

POTENTIAL T-SPLOST PROJECTS SUBMITTED TO GDOT

Northeast Georgia governments presented 164 projects totaling \$2.04 billion for inclusion in a submittal that was forwarded to GDOT State Planning Director Todd Long in early April. The proposed new transportation sales tax will be voted on in 2012. If the tax is approved by voters, it is anticipated that slightly more than \$1 billion can be collected during a ten-year period. Projects from the twelve-county region were submitted for a completeness review by NEGRC staff no later than March 30th. Executive Director **Jim Dove** and Executive Assistant **Mott Beck** reviewed each project and submitted them to GDOT on April 6th. Included among the projects were new bypasses, widenings of existing highways, bridge constructions and repairs, intersection improvements, transit efforts, and development of greenways, among others. After reviewing the projects, GDOT staff will return an "unconstrained list" to the Northeast Georgia Regional Transportation Roundtable (RTR) by a June 1st target date. The Executive Committee of the Roundtable will then produce a draft investment list (constrained list) prior to August 15th. The draft list will be presented to both the RTR and GDOT, public meetings will be held, and action on a final list will be taken no later than October 15th. For additional information, please contact Mr. Dove or Ms. Beck at **(706) 369-5650** or e-mail jdove@negrc.org; mbeck@negrc.org.



Widening of US 78 in Clarke and Oglethorpe Counties (L), SR 316 intersection improvements in Oconee County (C), and Jackson County airport improvements (R) were all included.

OXFORD HOLDS ANNUAL RETREAT

For the second consecutive year, Jim Dove and Mott Beck facilitated the annual retreat of the Oxford Mayor and Council. Held at the new Municipal Building on Saturday, April 16th, the session covered a variety of topics. Among these were development of a mission statement, change to a City Manager form of government, cash flow projections, capital projects, infrastructure, and encouraging citizen participation in government matters. The Mayor and Council also reviewed the 2008 through 2012 Short Term Work Program (STWP) and noted the significant achievements associated with that document. For further information, please contact Ms. Beck.



Oxford Mayor and Council

NEGRC WELCOMES NEW STAFF

Last month, the NEGRC's Planning & Government Services (PGS) Division, under the direction of Burke Walker, was pleased to have **Dave Van De Weghe** join its staff, filling the position of Principal Planner. Mr. Van De Weghe's broad, prior experience in both regional and local planning brings a unique dimension to the PGS staff.

Most recently, Dave was a Planner for Columbia County, Georgia, a rapidly-growing community of 125,000 people in the Augusta metro area. There, he oversaw the county's long-range planning, evaluated rezoning requests, worked with developers to design residential and commercial



projects, and promoted economic development through customized market analysis reports. Prior to his employment in Columbia County, Dave worked for the Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission in Augusta as a Regional Planner. At the Regional Commission, he composed comprehensive plans, revised zoning ordinances, wrote solid waste management plans and drafted environmental protection ordinances. He started his career at an inner city non-profit organization in Columbus, Ohio, where he managed a CDBG-funded home repair program for low income seniors and families. He also oversaw community outreach efforts including homebuyer education seminars and assisted with neighborhood block watch and volunteer programs.

Like the other PGS staff planners, Dave is certified with the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Dayton and a Masters Degree in City and Regional Planning from the Ohio State University. His areas of professional interest include: economic development for low income communities, the use of statistics and Census data to aid in decision making, and clarifying development codes to make them more user-friendly.

As requirements for local comprehensive plans are expected to change in the upcoming year, Dave, as the Principal Planner, is uniquely qualified to advise and assist local governments through this new process. His prior experience, on both sides of the comprehensive planning process, allows him to understand local government needs. The NEGRC hopes all our local governments will soon have an opportunity to meet and welcome Dave to our region and call on him for planning assistance. Dave can be reached at **(706) 369-5650** or email: dvandeweghe@negrc.org.

For information on the PGS Division and its services, contact Burke Walker, Director of Planning & Government Services, at (706) 369-5650 or email: bwalker@negrc.org.

ARC PUBLISHES CIVIL WAR MAP

Last month, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) announced the publication of a new map entitled, "Civil War: The Home Front." This map is intended to commemorate the 150th year of the American Civil War and show the locations in Appalachia that were affected by the War.

While most Civil War stories focus on battles and military history, few narratives have explored how sites away from the battlefields on the home front were affected by the war. The map guide highlights these places and the social and technological history behind them. Visitors are invited to see the heritage farms, railroads, restored houses and historic downtowns, national parks and memorials, living history museums, and many other attractions integral to the Civil War era.

The NEGRC region has four ARC counties (Barrow, Elbert, Jackson and Madison) and two sites were included on the map: the Crawford Long Museum in Jefferson and the Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm in Jackson County. Both facilities function as museums that are open to the public. The Shields-Ethridge Farm is an outdoor agricultural museum with a long history beginning in 1789 when it was first developed. The history of the Farm is punctuated by the fact that two Shields sons served in the Confederate Army and survived the battlefields of Virginia to return home to farm. The Crawford Long Museum and the Shields-

Ethridge Farm were two of 150 sites selected for the map, chosen from over 500 nominations.

The map itself is available as a free insert in the Spring 2011 issue of *American Heritage* magazine. In addition, copies have been distributed by the tourism offices of the 13 Appalachian states to targeted traveler mailing lists, regional welcome centers, and tourism trade shows. Individual copies will also be available at the NEGRC's headquarters. The map guide is also available as an interactive feature online at www.visitappalachia.com, where additional information specific to each Appalachian state is available to travelers.

Heritage Tourism is an important part of Northeast Georgia's economy and its four ARC counties. According to U.S. Travel Association estimates, tourism is a \$704.4 billion industry employing more than 7.4 million people in the United States (2009 data). ARC, last year, funded an interpretative program at the Shields-Ethridge Farm that can be found at www.shieldsethridgefarminc.com and previously provided financial support of the Crawford Long Museum.

For information on the ARC programs or heritage tourism, contact Burke Walker at **(706) 369-5650** or email: bwalker@negrc.org.

MAY IS OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

Every May since 1963, people in towns and cities across the country have come together to celebrate the enormous contributions of older Americans—borne of wisdom, experience, and the will to realize their dreams and speak their minds. Older Americans Month is our chance to show our appreciation and support our seniors as they continue to enrich and strengthen our communities.

The theme of this year's celebration—Older Americans: Connecting the Community—pays homage to the many ways in which older adults bring inspiration and continuity to the fabric of our communities. Their shared histories, diverse experiences, and wealth of knowledge have made our culture, economy, and local character what they are today. The theme also highlights the many ways technology is helping older Americans live longer, healthier and more engaged lives.

In fact, older Americans are more active in community life than ever before, thanks in part to advances in health care, education, technology, and financial stability over the last several decades that have greatly increased their vitality and standard of living. Older adults are out and about giving back and making a difference in their community.

Our seniors are mentoring the leaders of tomorrow, taking to heart the need for intergenerational learning to guide and inspire young minds. They offer a take on times gone by not discussed in any history class—a unique perspective that sheds new light on contemporary issues.

Older Americans step up to help one another as well. Across the country, seniors connect with other seniors by delivering meals, helping with home repair, assisting with shopping, and offering companionship, counseling, and care. Their efforts remind us that when older adults are active and engaged in their communities, everyone benefits.

Help us celebrate Older Americans Month! Join your neighbors not only to recognize what older citizens bring to our communities, but also to help them continue playing a vital role in weaving a unique and lasting community fabric.

Contact the NEGA Area Agency on Aging at **706-369-5650** or your local senior center to find out about volunteer opportunities with programs that provide services for seniors. We think you will discover that when you help seniors thrive in your community, you gain far more than you give.

NEGRC HOSTS CENSUS 2010 WORKSHOP

On Tuesday, April 12th, the NEGRC hosted a regional workshop to educate local government officials and staff on topics related to the recent release of data associated with the 2010 US Census. The chief-elected official from each NEGRC local government was invited to attend in a letter sent from NEGRC Executive Director Jim Dove. The workshop included a presentation from US Census Bureau staff that focused on general Census information, where and how to access Census data, and using and analyzing those data geographically. The information presented at the workshop sheds light on using the 2010 Census and accessing it online and through GIS.

In past Census years, most households received "short forms" that asked for basic demographic and housing information, while the rest (approximately one in six) were asked to complete "long forms" that also inquired as to income, employment, educational attainment, language, citizenship, health, military service, commuting patterns, detailed housing status, and other areas. However, the 2010 Census presented Americans with one streamlined form, billed as "one of the shortest forms in history," to gauge the number, name, age, sex, date of birth, and Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin, as well as type of housing. (<http://2010.census.gov/2010census/>)

Since the bulk of the former long-form's questions were not featured in the single 2010 form, the Census Bureau utilizes the yearly American Community Survey (ACS) to acquire such information. The ACS is a sample-based tool (i.e., it does not question all Americans) that generates data similar to those derived from the long form on a continuous, rolling basis. (<http://www.census.gov/acs/>)

The Census Bureau also continues to produce population estimates for certain geography types on an annual basis. While these can be helpful in establishing a rough idea of a community's population in the estimate year, they do not represent actual counts of residents. As such, they should not be relied upon as definite.

Population counts, American Community Survey data, and Census Estimates can be found through the Bureau's American FactFinder tool. *Please note:* this resource is currently in a transitional period, and access methods are likely to change. At present, FactFinder is split into two separate websites. The new version (<http://factfinder2.census.gov>) presents data from Census 2010 and Census 2000, while the "Legacy" FactFinder (<http://factfinder.census.gov>) references information from the American Community Survey, the Economic Census, and the Population Estimates Program. Please exercise caution in utilizing the correct tool to access the data you wish to retrieve; Census Bureau assistance is available to help users navigate these systems (**800-923-8282** or <https://ask.census.gov/>).

In addition to the presentation from U. S Census staff, NEGRC GIS Manager **Steve Cumblidge** and Senior Planner **John Devine** provided an overview of Census 2010 data in the region and illustrated several ways in which the Regional Commission can assist local governments utilizing the new data. These include redistricting, boundary and annexation surveys, facilities and infrastructure planning to meet the needs of growth areas, and preparing for future Census-related undertakings.

Please contact Mr. Cumblidge (scumblidge@negrc.org) and/or Mr. Devine (jdevine@negrc.org) if you would like assistance on Census-related projects. To access and obtain Census data for your community, please refer to the information above.



Census workshop attendees

WORKFORCE SUCCESS STORY

(The following is illustrative of efforts in which our Workforce Investment Division is involved. Only the first name of the client is used to protect his anonymity.)

John is a 29 year old Clarke County resident who was laid off from Recycle South in 2009. He was unaware that a layoff was imminent, was unprepared, and had to determine how to support his wife and three kids. He had always wanted to drive an 18-wheeler, so he began researching the companies in the area that offered Commercial Drivers License (CDL) training. When he found a local company he called them and realized very quickly that the cost of getting his CDL license was totally out of reach.

John continued to visit the local Department of Labor in search of a job. He commented to a DOL employee that he had always wanted to drive a truck over-the-road but just could not afford it. He was referred to Workforce Investment Act (WIA) staff through the Northeast Georgia Workforce Investment Board (WIB); and as he said, "the rest is history." Staff met with John, completed his enrollment application and arranged to pay his tuition at the CDL of Georgia driving school in Winder. Upon graduation in June 2010, John went to work with Interstate Transport, a company out of Tacoma, Washington with hubs all over the eastern states. "WIA was the best thing that could have happened to me. It has allowed me to do something I've always wanted to do. It has also allowed my kids to see that you are never too old to return to school. I'm making great money doing something I love and can now provide for my family. If not for WIA, I'm not sure where we would be right now." John travels all over the eastern seaboard for three weeks at a time and then he is at home for a week.

In the 12 county Northeast Georgia region, the Northeast Georgia WIB, through the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, provides a variety of services made possible by funding through the WIA. Last year, over 3,094 Northeast Georgia residents utilized the Northeast Georgia WIA for job search, career advisement, and retraining services. Most of the customers were laid-off from their jobs due to down-sizing or business closures in the area. WIA program participation rates have gone up 200% in Northeast Georgia in the past two years. More than 240 different employers hired persons who had received retraining assistance utilizing WIA funds.

For additional information on the services available through the Northeast Georgia Workforce Investment Board, contact **Carol Rayburn Cofer** at **(706) 369-5703**.

Update

REGIONAL MEETINGS

MAY

2	10:00 a.m.	Planning Advisory Committee	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
4	10:00 a.m.	Arts Development Council	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
10	8:30 a.m.	Workforce Investment Board	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
12	10:00 a.m.	Athens Line	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
18	2:00 p.m.	UOBWA Operations Committee	Bear Creek Reservoir
19	10:00 a.m.	Firefly Trails Advocacy Group	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room
19	Noon	NEGA Regional Commission Council	Athens Holiday Inn
25	9:30 a.m.	Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority	E.H. Culpepper Conference Room



Sincerely & Respectfully,