

ELBERTON AND BRASELTON PLANNING SESSIONS HELD

The annual planning/visioning sessions for the cities of Elberton and Braselton were held during March. The session for the City of Elberton Mayor and Council was held on March 5th at Richard B. Russell State Park. It was also attended by senior staff and the City Attorney. Reports of activities during the past year, along with future work programs were presented for the following departments: water/wastewater, natural gas, electric, public works, cemetery, Elberton.Net, and administration. In addition, a financial overview was provided, and attendees participated in an interactive discussion throughout the day.

The annual session for the Braselton Mayor and Council and Town Manager was held on March 18th at the Public Works and Utilities Building. The meeting began with an overview of activities undertaken during the past twelve months and a review of goals developed at last year's session. Mayor and Council members developed a preliminary list of goals for the next 12-18 months and later narrowed those down to priority items. In addition, attendees also identified long-range goals for action by town leaders.



City of Elberton retreat participants



Town of Braselton retreat participants



UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE SYSTEM PLANNING

Under the NEGRC's annual planning contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Planning & Government Services (PGS) Division staff are required to produce preferred alignment alternatives and local contact information for planned United States Bicycle Routes (USBR) through Northeast Georgia. The USBR system is a network of bicycling tourism corridors (typically on existing roads) that creates cross-country or similar long-distance opportunities.

The Adventure Cycling Association (ACA) has identified two routes that could bring bicycle tourists through Northeast Georgia, though neither are aligned nor mapped beyond the following general courses: Route 15 extends from Miami north to Upstate New York, potentially linking Northeast Georgia to the Macon area and the mountains of North Georgia and Western North Carolina; Route 84 runs from the South Carolina coast west to El Paso, and offers possible connections to Columbia, South Carolina and Atlanta.

As the vast majority of USBR routes follow existing, low-trafficked roads, drawing touring cyclists who wish to experience urban areas, countryside, and nature, scenic Northeast Georgia is extremely appealing. Cyclists learn about and access routes via a series of maps and other information produced

by ACA, and look for camping areas (where they exist), service stops (convenience stores, groceries, etc.), and traditional tourism attractions. Routes do not require any additional signage or facility improvements such as bicycle lanes, and local governments are not open to inherent liability in designating them.

If your community is interested in the possibility of being included on one of these routes, or to learn more, please contact Senior Planner **John Devine**, AICP, at jdevine@negrc.org for more information.

BROWNFIELD GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Brownfields are a vital, untapped resource with great redevelopment potential. If there is a brownfield site in your community, reinvesting in this property could have positive impacts such as an increased local tax base and job growth. The Environmental Protection Agency defines a brownfield as "...real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant." Cleaning up and redeveloping brownfield properties not only protects the environment, but can also reduce blight and encourage economic and community development.

There are a number of federal funding opportunities for assessing, cleaning-up, and redeveloping brownfields. Members of the NEGRC's Planning & Government Services Division staff are available to help develop the following brownfield grant applications for your community:

- **US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant:** provides funding to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to a community's brownfields sites; may apply for up to \$200,000.
- **US EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant:** provides funding for a grant recipient to carry out clean-up activities at brownfield sites; may apply for up to \$200,000.
- **US EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grant:** provides funding for a grant recipient to capitalize a revolving loan fund and to provide sub-grants to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites.
- **US EPA Area-Wide Planning Program:** grant program which provides funding to conduct activities that will enable the recipient to develop an area-wide plan for accessing, cleaning-up, and reusing high priority brownfield sites.

These funding resources offer a variety of opportunities, from assessment to redevelopment, for brownfield sites in the communities of Northeast Georgia. The deadline for many of these grant programs is fall of 2016.

For additional information on these grant programs, visit the EPA Brownfield website <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields> or contact **Allison Roland**, Project Manager, at aroland@negrc.org.

SETA FALL 2016 CONFERENCE HELD

The Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) Spring Conference was held March 6th – 9th in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. There were over 550 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 Northeast Georgia Workforce Development Board members attended the conference which offered over 45 different workshops on a variety of topics including board development, finance, case management, youth, and dislocated worker and special population services. Focus of this conference was on the transition to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which replaced the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) on July 1, 2015. The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration's Deputy Assistant Secretary **Gerri Fiala** 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. **Janet LeBreck**, USDOE Rehabilitation Services Commissioner also provided conference attendees with information on services available to persons with disabilities and ways that WIOA provides the opportunity to further collaborate. For information on WIOA services in Northeast Georgia, please contact the Workforce Development Division at **(706) 369-5703**.

SOLICITATION FOR SUMMER WORKSITES

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Workforce Development Division is soliciting requests from agencies wishing to serve as worksites for the 2016 Summer Youth Work component. Tentative plans are that youth will be available to work between June 6th and July 9th. Worksite informational packets will be mailed the week of April 16th and are due on May 7th. There will not be any additional funds available to operate a large stand-alone summer youth work experience activity. Plans are to provide this activity to those youth already enrolled in the WIOA year round in-school youth program. Approximately 100 youth throughout the 12 counties will be served with the available funds.

Youth may work in a variety of jobs depending upon the needs of individual worksites. The work proposed should be of a nature that would be beneficial to the youth, exposing them to various work and job skills. Youth will be paid through federal funds and will be covered under the Workforce Development Board's workmen's compensation insurance. Participants receive an hourly wage and can work up to 30 hours per week.

For those agencies interested in serving as a worksite that may not have received a packet, please contact **Rima Sullivan**, Youth Program Specialist, at **(706) 369-5703**, to ensure that they are on the worksite distribution list.

ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY PILOTING LIFESAVING YELLOW DOT PROGRAM

The Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) recently announced the launch of a pilot program designed to help first responders provide appropriate life-saving treatment during the first hour after a medical emergency. The Yellow Dot program is a project to help first responders understand important information about a patient's medical history in the event of an emergency. A yellow, peach-shaped decal placed in the driver side rear window of a vehicle will alert first responders that vital medical information is stored in the glove compartment. The decal can also provide life-saving information to emergency personnel responding to in-home emergencies.

The Yellow Dot program launched on March 19th as a pilot program in Athens-Clarke County. "No one wants to think about being in an accident or having a medical emergency but it can happen to anyone," said Department of Human Services Commissioner **Robyn Crittenden**. "The Yellow Dot

program can make sure Georgians, especially seniors and vulnerable adults get the care they need during the critical period following an emergency." Georgia's Yellow Dot Program is free and available to anyone. The medical information form in the Yellow Dot packet includes the participant's name, photo, medical conditions, recent surgeries, current medications, allergies, emergency contact information and more. Local emergency personnel, Athens Regional Health System and St. Mary's Health Care System have been trained to recognize the Yellow Dot information and use it to provide life-saving treatment.

The program is the result of a partnership between the Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Aging Services, the Georgia Department of Public Health, the Governor's Office of Highway Safety and Alliant Georgia Medical Care Foundation. "Having instant medical information available for first responders in the critical moments after a medical emergency or accident could help save lives, especially when someone can't speak for themselves," said Department of Public Health Commissioner Brenda Fitzgerald, M.D. "We are excited to pilot this program in two counties in the hope of expanding it to all 159 Georgia counties." At the Georgia Yellow Dot program kick off at the Athens Senior Resources Network Annual Senior Expo and Health Fair attendees were able to receive a Yellow Dot packet and ask questions about the program.

Yellow Dot packets are now available in the community at the following locations:

Arbor Terrace of Athens

April 6th, 13th, & 27th, May 11th & 25th,
and Jun 1st, 14th & 22nd
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Bridgeway Hospice

Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m. – Noon/1:00p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Talmadge Terrace Lanier Gardens

Tuesdays and Thursdays – 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Athens Community Council on Aging

Monday through Friday
9:00 a.m. – Noon

Thrive Assisted Living & Memory Care

Monday-Friday – 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

For additional information, visit <http://aging.dhs.georgia.gov/yellow-dot-program> or e-mail yellowdot.info@dph.ga.gov.

ROCK GYM ARMORY BUILDING

To continue NEGRC's yearlong celebration of the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, this month we will feature the Elbert County Rock Gym Armory (ERGA) building in Elberton. The "Rock Gym" was constructed in 1941, by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). It is a vernacular building with Art Deco detailing, typical of buildings constructed during the Works Progress Administration (WPA) era. The Rock Gym was constructed from granite ashlar, locally quarried and Elberton's primary industry at a cost of \$75,000.

The ERGA was first used as an armory for the National Guard during World War II. From the 1960s through the 1990s, the ERGA was a part of the Elbert County Middle School complex, serving as a classroom, performance space, and gym. After a new school complex was built, a group of school children, called the "Hard Rock Kids," organized to save the historic building and list it in the National Register of Historic Places. This recognition and documentation effort prompted the subsequent, multi-phased rehabilitation of the ERGA; transforming it into a viable economic asset for the community. The rehabilitation began in 2003. The first phase involved replacing the original roof with a long-lasting, terne-coated, stainless-steel roof. Multiple funding sources were utilized throughout the multi-phased

rehabilitation process. The Georgia Department of Transportation provided funding through its Transportation Enhancement (TE) program for Phases I, II, and III. The Robert W. Woodruff Foundation also provided funding that supported the construction and architectural services provided by Lord Aeck Sargent Architects. A final funding partner was the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), whom supported the purchase of theater lighting, sound equipment, and related furnishings to allow it to function as an event venue. The ERGA is currently used as a community space and for regular performances by Savannah River Productions (visit: www.savannahriverproductions.org). In 2013, the ERGA was awarded a Georgia Trust award for "Excellence in Rehabilitation."

The next time you visit Elbert County, be sure to see this unique and impressive historic preservation project or make plans to attend one of the performances staged by Savannah River Productions. If you have any questions about the ERGA, historic preservation, or the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, please contact **Jordan Shoemaker**, NEGRC Project Specialist, at jshoemaker@negrc.org or (706) 369-5650.

PLACES IN PERIL

Each year the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation identifies ten historic sites across the state that are threatened by demolition, neglect, development, or insensitive public policies. The *Places in Peril* list raises awareness of vulnerable historic resources in hopes of inspiring preservation efforts. In order to be selected, sites have to meet several criteria:

- Sites must be listed or eligible for listing in the National Register for Historic Places or the Georgia Register of Historic Places
- Sites must be under serious duress that threatens their existence or historic, architectural, and/or archeological integrity
- There must be a demonstrable level of community support for the preservation of the listed site

If there is a potentially threatened site in your community and you want it listed on the 2016 *Places in Peril* list, nominations are due by June 6, 2016. If you have any questions about the *Places in Peril* list or how you can preserve a threatened resource, contact Ms. Shoemaker.

STATE GIO ADDRESSES NEGRC COUNCIL

Georgia's Inaugural Geospatial Information Officer (GIO) **Susan Miller** was the featured speaker at the NEGRC Council meeting of March 17th. As GIO, Ms. Miller will enhance the use and application of geospatial data in public policy and decision making to improve the overall safety and economic prosperity of the state and its citizens. Geospatial data includes such things as elevation, soil type, parcel boundaries, flood plains, streams, roads, and administrative boundaries. Ms. Miller will coordinate and partner with Regional Commissions, local governments, state and federal agencies, universities, the private sector, and related entities. This level of facilitation will provide better access to higher quality GIS data at a lower cost, and lead to more well planned and resourced communities, which are better equipped to attract and expand industry, enhance public safety, and protect the property of Georgia's citizens. She can be reached at susan.miller@gio.ga.gov or (470) 599-0631.



Ms. Miller



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Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS

April

13	9:30 a.m.	Workforce Development Youth Council	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
20	1:30 p.m.	Aging Advisory Council	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
21	Noon	NEGRC Council	Athens Holiday Inn
21	3:30 p.m.	Rails to Trails Advocacy Group	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room

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Sincerely & Respectfully,