

ORIENTATION HELD FOR LOCAL ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

The annual orientation provided by NEGRC staff for local elected and appointed officials in the region was held on February 2nd in the E.H. Culpepper Conference Room at headquarters. The orientation was designed to acquaint attendees with resources available at NEGRC and advise as to how they might take full advantage of these opportunities.

Presentations were made by **Jim Dove**, **Mott Beck**, **Evans Brinson**, **Carol Cofer**, **Peggy Jenkins**, and **Burke Walker**. Staff also fielded questions from attendees and met privately with several officials following the orientation to discuss specific projects. The officials left with a better understanding of services provided.



Scenes from Orientation

REGIONAL COMMISSIONS DCA SATISFACTION SURVEY

How satisfied are you with the quality of planning services you've had with the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission? How have you worked with the RC in the past? What projects would you like staff to help you complete in the future?

These questions and others can be answered by taking a five minute "Satisfaction Survey" issued by the Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Office of Sustainable Development. DCA believes, "Since regional commissions are receiving state funds, improving the service they provide to their members is consistent with the Governor's customer service mission."

The survey can be accessed online by navigating to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PDX7R7P>, or through the NEGRC's website (<http://www.negrc.org/planning.php>, see "Planning News & Announcements"). The survey will help the NEGRC assist your

local government by providing DCA with critical background information related to the kind and quality of services we provide. Responses will be accepted until March 15, 2011. Examples of the type of work referenced in the survey include zoning, greenspace and tree ordinances, grant proposals, comprehensive planning, training and education, and developments of regional impact. If you indicate specific projects with which your local government needs assistance, DCA will relay requests to the RC. Otherwise, information will be kept confidential.

According to Planning and Government Services (PGS) Division Director **Burke Walker**, "The NEGRC encourages its local governments to complete this survey to evaluate local and regional planning efforts. It is also intended to assist DCA and the NEGRC in identifying local government project needs in the upcoming fiscal year."

If you have questions about the survey or if you have problems accessing the survey as linked above, please call or email Senior Planner **John Devine** at (706) 369-5650 or e-mail: jdevine@negrc.org. For information about the NEGRC's Planning Services, contact Mr. Walker at the phone number above or email: bwalker@negrc.org.

CITY OF HULL TO GET RADIO STATION

The City of Hull in Madison County will become home to the area's newest radio station. **WNEE**, 88.1 on your FM dial, was scheduled to hit the airwaves in late February or early March. The station, located at 55 Easy Street, will feature Christian content. **Lowell Jackson**, Chairman of the Community Public Radio Board in Athens, advises that there will be interviews with local leaders and a "man on the street" feature. The WNEE signal will be audible to I-20, Gainesville, Gwinnett County, and the Cities of Elberton and Royston. Congratulations to the City of Hull Mayor and Council and citizens!

REMINDER

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council will meet on **Thursday, March 17, 2011 at noon at the Athens Holiday Inn**. Information on the meeting will be forthcoming.

NEW WEBSITE UNVEILED

The new NEGRC website was unveiled at the monthly meeting of the NEGRC Council on February 17th. The firm of **J House Media** was contracted to design the website. The site is very user friendly and may be accessed at www.negrc.org. The Front Desk Section includes a calendar of events, information on our member counties and cities, members of the Council, and meeting agendas and minutes. There are also extensive sections

on our Planning and Government Services Division, Workforce Development Division, Area Agency on Aging, and Documents and Resources. Information on staff contacts in each division is also available. The website is accessible, not only in English, but in French, Spanish, and Chinese also. Should you have any questions or suggestions relative to the site, please do not hesitate to contact us.

PRE-DISASTER HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

Northeast Georgia's twelve counties and their Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs) have prepared and completed Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plans (PDM) in coordination with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA). Many of these plans were developed with assistance provided by NEGRC and approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These plans are approaching their three-five year update period and require complete updates. The costs for the updates can be funded through GEMA PDM grants. In an effort to assist local governments with this process, the NEGRC's Planning and Government Services (PGS) Division will host an informational and educational session and audio conference about Local Hazard Mitigation Planning on **March 16, 2011 at 3:00 p.m. at the NEGRC in Athens**.

The first part of the session will include presentations from PGS and GEMA staff on the PDM process. It will also include details on how EMAs can work in conjunction with the NEGRC in developing the updates. The second part of the session includes an American Planning Association (APA) audio conference titled *Mitigating Hazards Through Planning* beginning at 4:00 p.m. APA AICP Members will receive 1.5 Certification Maintenance credits for attending the audio conference. Local Government Managers and staff, EMA directors, and Planners are invited to participate in one or both of these sessions that are offered **free** but require pre-registration by March 9, 2011 by contacting **Jim Moneyhun** at (706) 369-5650 or jmoneyhun@negrc.org.

For information on updating PDM Plans and potential assistance from the NEGRC, contact Mr. Walker at the aforementioned phone number or email address. Please check the NEGRC's website www.negrc.org for further details on this educational session and updates to the agency (type PDM in the search box).

UNION POINT IS GEORGIA'S NEWEST CLG

Last month, the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced that the City of Union Point became Georgia's 81st Certified Local Government (CLG). The designation was confirmed by the National Park Service and U.S. Department of the Interior in January.

CLGs are communities that create a historic preservation ordinance and establish a design review commission to

protect historic properties. Union Point started this effort in 2005 with the assistance of Mr. Walker, who worked closely with Councilmember **Joel McRay** and **Wayne Jackson**, City Clerk. Union Point's CLG designation is the progression of local preservation efforts that began in 1991 with listing most of the city in the National Register of Historic Places. As a CLG, Union Point is eligible for state preservation funds that may be used for a variety of preservation activities including historic resource surveys, National Register of Historic Places nominations, educational activities, marketing purposes, publications, heritage tourism studies, and predevelopment plans.

Commenting on the designation, **Leigh Burns**, HPD's preservation planner and CLG coordinator said, "Members of the Union Point HPC and local government officials worked diligently to see the designation completed." The HPC has participated in statewide training and continues to encourage the preservation education of its members, as well as the larger Union Point community. Union Point joins Greensboro as the second CLG designated city in Greene County.

To learn more about the CLG program, visit HPD's website at www.gashpo.org/content/displaynavigation.asp?TopCategory=75 or contact Mr. Walker at the above number or email address.

HOUSE BILL ELIMINATES FUNDING FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA)

The U.S. House of Representatives voted in the early hours of Saturday, February 19, 2011 to slash funding for domestic programs by \$61 billion in order to keep the federal government in operation past the end of the current Continuing Resolution on March 4th. The bill slashes funding for the workforce system, both past, present, and future. It includes a \$175 million rescission of prior year "unobligated" funds and **eliminates \$3.6 billion in PY 11 funding (July 1, 2011) for all WIA formula programs.** Should this bill pass in the Senate (which it has vowed not to), as of July 1, there will be no new funding for WIA formula programs, devastating the workforce system's ability to provide assistance to jobseekers and employers in need of skilled workers.

During the period July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010, Northeast Georgia provided services to 463 adults, 532 youth and 355 dislocated workers utilizing Workforce Investment Act (WIA) formula funds for a total of 1,350, a 31% increase. In addition, Northeast Georgia also received WIA ARRA funds which provided training services to an additional 144 adults, 779 youth (through the Summer 2009 Work Experience Program) and 331 dislocated workers. This brings the total served in PY 09 to 3094, an increase of 201% in persons enrolled in WIA financial training assistance. Northeast Georgia has a proven performance track record with an adult employment rate of 75.3%, a dislocated worker employment rate of 73.1% and an older youth entered employment rate of 77.5%. All of these employment outcomes were achieved with the region's unemployment rate of 9.7%, ranging from 6.8% in Oconee County to 14.4% in Elbert County.

How can you help?

In the immediate term, it is important to weigh in with your House Members about how HB 1 will eliminate funding for WIA programs in Northeast Georgia, devastating the region's ability to help local employers recover from this recession and re-employ jobseekers.

We are actively working with our Senators to protect workforce funding from cuts in their version of the full year Continuing Resolution. For further information on these proposed cuts, please contact **Carol Rayburn Cofer** at (706) 369-5703.

13TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK

The Northeast Georgia Elder Rights Team joins with federal, state and local government agencies and consumer protection organizations to announce the 13th Annual National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW), March 6-12, 2011. During this week, groups nationwide share tips and information that help consumers protect their privacy, stay safe online, manage money and debt, avoid identity theft, and avoid frauds and scams.

This year's theme – **Your Information Destination: ncpw.gov!** emphasizes where consumers nationwide can go to get information to take full advantage of their consumer rights and make better-informed decisions. At the website, consumers can view, download and order multiple copies of educational materials provided by nearly 30 organizations, check out a calendar of events nationwide, and find out how you can host an event. The website's blog features posts from consumer experts nationwide, and allows consumers to connect directly with them about a variety of consumer protection resources.

National organizers of this year's NCPW include AARP, Better Business Bureau, Consumer Federation of America (CFA), Federal Citizens' Information Center (FCIC), Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and U.S. Postal Service.

The Northeast Georgia Elder Rights Team is proud to be a part of this year's National Consumer Protection Week campaign. Education is the first line of defense for consumers who want to manage their money wisely and protect themselves from frauds and rip-offs. Consumers are encouraged to take advantage of the resources that NCPW features at www.consumer.gov/ncpw to help them master the financial facts of life.

If you wish to receive information about fraud and identity theft, contact the **GeorgiaCares Program** at 1-800-669-8387 or the **Elderly Legal Assistance Program** at 1-888-257-9519.

Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS
MARCH

2	10:00 a.m.	Arts Development Council	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
9	1:00 p.m.	NEGA Solid Waste Management Authority	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
10	10:00 a.m.	Athens Line	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
16	2:00 p.m.	UOBWA Operations Committee	Bear Creek Reservoir
16	3:00 p.m.	Local Hazard Mitigation Planning Conference	NEGRC Atrium
17	10:00 a.m.	Firefly Trails Advocacy Group	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
17	Noon	NEGRC Council	Athens Holiday Inn
23	9:30 a.m.	Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
23	Noon	MEGA (WIA)	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room

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Sincerely & Respectfully,

