

## HISTORIC MADISON

The City of Madison is located a half hour south of Athens on U.S. 441. With a population of more than 4,000, Madison is the seat and largest municipality in Morgan County. Established in 1809, it flourished in its infancy as a stagecoach stop and in-town residence for planters' families. For the most part, Madison's antebellum architecture survived because Mayor **Joshua Hill**, a strong Unionist who had resigned his congressional seat in 1861 to return to Georgia, developed a gentlemen's agreement with General Sherman's Detachment. Recent development was guided to respect the local sense of place and style, as Madison values its identity and historic integrity. Downtown Madison is punctuated by a central town square and anchored by historic government facilities. Surrounding environs are still primarily rural in character with a thriving agrarian economy supplemented by tourism dollars. Smart growth planning ensures that Madison will continue to serve as a charming home for its residents and a wonderful destination for visitors. Recognized nationally and awarded frequently, the City is led by Mayor **Fred Perriman**, a member of the NEGRC Council, and City Councilmembers **Rick Blanton**, **Joe DiLetto**, **Chris Hodges**, **Eric Joyce**, and **Carrie Peters-Reid**. City Manager **David Nunn** is a former Chairman of the Regional Commission Council.



*Madison-Morgan Cultural Center*



*Historic Presbyterian Church*



*Antebellum Homes*



## NEGRC COUNCIL SEPTEMBER MEETING

The September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the NEGRC Council featured two outstanding presentations. U.S. Congressman **Jody Hice** was with us to give an overview of ongoing activities in Washington. He focused on the positive economic news emanating from the nation's Capitol, and discussed tax cuts and the huge role of public-private partnerships. He was pleased to report on growth in wage rates, most recent unemployment figures, and the 201,000 jobs added in August.

Fox Theatre Institute Director **Leigh Burns** presented information on programs and opportunities offered by that organization. Several communities in Northeast Georgia have received grants in recent years for restoration associated with historic theatres and cultural centers. In addition, funds

are also made available for technical assistance and property acquisition. Ms. Burns welcomes the opportunity to work with other communities in the region and can be reached at **404-881-2003**.



*Congressman Hice and Executive Director Dove*

## KICK-OFF FOR COUNTY MANAGERS' MEETINGS

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) is hosting its first, quarterly county managers meeting on **November 14th at 10:30 a.m.** in the E.H. Culpepper Conference Room at **NEGRC headquarters**. These meetings are intended to provide an informational forum and an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning.

The first meeting will include guest speaker **Deana Perry, Executive Director of Rural Broadband**, to discuss the new Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Program. This program currently resides with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). There will also be an opportunity for managers to discuss, share, and ask questions regarding broadband or any other concerns. County managers may include other appropriate staff or guests. Lunch will be provided and sponsored by the architectural firm of Goodwyn Mills and Cawood, Inc (GMC). These meetings will be held quarterly throughout the year and cover a range of topics and programs.

To register for the meeting or for additional information, please contact **Monica Sagastizado**, NEGRC Project Specialist, at **msagastizado@negrc.org** or **(706)-369-5650**.

## GEORGIA'S REGIONAL COMMISSIONS' ROLE IN RURAL JOB GROWTH

The State of Georgia's rural communities greatly benefit when cooperating in multi-regional efforts seeking to develop economic development opportunities. In many of these types of efforts, Georgia's Regional Commissions plan a key role in developing projects and securing funding in coordination with their member local governments.

An example of this success is demonstrated in a recent economic development project undertaken in Franklin, Madison, and Elbert Counties and within two Regional Commissions. This multi-regional project involved project development and grant writing assistance from the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) and Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) in coordination with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The grant's approval, announced on September 10, 2018, provided \$2,225,177 in funding to support water infrastructure improvements to support the location of Georgia Renewable Power (GRP), a renewable energy company. This project will result in creating 50 new jobs with \$368,103,575 in total private investment. The new infrastructure will provide water connectivity between Elbert and Madison Counties—something that has been envisioned for many years. These facilities will generate electricity from biomass fuel totaling 58 mega-watts. The

electrical power will, in turn, get distributed to the power grid through Georgia Power.

Once in place, the water system improvements will also provide the needed infrastructure to support additional, long-term rural job growth through new business location in the three-county area. The multi-regional cooperation and partnerships undertaken by the Franklin County Industrial Building Authority, the Madison County Industrial Development Authority, and the City of Elberton enabled economic prosperity for rural Georgia envisioned for many years. Georgia's Regional Commissions (see: <http://www.garc.ga.gov> and <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/government-politics/regional-commissions-georgia>) remain a key player in making these types of projects a reality through local government partnership, state and federal agency coordination, and direct assistance in project development and funding.

For questions regarding ARC programs or funding, please contact **Burke Walker**, Director of PGS, at **(706) 369-5650** or email: **bwalker@negrc.org**.

## JACKSON COUNTY COMMUNITY OUTREACH RETREAT

Executive Director **Jim Dove** and Executive Assistant **Mott Beck** facilitated the annual planning retreat for leadership of Jackson County Community Outreach (JCCO) on August 25<sup>th</sup> at Northridge Medical Center in Commerce. The objective of the retreat was to plan for effective implementation of strategies to enhance the JCCO Scholarship Program and to increase participation and donorship to the JCCO Endowment Fund for 2019 and beyond. In addition to JCCO President **Jim Scott**, other Board participants included **Gene Gilliam, Anita Brown, Elaine Roller, and Brenda Walker**. Advisory Committee members present were **Andy Byers, Neville Anderson, Tim Cornelison, Les Knoblock, and Judy Warner**. Specific discussion items included: 1) Increase Endowment Fund Donorship, 2) Increase the Number of Technical College Scholarship Applicants, 3) Review/Upgrade the Technical College Scholarship Skillset Criteria List, and 4) Fundraising and Banquet Table Sponsorship. There were several priorities identified to be undertaken over the next year. These are: 1) Establish JCCO teams for various functions, 2) Interface with Technical College instructors, 3) Prioritize Technical College Scholarships, 4) Establish concrete goals regarding banquet, discretionary funds, endowment fund, and scholarship application, 5) Discuss opportunities with senior class officers and receive feedback, and 6) Increase banquet table costs and establish different levels of sponsorship. JCCO President Scott stated, "As JCCO President, we appreciate the dedication of our combined leadership team to the JCCO's mission, devoting many years of participation. And, we sincerely appreciate Jim Dove and Mott Beck of NEGRC for giving up a Saturday plus a week or more of pre-planning to make the session an overwhelming, productive success."



*Retreat Participants*

## MANUFACTUREADY GRADUATION

ManufactuREADY is a six-week program offered by Athens Technical College and WorkSource Northeast Georgia to help individuals gain the skills and knowledge needed to obtain full-time employment. Upon completion of the course, students earn six certifications, including Forklift and OSHA-10. Classes are offered on a rolling basis in Athens, Greensboro and Monroe.

For further information about the program and to apply, contact **Pete McGill**, Athens Technical College, at **(706) 369-5763**. For information on other Workforce Development services available in the Northeast Georgia region, contact the NEGRC Workforce Development Division at **(706) 369-5703**.



*ManufactuREADY graduates*

## MEDICARE'S OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD

Medicare's Open Enrollment runs **October 15<sup>th</sup> through December 7<sup>th</sup>**, and is the time of year when you can make changes to your Medicare coverage. You can make as many changes you feel appropriate during this time. The last change you make will take effect on January 1, 2019. Take action to make sure your coverage will meet your needs in 2019.

The changes you can make include:

1. Joining a new Medicare Advantage Plan or Part D Prescription Drug Plan.
2. Switching from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan.
3. Switching from a Medicare Advantage Plan to Original Medicare (with or without a Part D Plan).

Review your coverage for 2019:

1. Medicare Advantage and Part D plans usually change each year. Make sure that your drugs will still be covered next year and that your providers and pharmacies will still be in the plan's network.

Know who to contact if you have questions:

1. State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), which in Georgia is called GeorgiaCares. Counselors can help you review your options and pick a plan that meets your needs. Please contact GeorgiaCares at **1-866-55AGING (1-866-552-4464)**.
2. Medicare Advantage Plan/Part D Plan-contact your plan directly about your benefits, coverage or costs. If you do not receive your Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) or Evidence of Coverage (EOC), contact your plan to request changes. You should also talk to your doctor and other medical providers to find out which plans they accept.

3. **1-800-Medicare** or **www.medicare.gov**. Calling 1-800-Medicare or visiting **www.medicare.gov** are ways to find plans in your area or change your coverage during Medicare's Open Enrollment Period. Medicare will send you a new Medicare & You Handbook in the mail each fall containing information specific to your region.

It is important to remember that you should make any necessary changes to your Medicare coverage by December 7, 2018 in order for the changes to take effect January 1, 2019. In 2019, if you need to change your Medicare coverage, you may have the opportunity to make changes if you are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan or have Extra Help.

Help is out there. GeorgiaCares provides free, non-biased, one-on-one assistance in comparing your options and deciding on which plans best meet your needs. Contact GeorgiaCares at **1-866-55AGING (1-866-552-4464)**. Staff can also be reached at **GeorgiaCares@dhs.ga.gov** or on their website at **www.mygeorgiacares.org**.

## PLANNING FOR BICYCLING AND WALKING

Through an annual contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the NEGRC's Planning and Government Services (PGS) Division conducts bicycling and walking planning and educational activities in Northeast Georgia. Regionally, PGS maintains the **Northeast Georgia Plan for Bicycling and Walking**, which informs state and local governmental agencies on routes, practices, policies, and programs designed to increase the safety and usage of bicycling and walking for transportation and recreation. The NEGRC is also involved in multijurisdictional-trails planning on projects such as the Firefly Trail.

On the local level, NEGRC staff are available to prepare city and county plans for "complete streets" (safe roadways for all types of users) and trails, offer audits of individual corridors and/or neighborhoods, and conduct Safe Routes to School planning activities. The NEGRC's education and outreach programs involve partnerships with Georgia Bikes, BikeAthens, and others. The types of educational opportunities offered by the NEGRC include: organizing law-enforcement training (POST-certified), Bike-Friendly Driver training, safe-cycling workshops, and a presentation on 'complete streets' and 'complete communities.'

With our contractual arrangement with GDOT, these activities require minimal local match from member local governments. Staff are available to assist with individual or collective local projects and educational opportunities upon request. Please contact the NEGRC's Principal Planner, **John Devine**, AICP, with any questions at **jdevine@negrc.org** or **(706) 369-5650**.



*Complete Streets program meeting with City of Madison*

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Athens, GA 30605

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# Update

## REGIONAL MEETINGS OCTOBER

9	8:30 a.m.	Workforce Development Board	NEGRC Atrium
9	11:00 a.m.	NEGA Care-Net	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
17	1:30 p.m.	Aging Advisory Council	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
18	Noon	NEGRC Council	Athens Holiday Inn
18	3:30 p.m.	Firefly Trails Advocacy Group	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room



*Sincerely & Respectfully,*

