby Jacobs**, and Councilmembers **Katherine Alexander** and **David Wease**.

Topics discussed included efforts being made to encourage young people to be active in the community, what good things are on the horizon in the future, continued camaraderie between City and County officials, and the possibility of renegotiating House Bill 489 with the idea of equally sharing services.

The meeting was facilitated by Executive Director **Jim Dove** and **Ms. Beck**.



Panel of City and County Officials

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES

Local Foods, Local Places helps communities create walkable, healthy, economically vibrant neighborhoods through the development of local food systems. Supported by EPA, USDA, CDC, DOT, and ARC, among others, the program aims to:

- Boost economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses
- Improve access to healthy local food and promote childhood wellness
- Create walkable, healthy, economically vibrant neighborhoods

NEGRC Planning and Government Services staff is available to assist communities in applying for this technical assistance program. The application deadline is September 15, 2015. For additional information, please contact **Theresa Owen** at towen@negrc.org.

NEGRC DEVELOPS BLUEPRINT STRATEGY FOR DOWNTOWN COMMERCE

In June 2014, the City of Commerce engaged the NEGRC for assistance in developing a Blueprint Strategy for the City's downtown. Over the course of the 2015 fiscal year, NEGRC staff worked with the City, a stakeholders committee and the public to develop a set of recommendations to revitalize and enhance downtown Commerce. The goal for the Blueprint Strategy is to develop a strategy for downtown Commerce that builds upon its existing assets, meets the needs of the community and fosters a vibrant economic town center.

Development of the Strategy relied heavily on stakeholder discourse, with stakeholder meetings held monthly between August and April. Public input was also critical in development of the Blueprint Strategy. A robust strategy for gaining public attendance and participation at two public meetings was utilized and included reaching out to property owners, schools, churches, veterans, garden clubs, civic clubs and minority neighborhoods for their involvement. Additionally, a \$10 utility bill discount was offered to residents for attending the meetings. This proved to be a successful strategy, with approximately 150 people in attendance at the public meetings. With the input gathered from the stakeholders and the public, the needs, opportunities and goals for downtown Commerce were identified. These goals became the framework for the Blueprint Strategy and are integral in guiding the future of Commerce's downtown. Identified goals include:

- 1) Address the needs and opportunities for infill, redevelopment and revitalization
- 2) Promote business development
- 3) Address infrastructure needs
- 4) Create opportunities for downtown living

A series of recommended action items are included in the Blueprint Strategy document and offer a guide for working towards these goals.

The Blueprint Strategy document will be of use to elected officials, City staff, boards and other entities to help in making decisions that are in the best interest of the community, for grant procurement, in building partnerships, and as a tool for working towards the community's goals.

For further information about Commerce's Blueprint Strategy, please contact Ms. Owens at the e-mail in preceding article.



City Manager Pete Pyrzewski addresses group

STATE REVENUE COMMISSIONER TO SPEAK AT COUNCIL

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council is pleased to announce that the keynote speaker for the August 20th meeting will be State Revenue Commissioner **Lynne Riley**. Commissioner Riley comes to the Department of Revenue from the Georgia General Assembly, where she served four years as the House District 50 Representative. She served as one of Governor Deal's Floor leaders and as a member of the Ways and Means, Natural Resources and Environment, Retirement and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Oversight Committees.

Commissioner Riley previously served as the Fulton County Commissioner for District 3 from July 2004 to December 2010. She served on U.S. Congressman Tom Price's Advisory Council and was appointed to the National Association of Counties Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs Steering Committee. Commissioner Riley served as Vice Chair of the Association County Commissioners of Georgia's Revenue and Finance Policy Committee in 2010, and Economic Development and Transportation Policy Committee in 2009. In 2009, she was appointed by Governor Perdue to the Georgia Public Defender Supervisory Council for the Atlanta Judicial Circuit.

Commissioner Riley is a professional accountant and was Principal of Riley Accounting Services for over 30 years. She attended Northeastern University in Boston Massachusetts, Bentley College in Waltham, Massachusetts, and the American Institute of Banking in Boston, Massachusetts. She and her husband Mike have three children and have resided in the Johns Creek community for over 25 years.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Information about aging services is always available from the counselors at the Regional Commission, but the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging (AAA) also comes to the community. AAA staff participate in health fairs, present at community organization meetings, and visit healthcare providers in the community to educate about the services and programs offered through the agency. Now, the AAA has partnered with GeorgiaCares to host offsite counseling events in the twelve counties in the Northeast Georgia region. These events will be held at the county senior centers, senior apartment complexes such as Athena Gardens and Winding Hollow and assisted living facilities such as Lanier Gardens.

GeorgiaCares is a program that uses volunteers to provide unbiased and factual information about Medicare at no cost. In the Northeast Georgia region, GeorgiaCares operates out of the Athens Community

Council on Aging. GeorgiaCares is the State Health Insurance Assistance Program and Senior Medicare Patrol. Volunteers can meet with the Medicare beneficiary face-to-face, provide consultation over the phone and even provide assistance via email. Volunteers receive training from the GeorgiaCares Coordinator and learn how to advise Medicare beneficiaries about their plans and how to solve any problems they may encounter. GeorgiaCares volunteers screen individuals for programs that assist with healthcare costs, such as the Medicare Savings Program. The GeorgiaCares Coordinator keeps volunteers updated on changes and new information through quarterly meetings, the monthly Medicare messenger and the volunteer email list server.

AAA Counselors are trained GeorgiaCares volunteers. They attend offsite counseling events to meet with individuals in their own communities. At these events, attendees have the opportunity to receive unbiased information about Medicare as well as a comprehensive consultation about the programs and services available to older adults and individuals with disabilities. The counselors can discuss eligibility criteria, application processes, waiting lists for programs, as well as community resources and other providers in the aging services network.

A representative from the AAA will visit the Elbert, Oconee, Newton, Greene and Walton County Senior Centers in September. The new GeorgiaCares Coordinator, **Kristi Oltman**, will visit several sites in August, including the Morgan County Senior Center, Green Acres Baptist Church, Lanier Gardens, Winding Hollow and more. Please call **(706) 583-2546** for additional information on these offsite counseling events.

The AAA will bring Powerful Tools for Caregivers sessions to the community this fall. Starting August 19th, Certified Class Leaders **Toshia Lewis** and **Megan Vogt** will host a series at Tuckston United Methodist Church at 4175 Lexington Road. in Athens. Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six-week educational program designed to help current and future family caregivers. This program will help participants take care of themselves while caring for a relative or friend. Participants will benefit from this class whether they are helping a parent, spouse, friend or someone who lives at home, lives in assisted living or a skilled nursing facility, or live across the country. For further information or to register for the class, contact Ms. Vogt at **(706) 583-2546/ext. 208**.

SUMMER 2015 WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA) WORK EXPERIENCE

This year, 138 youth from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) In-School Youth Program participated in the Summer Work Experience Program. There were a total of 111 worksites in the 12-county area, which included non-profit agencies, local government worksites and some private sector businesses. New Worksites included Barrow County Senior Center, the State Botanical Gardens of Georgia, and Benchmark Physical Therapy in Barrow and Walton Counties. The Work Experience activity operated for a five-week period from June 10th through July 11th. Participants worked up to 30 hours per week and were paid \$7.25 per hour. The work experience was extended by one week for eight worksites that were closed the week of July 4th.

Ninety-eight percent of the participants successfully completed the Summer Work Experience activity and 25 students secured employment on their own prior to the Summer Work Experience, which is one of our goals. In addition, nine students were hired at their worksites after the completion of the Summer Work Experience. A number of additional worksite supervisors expressed an interest in hiring some participants if additional funding was made available.

For further information on the Youth Services offered by the NEGR Workforce Development Division, please contact **Rima Sullivan**, Youth Program Specialist, at **(706) 369-5703**.



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Athens, GA 30605

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS
AUGUST

11	8:30 a.m.	Workforce Investment Board	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
20	Noon	NEGRC Council	Athens Holiday Inn
20	3:30 p.m.	Firefly Trails Advocacy Group	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
21	10:00 a.m.	NEGA Senior Center Directors	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room

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Sincerely & Respectfully,