



The Partner Connection

The Newsletter of DCA



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POPULAR RESOURCES



We want to hear from you...



Continuous improvement is a large part of the culture at DCA, and we foster this throughout the agency in various ways. We've recently developed a new Customer Service Management System that enables a constant emphasis on improving the way we deliver our services to you, our customers. Part of this new system is a promise that *DCA will respond to your feedback within 3 business days*. I hope that you will use this new system for any comments you have - either complaints or compliments. Just visit www.dca.ga.gov and click on the "Customer Feedback --- How's

Our Service?" link. We want to hear from you, and deliver service that exceeds your expectations.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Communities of Opportunity: Pilot Communities Hold Quarterly Meeting

With Commissioner Beatty and DCA staff in attendance, the local champions for the Co-Op pilot communities held their quarterly leadership meeting on Thursday, March 24 at the Thomson-McDuffie County Regional Airport. Each local champion highlighted their community's recent activities and accomplishments, but also discussed creative ways to address goals that have been impacted by the economy. Commissioner Beatty encouraged the local champions to continue to work hard and share their stories with other communities throughout the state. The designated Co-Op communities in Region 7 include Wilkes, Lincoln, Taliaferro, McDuffie, Warren, Hancock, Glascock, Jefferson, Burke and Jenkins, along with Elbert County in Region 5.



Quarterly Meeting in Thomson

Forsyth County Designated As Georgia's Eighteenth WaterFirst® Community

"Top Notch," said the State's WaterFirst Reviewers when asked to describe the Forsyth County's team.



At a ceremony filled with Forsyth's "top notch" team Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Mike Beatty announced the designation of the state's

[American Recovery and Re-Investment Act](#)



[DCA Home](#)



[Georgia Census](#)

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Exceeding Excellence

Did You Receive Excellent Service From A DCA Staffer? DCA's "Exceeding Excellence" Customer Service Recognition Program Allows You To Recognize A Job Very Well Done. Please consider nominating a DCA staffer that's gone above and beyond! DCA's "Exceeding Excellence" recognition program affords DCA team members and our external customers the opportunity to recognize DCA team members for providing excellent customer service. Information is available from the DCA website front page - www.dca.ga.gov, Click on the "Customer Feedback" link and complete the information.

eighteenth WaterFirst® community. The ceremony, attended by community leaders and local and state officials, was held on March 31st at the Forsyth County Administration Building.

"Forsyth County has joined an exclusive group of communities committed to water stewardship. The state's WaterFirst® communities have a demonstrated track record of implementing solidly-developed strategic plans that support long-term excellence in water resource management," said DCA Commissioner Mike Beatty.

Added Beatty: "Earning this designation took a lot of effort and required significant teamwork. The WaterFirst® reviewers were especially impressed with the coordination among the County departments and their efforts to promote water conservation. The County has adopted an aggressive conservation pricing rate and has leveraged partnerships, including relying upon the Keep Forsyth Beautiful Affiliate to provide extensive water resource educational programming throughout the county. Their effort to maintain water quality by adopting and enforcing a tree ordinance and stream buffer set backs demonstrates the County's commitment to protecting our water resources, and today, DCA is very pleased to recognize the staff, citizens, and leaders of Forsyth County for their stewardship of our water resources by designating them as Georgia's eighteenth WaterFirst® Community."

The WaterFirst® Community Program, led by the DCA's Office of Environmental Management, is a voluntary partnership between local governments, state and federal agencies and other organizations working to improve the management and protection of our shared water resources. For more information about DCA's WaterFirst program, visit www.dca.ga.gov/development/EnvironmentalManagement/programs/water_first.asp

Forsyth County is the 18th entity to receive a WaterFirst® Community designation. Previously designated WaterFirst® communities include the City of Braselton, Cobb County, Cobb/ Marietta Water Authority, Columbus Waterworks/ Columbus Consolidated Government, City of Gainesville, City of Griffin, Gwinnett County, City of Hartwell, City of Hinesville, Oconee County, City of Rome, City of Roswell, City of Savannah, Douglasville/Douglas County WSA, City of Tifton/ Tift County and City of Tybee Island.

2009 International Energy Conservation Code Task Force Update

The 2009 IECC (International Energy Conservation Code) Task Force is charged with assessing the differences between the 2006 IECC with Georgia Supplements and Amendments (Georgia's existing code) and the 2009 IECC. The task force will make a recommendation regarding the adoption of the 2009 IECC and ASHRAE 90.1-2007 and any necessary supplements and amendments to the State Codes Advisory Committee (SCAC) at its July 29, 2010 meeting.

The task force has been meeting monthly since November 2009 and is nearing the completion of its charge. A task force work group session will be held on April 19, 2010 at 9 A.M. in the DCA Boardroom, and the next full task force meeting will be on April 22, 2010 at 9 A.M. in the DCA Boardroom. The agendas for these meetings and other important task force information can be found on the web at: <http://www.dca.ga.gov/development/constructioncodes/programs/IECTaskForce.asp>.

Upon approval of the SCAC and the DCA Board, this new code will take effect on January 1, 2011. This project is funded in part by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 in cooperation with the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority. For more information or to be placed on the interested parties list, contact Ryan Meres at (404) 679-3109 or Ryan.Meres@dca.ga.gov.

Georgia's Service Delivery Strategy Act

In order to make the implementation of the Service Delivery Act as workable as possible for the Department and local governments, DCA has changed its interpretation of one provision of the Act. The law requires that each county and its cities consider and agree upon how government services are provided, and which local government will provide them. The law outlines five "triggers" for local governments to reconsider the agreed-upon strategy. One of these triggers is the completion of a new comprehensive plan, which each local government in the state is required to update every ten years.



As of March 15, 2010, DCA will interpret this trigger to mean the completion of a county comprehensive plan. For instance, in a county with five cities, one of those cities' adoption of a new comprehensive plan will not trigger the review of the current, agreed-upon Service Delivery Strategy. The date by which the county must adopt a new plan is now the date by which the county and its cities must adopt a new service delivery strategy as well.

To determine the next date by which your local governments must complete a new strategy, check this website: <http://www.georgiaplanning.com/planners/qlgdeadlines/>

This change in no way affects the other five SDS Update "triggers" found in O.C.G.A. § 36-70-28(b). For more information regarding Service Delivery Strategies, contact Renetta Hobson at renetta.hobson@dca.ga.gov or by phone at 404-679-3111.

OPQG and Regional Commissions

In our effort to continually improve our products and services, OPQG staff plan to meet with staff from each Regional Commission between April 12 - 21 in Atlanta (DCA) and Macon (Music Hall of Fame). As our partners, Georgia's Regional Commissions offer OPQG honest feedback as to the needs of local governments around the state. As we begin the process of making contract decisions for FY 2011, OPQG staff wants to learn about the specific challenges faced by each RC, as well as offer assistance to Regional Commission planning staff in the following areas: Regionally Important Resources, Regional Plans, Developments of Regional Impact, and FY11 Contract.

The Congress for New Urbanism Conference is coming to Georgia

From May 19 thru 22, New Urbanist leaders from across the country will be in Atlanta to lead discussions, workshops and field trips to share groundbreaking ideas in land use planning. The conference will cover topics such as: health and land use, local ordinances, transportation alternatives, environmentally friendly land use, new trends in the retail industry, retrofitting old shopping centers and rethinking stalled developments. For more information please visit: www.cnu.org/cnu18.

SmartCode Special - \$49

Have you heard the term "form-based code" but don't really know what it is? Has your community held visioning sessions and imagined wonderful walkable downtowns, only to discover that your existing zoning code won't allow your ideas to grow? Don't worry - communities across the nation are running into the same challenges. And on May 19, some of the most renowned form-based code leaders in the United States will be in Atlanta to spend a day with local officials and staff to work through some of the tough issues that surround changing a zoning code to get the development patterns a

community envisions. The \$49 registration fee gets you a full day of education and a box-lunch. One of the best deals in the state! Register online at www.smartcodeworkshop.com. If you can't make it in person, a webinar option is available.

SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SFY 2011 Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) Annual Competition Applications are Due July 1, 2010

DCA has released its Program Description outlining the requirements for application submission for SFY 2011 CHIP funding. For the first time, DCA has broadened the program to not only include local governments but also allow applications by nonprofit organizations and public housing authorities to implement homeowner rehabilitation and down payment assistance programs in their service areas. To learn more about eligibility requirements and other key changes to the program, plan to attend our CHIP Annual Applicants Workshop on April 30, 2010, at the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame in Macon.

The purpose of this workshop is to inform interested parties of the procedures to be used in preparing the CHIP application. The workshop will provide an opportunity to learn the details involved in putting together a competitive application, to ask questions, and to share information. During the workshop, participants will be provided an Applicant's Manual and Program Description that describes the application process and the guidelines that will be used in evaluating applications. In order to receive the discounted registration rate, please complete your registration by April 16, 2010. To review the Program Description, learn more about the program and to register for the workshop please visit our web site at:

<http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/housingdevelopment/programs/homeinvestment.asp> To inquire about the program, please contact either Michelle Lewis at (404) 679-0659 or michelle.lewis@dca.ga.gov or Kay Garrison at (404) 679-0573 or kay.garrison@dca.ga.gov.

GeorgiaHousingSearch.org reaches 150,000 units and continues to grow!

Since its introduction in the fall of 2005, GeorgiaHousingSearch.org has become a favorite of both tenants and property owners. Accessible from any computer or telephone, this FREE, easy-to-use service has connected thousands of Georgia tenants and property owners. On the site - GeorgiaHousingSearch.org -- citizens can search for rental properties statewide while landlords can post listings for free and reach thousands of potential renters. The website is bilingual (English and Spanish) and has a toll-free number (1.877.428.8844) available to assist potential renters or property providers. In addition, the site's unique Special Needs Housing Search feature has assisted Georgia caseworkers locating housing for hundreds of traditionally hard-to-place families and individuals.



GEORGIAHOUSINGSEARCH.ORG

With the generous support of the Atlanta Housing Authority, the site will be featured during the Spring on MARTA trains and buses across Fulton and DeKalb counties. The site is designed to help residents locate affordable housing resources that meets their household's needs.

So whether searching by price, size, or even proximity to schools or transportation, GeorgiaHousingSearch.org is the key to finding the right rental, right now, right where

you want to live! For more information, please contact Sheila Barry at (404) 679-4855 or sheila.barry@dca.ga.gov.

HPRP Reaches 1,000 Households Served

Launched in October 2009, DCA's Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) reached its first significant milestone of assisting 1,000 households across 118 counties in Georgia since the program's inception. The program serves 151 Georgia counties

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009 (ARRA) provides HPRP funding to the homeless or those on the point of homelessness, offering support to individuals and families within their local communities through activities such as rental, utility and moving assistance, housing placement, and case management. HPRP funds are administered through seven regional non-profit agencies, each with a strong track record of assisting vulnerable people within the community.

To apply, households must meet with a case manager to discuss their situation, be at or below 50% Area Median Income, show that "but for" this assistance they would be homeless, and demonstrate that after this temporary assistance they will not need further financial help. To learn more about this program, please visit our web site at <http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/specialneeds/programs/HPRP.asp>.

RFP Funding Opportunity Available For Regional Commissions

DCA recently released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Regional Commissions for training and education related to affordable housing. Funding is to assist communities that participated and/or are participating in the Signature Community, Georgia Initiative for Community Housing, and Communities of Opportunity programs to achieve their affordable housing goals.

DCA has set aside \$55,000 under this RFP for housing related activities. The deadline to submit a response to the RFP is May 27, 2010. Additional questions may be directed to Cynthia Harrison at cynthia.harrison@dca.ga.gov or (404) 502-6176.