

NEGRC FACILITATES RETREATS/PLANNING SESSIONS

Executive Director **Jim Dove** and Executive Assistant **Mott Beck** were busy during late February and March facilitating a number of retreats and planning sessions. Facilitation of these sessions is provided as a service to our member governments.

For the second consecutive year, an annual retreat was facilitated for the Newton County Board of Commissioners at the Burge Plantation. The session was held on February 25th and 26th. A variety of matters were discussed including the tax digest, budget process, HB 277, audit, GIS, development services, redistricting, and others.

A day long retreat was conducted for the Jackson County Airport Authority on March 2nd at the Pat Bell Conference Center. In addition to developing a Vision Statement, the Authority reached consensus on a Code of Ethics. Other issues discussed included airport revenues, FBO, Capital Improvements Plan, design of a new terminal, overview of finances, rules and regulations, overlay district/zoning, and other matters.

A planning session for the Elberton Mayor and Council was facilitated for the second consecutive year at Arrowhead Point Clubhouse at Russell State Park. The session was held on March 4th and 5th. Discussion items included the general fund and activities of each City Department.

Finally, a retreat was conducted for the Braselton Mayor and Council on March 18th. This marked the fourth such session facilitated for the Town. Participants reviewed previous goals and accomplishments of the Mayor and Council, as well as a report of accomplishments, challenges, and priorities of individual departments. Goals and objectives for the next 12-18 months were developed.



Newton County Board of Commissioners



Jackson County Airport Authority



Elberton Mayor, Council, and staff



Braselton Mayor and Council

GEORGIA WINS NATIONAL AWARD FOR INNOVATION IN COMMUNITY LIVING INITIATIVES

The U.S. Administration on Aging announced that Georgia has won the 2011 Excellence in Action award for Outstanding Achievement in Changing Systems by a State. The honor recognizes the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Aging Services for developing programs that improve services and support for older adults and people with disabilities.

"We are building an unprecedented number of bridges across agencies and divisions to give consumers more convenience and flexibility," said Dr. **James Bulot**, Director of the DHS Division of Aging Services. "Our collaborators include the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the Veterans Administration, the Georgia Department of Community Health, and many others."

The Georgia programs that have attracted national attention help organizations coordinate activities and streamline processes to give older adults and people with disabilities more control over services and efficient access to information. Initiatives with widespread attention include the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC), the Community Living Program (CLP), and the new Veterans-Directed Home and Community-Based Services Program (VD-HCBS).

- The ADRC serves older adults and people with disabilities, their families, and caregivers by providing information and counseling about long-term services and supports. This is accomplished through partnerships within aging and disabilities fields.
- In selected areas, CLP provides eligible older adults and caregivers with funds to hire and supervise in-home help and also to purchase needed supplies.
- In selected areas, VD-HCBS gives eligible veterans and their caregivers the option of managing their in-home care budgets, workers and supplies.

Georgia's aging and disability network offers a range of services and information to help individuals successfully age in place. Some services have a waiting list or may not be available in every county. All Area Agencies on Aging, however, offer quick access to general resource information, adult protective services, elder abuse prevention education, answers about Medicare and related products, senior legal hotline help, and caregiver support. For additional information, please contact the **Division of Aging Services** at **1-866-55AGING (1-866-552-4464)** or visit **www.aging.dhr.georgia.gov**.

UPDATE ON BASIC COMPUTER SKILLS VOUCHER PROGRAM

The Governor's Office of Workforce Development has initiated a program that provides Basic Computer Skills vouchers to those who have little or no experience with computers. The agency recognizes that computer skills are essential in today's technologically advanced society and may enhance an applicant's ability to obtain employment. The Basic Computer Skills vouchers are issued to

interested parties free of charge by local Workforce Development offices. (As of February 2011, online issuance of vouchers began). Applicants must then call the training provider (the local technical college) to register for the class within 45 days of the date the voucher is issued.

The first course curriculum covers components of the computer such as the keyboard, mouse, scanner, monitor, printer and speakers, storage devices, and their uses. It provides an overview of how the computer operates and versions of Windows operating system. The participant learns how to navigate in Windows, manage documents, connect to and search the internet, and to use E-mail.

For additional information, please contact NEGRC's Workforce Development Division at **(706) 369-5703**.

SPRING 2011 SETA CONFERENCE

The Spring 2011 Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) Conference was held March 6-9 in Greensboro, North Carolina at the Sheraton Four Seasons and Koury Convention Center. SETA is a professional development organization providing training and staff development to frontline staff from the eight southeastern states. There were 584 attendees and more than 50 interactive training sessions from which the conference attendees were able to choose.

Sessions included topics covering youth programming, Dislocated Workers, adult funding and eligibility; case management, Washington news, Rapid Response, and Business/Employer Relations. **Carol Cofer, Danielle Ingels, Kim Meadows, Rhonda Keeter, and Rima Sullivan** from the Workforce Development Division attended the conference and participated in many useful workshops. Attendees also had the pleasure of participating in a question and answer session with **Jane Oates**, Assistant Secretary of the USDOL's Employment & Training Administration and **Helen Parker**, USDOL ETA Regional Administrator. The Fall 2011 SETA Conference will be held in Savannah in September.

2011 BICYCLE FRIENDLY NORTHEAST GEORGIA AWARDS

With funding provided through a contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the NEGRC is facilitating the first Bicycle Friendly Northeast Georgia Awards program. Planning and Government Services (PGS) staff has solicited assistance from the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force in developing this program to celebrate local governments, organizations, and businesses that have encouraged bicycling and bicycle commuting in the region. The online application will be available Monday, March 28th through Friday, April 8th at **www.surveymonkey.com/s/CVXNRY8**. Applicants have the opportunity to receive a total of twelve points, and award levels have been determined as follows:

- 10-12 points – Gold
- 7-9 points – Silver
- 5-6 points – Bronze
- 1-4 points – Honorable Mention

Awards will be officially announced in May 2011 at the NEGRC Council meeting. Awardees will receive a certificate, recognition on the new NEGRC website, and the use of a special Bicycle Friendly Northeast Georgia logo for one year. If you need further information, please contact Nina Kelly at nkelly@negrc.org.

PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PLAN UPDATES

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA2K) required counties across the nation to create Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plans to address the community's vulnerability to hazards prior to a disaster event. The intent of a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan is to help an individual county reduce the risks from natural and technological hazards. The plan also serves as a roadmap for decision makers as they commit time and resources to reduce the effects of potential hazards. By updating and maintaining a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan, counties and municipalities maintain eligibility for funding from FEMA through the national post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

Between 2005 and 2007, Northeast Georgia's twelve counties and Emergency Management Agencies prepared and completed Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plans in coordination with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA). Many of these plans were developed with assistance provided by NEGRC staff and approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These plans are approaching their update period, and within the next two years will require complete updates.

FEMA provides funding through the Pre-Disaster Mitigation program to communities for hazard mitigation planning, including Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan updates. Pre-Disaster Mitigation grants are available annually and are awarded on a competitive basis. Many Northeast Georgia counties are expected to receive GEMA grants in 2010. Federal funding of Pre-Disaster Mitigation activities typically comprise 75 percent of the total eligible project cost. The non-Federal share may be met with cash, contributions, certain other grants programs, or in-kind services.

Once a community has been awarded Pre-Disaster Mitigation funding, to begin the actual update of the plan a local planning committee must be created to oversee the plan update process and a kick-off meeting should be scheduled in the community. The Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan update focuses on updating data and information related to critical facilities, potential hazards, risk assessment, and the mitigation strategy identified in the original plan. Upon completion of the plan update, the draft plan is transmitted to GEMA and FEMA for review and comment. Once approval is obtained from GEMA and FEMA, the plan must be locally adopted by resolution. The estimated timeline for developing and completing the update varies but typically involves an 18-month process.

Counties may choose to engage the NEGRC to assist in the preparation of their Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan update. In such instances, NEGRC staff will provide meeting coordination and facilitation, data analysis and mapping, administration of the planning process and labor match documentation, and development and composition of the actual Plan update.

For further information regarding the Pre-Disaster Mitigation planning process and how NEGRC staff can assist your community, please contact Burke Walker at bwalker@negrc.org or (706) 369-5650.

RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the new Jackson County Senior Citizens Center was held on Tuesday, March 1st. Speakers for the event included Advisory Council Chairman **Archie Chaney**, BOC Chairman **Hunter Bicknell**, and Senior Citizens Center Director **Shirley Smith**. Attending from the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission were **Mott Beck**, **Peggy Jenkins**, **Alan Densen**, and **Urika Roebuck**. The total cost of the project was approximately \$800,000.



Senior Citizens Center Ceremony

FREE WEBINAR SERIES

Changing the Culture of Long Term Care is a series of three **free** webinars that will be held on April 14th, April 21st and April 28th from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The series is aimed at promoting culture change in Georgia. It is an opportunity to explore the Culture Change movement, which is based on person-centered values and practices, where the voices of elders and those working with them always come first. The webinars are based on the "Changing the Culture of Long-Term Care Symposiums" that took place in Georgia in 2010. Webinar goals and expected outcomes are:

- To build common knowledge and ensure an understanding of the principles of culture change and person-centered care in long-term care settings;
- To identify ways in which culture change is already occurring and can be fostered and nurtured in the near future;
- To identify and address concerns which regulatory agencies and legislators may be able to address so that culture change progress can continue; and
- To increase awareness, facilitate information sharing, and promote partnerships between all stakeholders of aging services in Georgia.

The webinars are co-sponsored by the Georgia Division of Aging Services' Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, the University of Georgia Institute of Gerontology, the Georgia Geriatric Education Center, the Georgia Council on Aging's Georgia for a Lifetime Initiative, the Culture Change Network of Georgia, and the Division of Social Work at Valdosta State University.

For further information, visit the UGA Institute of Gerontology website at: <http://publichealth.uga.edu/geron/events/free-webinar-series-changing-culture-long-term-care>.

Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS

APRIL

4	10:00 a.m.	NEGRC Planning Advisory Committee	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
12	8:30 a.m.	Workforce Investment Board	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
14	10:00 a.m.	Athens Line	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
20	2:00 p.m.	UOBWA Operations Committee	Bear Creek Reservoir
20	1:30 p.m.	Aging Advisory Council	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
20	3:30 p.m.	Bike/Pedestrian Task Force	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
21	10:00 a.m.	Firefly Trails Advocacy	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
21	Noon	NEGRC Council	Athens Holiday Inn



Sincerely & Respectfully,