

The Brighter Future

A Northwest Georgia Newsletter

The ARC Grant Deadline is Fast Approaching

Chris Brazell, Georgia's ARC liaison, will host an application workshop on Thursday, June 25th at The Rome Area History Museum. This workshop will provide information related to project development and preparing successful funding applications. If leaders from your community would like to attend this workshop, and have not registered, please email annaka.woodruff@dca.ga.gov and include: name, organization, and if you prefer a vegetarian or gluten-free meal option.

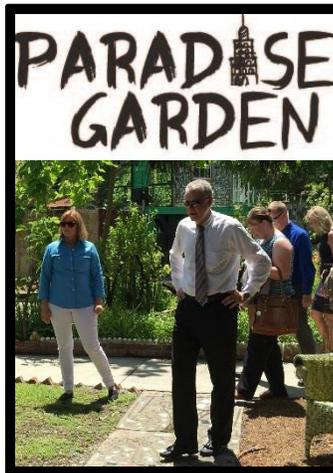
ARC funds projects that address four essential goals identified in the Commission's strategic plan: (1) Increase job opportunities and per capita income in Appalachia to reach parity with the nation, (2) strengthen the capacity of Appalachia to compete in the global economy, (3) develop and improve Appalachia's infrastructure to make the Region economically competitive and, (4) build the Appalachian Development Highway System to reduce the region's isolation.

ARC pre-application deadline is August 31st this year. NWGRC is more than happy to provide guidance on project eligibility and assistance in preparing a grant application.

The Community and Economic Development Representatives at NWGRC request notification of any potential projects requiring pre-application assistance by May 30th each year. This will allow NWGRC sufficient time to research, prepare, and write the application. It will also allow us to discuss the project with our ARC and DCA Representatives.

ARC Projects Selected for the 2015 Full Application Include

- Calhoun City Schools/Gordon County; to provide design software and fabrication equipment including 3D printers and CNC milling machine to teach mechatronics (mechanical engineering and electronics) and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) skills through an innovative partnership between local business and industry and Calhoun City Schools.
- City of Cedartown; to renovate the current 52,000 square foot hospital building to accommodate the One Door Polk Network. This facility will improve the health, wellness, and economic wellbeing of residents of the City of Cedartown and Polk County by bringing distinct social service providers together in one location.
- Jasper/Pickens County; to extend sewer service north along Georgia Highway 515 to provide service to the proposed Port Royal development to help create 400 new full-time jobs.
- Murray County; to provide for phase I (site development) for a multi-phase project to construct the Murray County inland port, including demolition, ESPC (erosion, sedimentation, pollution control), earthwork, and site fencing on the initial 31 acres of land.
- Trion/Chattooga County; to provide for site development of the Trion Industrial Park, including grading of the initial 20-acre parcel to shape the available building sites in accordance with the park master plan to ready the park for industrial development.
- Tunnel Hill/Whitfield County; to develop a preservation and reuse plan for the local historic depot (one of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation's Ten 'Places in Peril' for 2014) to stimulate economic growth through increased tourism.
- Walker County; to extend sewerage service into the new Walker County Business and Industrial Park to provide service for Audia International to help create approximately 100 new jobs.



Scott Hamilton, who became executive director of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in September 2014, toured selected ARC projects in Northwest Georgia in late May.

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2015 Deadlines

May 25th
ARC Workshop (Location TBD)

August 31st
ARC Pre-applications

October 16th
CDBG Notification

*Contact the Regional Commission for further information.

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CDBG Reminder & Information

The Community Development Block Grant is the major community revitalization initiative administered by the DCA. The CDBG program is a flexible grant program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The program goals are to ensure decent affordable housing is available to provide services to the most vulnerable persons in our communities, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses. CDBG is an important tool for helping local governments tackle serious challenges facing their communities.

Eligible Activities must benefit low- and moderate-income persons, offer prevention or elimination of slums or blight, and/or address community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community for which other funding is not available.

Examples include:

- housing improvement projects
- public facilities such as water and sewer lines
- buildings such as local health centers or heard start centers
- economic development projects

Match Requirements:

- Grants up to \$300,000, or grants for single activity housing projects - no matching funds required.
- Grants of \$300,000 to \$500,000 - 5% local matching funds required
- Grants of more than \$500,000 - 10% local matching funds required.

****As we are fast approaching the deadline, it is important that you notify the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) to assist with your CDBG by October 16, 2015 to ensure an appropriate amount of time to prepare your application.**

COOSA NORTH GEORGIA WATER COUNCIL & NORTH GEORGIA WATER RESOURCES PARTNERSHIP

In 2011, the Coosa North Georgia Water Planning Council worked with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to prepare the Region's Water Plan. This plan is now being updated. The Council will meet June 24, 2015 at the Union County Community Center to discuss items necessary to the five year update of the plan.

The North Georgia Water Resources Partnership has been designated as technical advisors to the Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Planning Council. In 2014-2015, the Partnership undertook activities to assist with implementing the Regional Water Plan including an Agricultural Water Usage Study, an Emergency Interconnectivity and Redundancy study, and a Water Transmission Grid Study for the North Georgia region. The Partnership also sponsored a water resource educational seminar on April 22, 2015 at the Tellus Science Museum. This year, the Partnership is assisting the Regional Water Council in the Five- Year Update to the Coosa-North Georgia Water Plan, as well as preparing the Model Nutrient Monitoring and Implementation Plan for the Soque River Watershed. For more information on the June 24, 2015 Water Council Meeting, or to join the Water Resources Partnership, please email Julianne Meadows.

Changes in Leadership at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)



Camila Knowles was appointed as commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) by Governor Nathan Deal earlier this year. Knowles leads DCA's work for community development, ensuring that (through workforce housing, community infrastructure, downtown

development and economic development financing) communities are prepared for opportunities to meet Georgia's top priorities: creating jobs across the state. Commissioner Knowles joined DCA after serving as Chief of Staff for U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss of Georgia.

While on Senator Chambliss' staff, Knowles worked on legislation directly impacting communities across Georgia, including the designation of Arabia Mountain as a National Heritage Area, the amendment of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act, and the deepening of the Savannah Harbor. She also worked on appropriations bills providing federal funding to numerous Georgia projects.

Patrick Vickers was recently named the Community Services Regional Representative for Northwest Georgia. Vickers, who replaces Leamon Scott, previously served as Economic Development Field Services Representative for Northwest Georgia and two other regions in our part of the state.

*patrick.vickers@dca.ga.gov



Annaka Woodruff was recently appointed as the ARC Program Manager. Previously, Annaka served as the Communications Manager for DCA and has Twenty-plus years of experience working with local, regional, state and federal governments.

*annaka.woodruff@dca.ga.gov

DCA provides funding and technical assistance throughout Georgia, partnering with local communities to create a climate of success for Georgia's families and businesses.

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GICH PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) offers communities a three-year program of collaboration and technical assistance. The objective of the Initiative is to help communities create and launch a locally based plan to meet their housing and neighborhood revitalization needs. The program represents a collaboration of three partners: the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA), and the University of Georgia (UGA) Housing and Demographics Research Center.

PURPOSE: Quality, affordable housing is critically needed for Georgia's families. There are low- to moderate-income households suffering at least one housing need, with the overwhelming majority experiencing cost burdens, spending over 30% of their gross incomes to obtain housing. Furthermore, Georgia's communities struggle to respond to substandard and dilapidated housing and deteriorating neighborhoods. A range of housing programs to help meet those needs are available through the state and federal governments, the private sector, foundations, and nonprofit organizations; however, those housing programs must generally be delivered by community-based organizations. GICH was developed recognizing that many Georgia communities, especially our rural communities, struggle with how to bring together the critical players, access funding, and organize and implement a strategy.

GOAL: To help communities address their housing and neighborhood revitalization needs through partnerships and coordinated action. Many leaders of Georgia's communities have a clear vision for their community:

- They want to create a climate for innovation and prosperity for families.
- They want diversity in their housing stock that provides a range of affordability for families of all incomes.
- They want housing that is an asset to their community.
- They want to preserve what is excellent in their existing housing stock, create new housing opportunities and foster vibrant neighborhoods.

What they lack is a clear road map to achieve their vision. With its professional facilitators, housing experts, legal experts, and administrative support structure, the Initiative framework guides each housing team through the steps of:

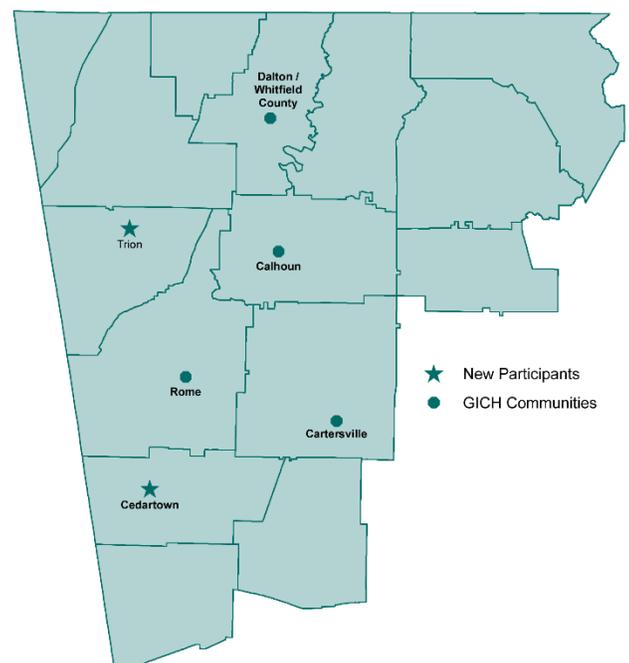
- (1) clearly identifying what the community wants related to housing and community development,
- (2) showing communities how to develop an asset map and to identify resources, and
- (3) developing and implementing a community housing work plan. An important part of the facilitated retreats and technical assistance is to provide support to the community housing teams as they tackle their first goals and objectives.

PARTICIPATION: The application process is designed to meet two objectives. First, the process identifies communities that are ready to fully participate in the three-year program and act on their goals and work plans. Secondly, the application process itself is a first step in the community's plan development. Each community is asked to identify:

- Its housing needs (housing need data, as well as local knowledge).
- Members of its community housing team — representing a cross section of organizations and relevant players.
- Its building blocks for success — past successes, community resources, or other factors that will lead to future success for the community housing program.

During the application process, a site-team visits the applicant communities (October), meets with the community's housing team, and tours the community with the team to get a first-hand look at local housing and neighborhood revitalization needs. The site team also discusses the Initiative process with the team and prepares the members for their role over the next three years. Following the site visits with the finalist communities, the team makes recommendations to the Initiative's selection committee. Four to six communities are selected based on demonstrated housing need and readiness to participate.

Northwest Georgia GICH Communities



ANNOUNCEMENT

In 2015 DCA announced that two Northwest Georgia cities were approved for the GICH program; Cedartown and Trion. After completing the three-year program, the housing teams in these communities will be able to move forward independently toward meeting additional housing and neighborhood revitalization goals. These trained, successful housing teams can then become a resource for other communities in the state. The community housing teams also develop their own local expertise in available housing programs and legal tools.

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INVESTING IN MANUFACTURING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (IMCP) UPDATE

Infrastructure initiatives – working with several Regional Transportation projects that are aimed at significantly improving traffic flow in corridors that are heavy in manufacturing. A “Infrastructure for Manufacturing” conference is also in the planning stages, tackling digital and physical infrastructure issues that face manufacturers, suppliers, and entrepreneurs in the region. NWGRC is developing a website for digital economy news.

Research, Innovation and Sustainability initiatives: *Alliance for Innovation in Sustainability (AIS)* has created a membership-based manufacturer/supplier, educator alliance. The AIS group will host a forum on July 15th 2015 from 10 am to 1:30 to discuss sustainability issues in manufacturing; promote business practices that demonstrate environmental stewardship, economic vitality, and social responsibility; promote collaboration between regional floorcovering manufacturers and suppliers; and share best practices. AIS introduced the proposal for a grant application with the National Science Foundation advance technology education grant to develop a STEM coach program to be implemented in middle school and high school to develop the skills needed for a career pathway in advanced manufacturing.

Workforce initiatives:

- Curriculum development in areas identified by industry such as a Chem Tech certificate program with direct pathways to two-year and four-year degree programs.
- Workforce/education working group has partnered with the Innovation and Sustainability working group to develop a proposal to apply for the National Science Foundation ATE grant. This proposal is to design a STEM coach program to be implemented in middle school and high school to develop the skills that relate to STEM education needed for a career pathway in advanced manufacturing as identified by industry
- Endorsement of the GA Dept of Economic Development, in partnership with TCSG, US Dept of Labor American Apprenticeship Grant for a Registered Apprenticeship program to Expand Georgia's Advanced Manufacturing Workforce.
- Development of high school apprenticeship work-study program (beginning at age 16) (AM Pathway pilot program) led by J&J Industries in partnership with NWGCCA. The AM Pathway pilot program aims to hire apprenticeship positions by fall of 2015.
- NWGRC has applied to participate in a nationwide program “Communities That Work”. This is a new learning exchange that will focus on building regional partnerships to accelerate talent-based economic development across America. This is led by US EDA in partnership with The Aspen Institute’s workforce Strategies Initiative. Only six communities will be selected. Selection announcement is July 13, 2015.

Marketing initiatives – Floor 360 Consortium – Developing a brand for “*Floor 360*” to effectively market and rebrand advanced manufacturing as a smart and viable career choice. GA Tech in conjunction with NWGRC is developing a Floor 360 website.

Partnership initiatives – Planning a **Regional Educator and Manufacturer Workshop** This workshop will bring the region’s key decision makers in high school education, career academies, and local technical colleges to the same table with the region’s top manufacturers for a half-day workshop to discuss issues pertinent to the longevity and growth of advanced manufacturing in the region.

*For more information please contact Deanna Perry in our Rome office.

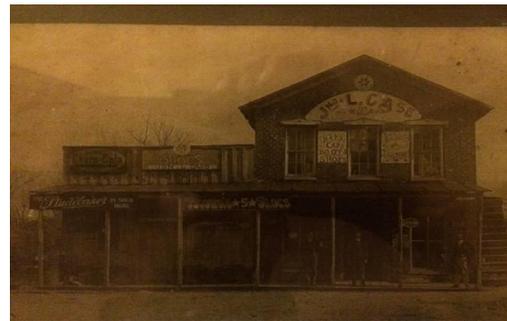
BUSINESS LENDING SERVICES

Loan Packaging Services: NWGRC continued providing administrative entity services to the NGCDC, Inc., a certified development corporation designated by the U.S. Small Business Administration to administer their SBA 504 loan program. During the quarter, two (2) SBA 504 loans were closed including one for the expansion of an existing Ace Hardware store in Trenton (Dade County) and one for the purchase of new equipment to Millwood Specialty Flooring, a hardwood floor manufacturing company in Ellijay (Gilmer County).

The SBA loan assisted the Ace Hardware store in Trenton to move from their original 8,500 square foot location to their new location following construction and expanding their business to 14,800 square feet which created seven (7) new jobs. The Case Ace Hardware Store has been in continuous operation in Dade County since 1904. The project had a total investment (SBA and Private dollars) of over \$711,000.

Millwood Specialty Flooring in Ellijay used the funding from their SBA loan to assist them in purchasing new equipment for operations which created five (5) new jobs on their manufacturing line and increased their output beyond expectations. The project had a total investment (SBA and Private dollars) of over \$1.4 million.

*For more information on NWGRC’s loan programs, contact Jennifer Whorton, the Loan Programs Officer.



The Case Ace Hardware Store, 1904



The Case Ace Hardware Store, 2015