



# The Partner Connection

*The Newsletter of DCA*



## September 2011

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### In This Issue

[CDBG Awards](#)

[GICH Retreat in Athens](#)

[City of Woodstock Uses ARRA Funds](#)

[Celebrating Rural Georgia](#)

[HOPWA Workshop](#)

[Georgia Downtown Conference](#)

[Focus on the Office of Special Housing Initiatives](#)

[CDFD Awards for August](#)

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The Georgia Dream Homeownership

## NEWS AND EVENTS

### Shell Oil Makes Donation to Hands On Georgia for Disaster Relief



From left to right: Terry Ball, GA Emergency Management Agency; Heather Teilhet, Hands on Georgia; Debbie Breazeale, Shell Oil; Commissioner Mike Beatty; Glen Wilkins, Hands on Georgia Board member

The Shell Oil Company and Motiva Enterprises, LLC, presented Hands on Georgia (HOGA) \$5,000 in individual gasoline cards to aid volunteer recovery efforts in the aftermath of disasters and other emergencies. HOGA Board of Directors Chair Vickie Williamson said, "This gift will enable HOGA to empower Georgia citizens to respond to disaster. Local efforts are the most efficient and sustainable path to recovery." DCA Commissioner Mike Beatty, (also a HOGA board member), said the Shell gift "...is a great example of how a partnership between the public and private sectors can serve the people of Georgia. These gasoline cards give us the flexibility we need to support volunteers who are willing to begin the hard work of cleaning up and rebuilding damaged communities." Many thanks to the Shell Oil Company and Motiva

Program makes purchasing a home more affordable for low-to-moderate income families and individuals by offering fixed, low-interest rate mortgages loans. These rates vary weekly: to check the most current rates, click [HERE](#). To receive weekly emails with the most current rates and program information, go to [www.dcaloans.com](http://www.dcaloans.com) and complete the email request.

#### **Rates Effective September 15:**

*Georgia Dream First Mortgage:  
FHA/VA/RD*

*Conventional Uninsured  
4.625%*

*Georgia Dream First Mortgage  
Combined with Any*

*Georgia Dream Downpayment Loan:  
FHA/VA/RD*

*Conventional Uninsured  
4.875%*

### **Exceeding Excellence**

#### **Did You Receive Excellent Service From A DCA Staffer?**

Please consider nominating a DCA staffer who's gone above and beyond! DCA's "Exceeding Excellence" recognition program affords our staff and 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](http://www.dca.ga.gov). Click on the "Customer Feedback" link and complete the information.



The Department launched HomeSafe Georgia on April 1, 2011 to assist homeowners affected by the recession. Since its inception, the program has:

- Received 10,080 applications
- Recruited 70 loan servicers to

Enterprises for their generosity to Georgia's disaster recovery efforts.

## **GEFA Names DCA Winner of State Building Energy Competition**

The Georgia Environmental Finance Authority ([GEFA](#)) announced the winner of Georgia's First Annual State Building Energy Competition. The Georgia

Department of Community Affairs Headquarters Building and its trainer, [Griffith Engineering](#), earned first place, reducing its energy use intensity (EUI) by 16.7 percent. DCA also moved its [ENERGY STAR](#) score from 42 at the beginning of FY2010 to 61 by the end of FY2011. "I'd like to congratulate Commissioner Mike Beatty, the staff at DCA and Griffith Engineering for a job well done promoting and supporting Georgia's culture of conservation," said GEFA Executive Director Kevin Clark. "Many state agencies do a great job conserving energy, but DCA, which has now successfully met the Georgia Energy Challenge, sets the benchmark for developing energy-efficiency initiatives that reduce energy consumption."



Congratulations to DCA Staff! (Left to right: Raymond Noel, Director, Administrative Operations; Joe DeGumbia, Facilities Manager; John Ellis, Assistant Commissioner for Administration, Bill Swaim, Chief of Staff.

additional consulting services to apply for an ENERGY STAR label (if eligible), free of charge from Georgia Power and full tuition for one person to attend the [Building Operator Certification Program at Gwinnett Technical College](#).

"We're honored to win this award," says John Ellis, the Department's Assistant Commissioner for Administration. "We focused our efforts on employee behaviors, like turning off lights and computers when not in use, and we made a sizeable difference in our energy consumption. I'd like to think that we can serve as an example for statewide energy efficiency, for people both at work and at home."

Open to state agencies only, the competition challenged agencies to reduce energy use intensity (EUI) (BTU per square foot). The agencies received free assistance from energy experts on best conservation practices, and utilized ENERGY STAR's online energy tracking tool, [Portfolio Manager](#). The goal of the competition was to move more state buildings toward higher energy performance standards and earn an ENERGY STAR label. DCA will receive

participate in the program

- Closed 156 loans
- Processed 1,606 applications
- Determined 1,291 applicants to be ineligible

For complete program information, including how to apply, see the [HomeSafe Website](#)



Now, more than ever, Georgia citizens need quick and easy access to affordable housing options and GeorgiaHousingSearch.org is here to help! Whether you are searching by price, number of bedrooms, or even proximity to work, school or transportation, finding a home that meets your needs keeps becoming easier with [GeorgiaHousingSearch.org](#). There are thousands of vacant units in the rental housing market available statewide right now and [GeorgiaHousingSearch.org](#) is the key to linking tenants with landlords! The additions of Atlanta and Marietta Housing Authorities underscore the commitment to meeting community needs and have dramatically increased the pool of housing units listed on the site. This expansion is particularly critical for planning ahead to serve displaced persons during other crises, a vital function during hurricane season. GeorgiaHousingSearch.org offers FREE property posting, is bilingual, and has a toll-free number (877-428-8844) available to those individuals without internet access. The website also provides information on rental assistance, community resources and special needs housing. Landlords can register in a five-minute process or work with staff to register large-scale listings. Property owners are encouraged to post their affordable rental units to help make this site as useful as possible. For more information, please contact Sheila Barry at 404-679-4855 or [sheila.barry@dca.state.ga.gov](mailto:sheila.barry@dca.state.ga.gov)

## Governor Deal Announces CDBG Awards

Governor Nathan Deal announced more than \$38.8 million in federal assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded through the Department of Community Affairs' Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The Community Development Block Grant program provides a financial resource to Georgia's small and rural communities to support projects that will create jobs and assist low-and-moderate-income citizens. These awards support economic development, job creation, and an improved quality of life at the local level.

Seventy Georgia communities will use nearly \$33 million in CDBG awards to support health and safety projects. Projects include the upgrading of water supplies, the provision of basic sewer services, health facilities, senior citizen facilities, flood and drainage improvements and other neighborhood revitalization projects.

An additional \$6 million was recently invested for economic development projects in fifteen Georgia communities. The CDBG funds for the fifteen projects will leverage over \$450 million in private investments for economic expansions that will create more than 1,700 jobs for Georgians. As additional resources become available, funds for worthwhile job creation and redevelopment projects will be made available on an ongoing basis in various parts of the state. A complete list of projects and award amounts is available [HERE](#).

## Five Communities Complete GICH Program at Retreat in Athens



The [City of Athens](#) hosted the August 8-10, 2011 Georgia Initiative for Community Housing retreat, attended by 180 community leaders and housing advocates. Participants worked in facilitated sessions to further develop their community's housing work plans, learned about community development and housing issues from a variety of experts and practitioners, and toured Athens to see housing successes in the city.

The Fall Retreat marks the completion of the GICH program by five more communities: Brunswick, Hawkinsville, Rome, Sandersville/Tennille/Washington County and Vienna. They join Calhoun, Camden County, Cartersville, Colquitt, Cordele, Dalton/Whitfield County, Douglas, Fort Valley, Griffin, Hall County, Metter, Milledgeville, Moultrie, Newnan, Sylvester, Thomasville, Tifton, Toccoa, Valdosta, Waycross, and Waynesboro as successful graduates of the program, and are considered leaders in Georgia in working to improve housing options for their citizens.

GICH's value is well known statewide. The communities of Americus/Sumter, Covington, Gray/Jones County, Thomson/McDuffie County, and Winder joined the program in 2010; Auburn, Berrien

County, Eatonton, Sylvania, and Washington joined the program in 2011. These communities are scheduled to complete the program in 2012 and 2013 respectively. The GICH partners are in the process now of selecting the newest participants, who will join the GICH family in February 2012.

Launched in November 2004, the GICH program offers communities a three-year program of collaboration and technical assistance. Through the program a community works to create and launch a locally-based plan to meet its affordable housing needs. The Department, along with the Georgia Municipal Association and The University of Georgia's Housing & Demographics Research Center, serve as GICH's primary partners. The Georgia Power Company, Wells Fargo Foundation, and USDA Rural Development provide funding for the initiative. Georgia Electric Membership Corporation and UGA's Archway Partnership Program serve as GICH's implementation partners.

GICH accepts applications from prospective program participants each year. For additional information about GICH, please contact Program Director Karen Tinsley at (706) 542-4949 or [kit@uga.edu](mailto:kit@uga.edu) or visit <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/hace/hdrc/gich.html>.

## City of Woodstock Uses ARRA Funds to Create Senior Housing



Since 2009, most communities in Georgia have struggled with the on-the-ground realities of the national recession. Many cities and counties have streets with no homes on them, graded sites with no buildings, or half-finished buildings with no tenants. What to do with these projects is a tough question, and one to

which we don't have a one-size-fits-all answer.

With funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the Department has been able to work with a number of communities and private developers to reinvigorate some construction projects. Through hard work and innovation, private businesses, local governments and the Department have been able to look at projects and imagine them differently than they were started, and ultimately, complete these projects in ways that benefit the communities, the developers, and Georgia's citizens.

One such project is Heritage at Madison Pointe in [Woodstock](#). The original owner began construction in 2008 on a mixed use, retail and townhome project. In 2009, the property was unfinished and abandoned. The city, the Department, and a different developer, [Norsouth Corporation](#), developed a plan to complete the project as an affordable senior housing complex. A portion of the necessary funding came from the ARRA Tax Credit Exchange Program, which allows the Department to convert some of its Housing Tax Credits to cash for use with certain

affordable housing proposals.

Heritage at Madison Pointe will provide 100 units of mixed-income housing for independent seniors. Slated to open in late 2011, the community will provide an array of amenities, as well as the latest in sustainable construction practices. The city projects that the community will create 100 jobs. "Beyond job creation, this site is helping the City of Woodstock create a vibrant space for senior citizens, which helps the community overall," says Laurel Hart, DCA's Director of the Office of Affordable Housing. "We're using this ARRA money as wisely as we can, helping as many communities as possible through a very tough period in our history." For more information on the Department's ARRA programs, see our [webpage](#), or contact Joe Collums at [joe.collums@dca.ga.gov](mailto:joe.collums@dca.ga.gov).

## UPCOMING EDUCATION, EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND DEADLINES

### University of Georgia Tifton Campus Conference Center, October 12



## Celebrating Rural Georgia



Join Governor Nathan Deal and many of your colleagues and friends from across the state in Tifton on Wednesday, October 12 for a day of Celebrating Rural Georgia. Celebrate our past successes, discuss future opportunities and learn about best practices that are making a difference.

Individual registration of \$25.00 covers a networking breakfast, buffet lunch and all concurrent sessions. To encourage communities to expand and strengthen local partnerships, team discounts of \$20 per participant are available to all entities sending three or more individuals as a team!

Please visit the online registration site:

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/external/tccc/calendar.html> today and sign up to attend this one-day event. We look forward to seeing you in Tifton!

### HOPWA Workshop in Savannah: October 3-5

The Department's State Housing Trust Fund workgroup will provide a statewide Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) conference October 3-5, 2011 at the DeSoto Hilton in Savannah to provide guidance to improve and expand Georgia's programs. Conference topics include:

- Performance measurement
- HUD's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- An overview of HOPWA regulations
- Best practices for housing-based supportive services

For more information and to register for the conference, contact Phillis Thomas at [phillis.thomas@dca.ga.gov](mailto:phillis.thomas@dca.ga.gov) or 404.679.0651

### Georgia Downtown Conference in Rome:

**September 28-30**



The [Georgia Downtown Association](#), the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the [City of Rome](#) and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' [Historic Preservation Division](#), are sponsoring the 2011 Georgia Downtown Conference in Rome, Georgia, September 28 - 30. The conference is designed to provide information on national and state issues affecting downtown development, reinforce existing downtown development efforts, and help downtown development organizations plan for the future.

[Ed McMahon](#), Senior Resident Fellow at the Urban Land Institute in Washington DC, will provide Thursday's keynote address. McMahon is nationally known as an inspiring and thought provoking speaker and leading authority on topics related to sustainable development, land conservation, smart growth, and historic preservation. According to McMahon, evolving consumer behavior, high-priced gas, and Internet shopping are changing the way we develop and redevelop our land. The future, he says, belongs to town centers, main streets, and mixed-use development. Come hear how your downtown can provide a "place-making dividend" that will benefit businesses, consumers, and communities.

Speakers from across Georgia and the Southeast will be available to provide the best possible resources for enhancing downtown. This year's conference will partner with the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to offer Historic Preservation Commission training during the conference, and will include sessions on preservation law, design guidelines, and best practices for Certified Local Governments (CLG). This training will meet HPD's training requirement for CLGs in Georgia.

Special reduced rates are available for GDA members and state designated Better Hometown and Main Street cities. The registration deadline is September 16, 2011. For more information and to register, visit [2011Georgia Downtown Conference](#).

## **THE DEPARTMENT IN DEPTH**

### **Focus On:**

### **The Office of Special Housing Initiatives**

The Office of Special Housing Initiatives (OSHI) is a part of the Department's Housing Finance Division. With a mission of providing stable, safe, and affordable housing opportunities, the staff of OSHI work with local governments, non-profit organizations, Housing Authorities and housing developers to increase the housing options for Georgia's citizens.

Each year, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development

(HUD) provides states with block grants for housing activities. Each state must have a plan in place for how it will use the money. The Planning and Support Team of OSHI writes Georgia's Consolidated Plan, outlining how our state will use federal funds to increase housing opportunities. Outlined below are a few of HUD's funds, and how the Department uses them. (For a complete list of programs and activities, please see our [webpage](#).)

- HOME funds: DCA uses some of this money to fund the Georgia Dream program, which provides down payment assistance to many first-time homebuyers. See [this page](#) for a complete list of HOME activities in Georgia
- CHIP funds: DCA uses a portion of these funds to rehabilitate existing, owner-occupied homes (for low-to-moderate income households), and a portion to provide down-payment assistance. See [this page](#) for a complete list of CHIP activities
- HOPWA, ESG, Shelter Plus Care, and HPRP (as well as [many others](#)) are funds dedicated to preventing and reducing homelessness in Georgia

OSHI passes on the majority of the funds listed above as grants to local governments, non-profit organizations, and Housing Authorities. The funds through the Georgia Dream program are forgivable loans to qualifying homeowners. Keeping track of millions of dollars of taxpayer money is an enormous responsibility, and OSHI prepares the State's Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report to show Georgia's citizens how the Department uses the money each year.

In order to help local governments address the issues associated with safe, decent and affordable housing within their jurisdictions, OSHI provides technical assistance through the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH). This program is designed for the many Georgia community leaders, especially in rural communities, who struggle with how to bring together the critical players, access funding, and organize and implement a strategy. The goal of the Initiative is to help communities address their housing and neighborhood revitalization needs through partnerships and coordinated action. GICH represents a collaboration of three partners: the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA), and the University of Georgia (UGA) Housing and Demographics Research Center. Currently, GICH is funded by the Georgia Power Company, Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation, and the USDA Rural Development.

Housing availability and affordability are critical to every Georgian, affecting nearly every other aspect of life. The staff of the Office of Special Housing Initiatives is dedicated to increasing the options available to all Georgians, and their hard work shows in communities across our state.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCE DIVISION**

### **Awards by Region - August 2011**

#### **Region Three**

#### Development Authority of the City of Douglasville

- \$250,000 in REBA funds
- \$60,810,000 in private investment within 24 months
- Creates 141 jobs
- Douglas Acquisition LLC, will locate a manufacturing facility in Douglasville

#### Henry County Development Authority

- \$300,000 in REBA funds
- \$55,000,000 in private investment within 36 months
- Creates 157 jobs
- Retains 131 jobs
- PVH Corporation will locate a distribution facility in McDonough

#### **Region Five**

##### City of Bowman

- \$50,000 in Immediate Threat and Danger funds
- Make improvements to and remove sludge from the South Pond
- Benefits 862 citizens

#### **Region Seven**

##### The Development Authority of Richmond County

- \$350,000 in OneGeorgia EDGE funds
- \$881,060 public (non-DCA) investment
- \$750,000 private investment in 28 months
- Creates 225 jobs
- Retains 125 jobs
- Electrolux Home Products will locate and expand a call center in Richmond County

#### **Region Nine**

##### Jeff Davis County

- \$318,000 in Employment Incentive Program (EIP) funds
- 403,000 private investment
- Creates 12 jobs
- Retains 18 jobs

- Triple H Specialty Company, Inc. will purchase the former Southern Assembly and Packaging facility to expand its operations into the agricultural sector.

### Region Ten

City of Doerun

- \$30,023 in Immediate Threat and Danger funds
- Replace and improve a pump in a public well
- Benefits 900 citizens

### Region Twelve

Bulloch County

- \$500,000 in EIP funds
- \$2,000,000 in OneGeorgia EDGE funds
- \$34,000,000 in private investment
- \$10,000,000 in public investment (non-DCA)
- Will create 243 jobs
- The county will acquire storm water drainage system improvements to serve Great Dane Limited Partnership's new facility location and provide site preparation. The company will construct a 450,000 square foot manufacturing facility to produce refrigerated and platform trailers.

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