



The Partner Connection

The Newsletter of DCA



August 2011

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NEWS AND EVENTS

DCA Funds at Work in Athens



First row: Don Watt, Wanda Culpepper, Janna Chapman, Callie Waller, Loletta Jewett **Second row:** Dawn Frisch, Julie Knowlton, **Back row:** Commissioner Beatty, Jim Gaudin, Evan Mills, Mark Harper, Virginia McKenna, Tom Rodgers

On August 1 Commissioner Mike Beatty visited with representatives of the [Athens Area Homeless Shelter](#) and the [Interfaith Hospitality Network of Athens](#). Both agencies serve homeless families with children and provide housing and supportive services to help families back to independent living. DCA provides Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) to both



The Board and the staff of the Department of Community Affairs would like to thank Frank Turner, the outgoing chairman of the board, for his leadership in state government. Left to Right: Incoming Chairwoman Bebe Heiskell, former Chair Frank Turner, and Commissioner Beatty commemorate Mr. Turner's service to DCA.



Congratulations to Annette Henson in the Office of Planning and Environmental Management for receiving this quarter's Exceeding Excellence award! Annette is the oil that keeps the OPEM engine running smoothly. She uses her outstanding customer

agencies to assist with costs associated with housing operations and services, but the true strength of both programs lies in the efforts of volunteers, board members and dedicated staff.

Resource Team + CDFD Funds + Local Commitment = PROGRESS in West Point



This West Point building sat vacant for years.

The team's recommendations filled a 50+ page [report](#), and under Mayor Drew Ferguson's leadership, West Point staff and



With vision, leadership and financial partnerships, West Point is restoring its downtown to a vibrant, interesting place to be.

the City's West Point 2100 Foundation to blend public and private financing to restore a late 19th century building in the heart of downtown, creating ten jobs and providing a much-needed boost to a very visible downtown block.

"These types of public-private partnerships are those that offer win-win solutions for citizens, businesses, governments, and entire communities, and are some of the most satisfying deals we

In January 2008, the City of West Point was a year away from the opening of [Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia](#) and had a brand-new mayor interested in capitalizing on the city's assets. The downtown had lost more than half of its businesses, leaving all of the city's historic textile mills vacant and boarded up. A DCA-sponsored Resource Team spent a week in West Point, taking stock of everything from sidewalks to current ordinances to funding

citizens got to work. Since 2008, the city has partnered with [Columbus State University](#) to open a downtown campus, attracted several new businesses downtown, and continued to partner with the Department to implement more than a dozen (and counting) of the team's recommendations. Most recently, the Community Development Finance Division partnered with

service skills daily as she assists our internal partners, and our external customers. She consistently strives to find the appropriate response to any inquiry she receives.

Recently, a caller was trying to contact an individual who works in State government, but not at DCA. Annette went above and beyond the call of duty to track the person down and provide the caller with the correct contact information. The caller told Annette that "... ever since my heart transplant I have received nothing but blessings and this was a blessing to me.... Thank you, you are a blessing!" Annette goes the extra mile in providing additional assistance to all of the Office of Planning and Environmental Management's callers in this manner.



The Georgia Dream Homeownership 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 and complete the email request.

Rates Effective August 4:

*Georgia Dream First Mortgage:
FHA/VA/RD
Conventional Uninsured
4.875%*

get to be a part of," says Brian Williamson, Assistant Commissioner of the Community Development Finance Division.

State Energy Code Compliance Study

[The Office of Codes and Research](#) is undertaking a State Energy Code Compliance Pilot Study. This study includes on-site evaluations for new commercial buildings, commercial renovations, new residential buildings and residential renovations; and a survey of building officials across the state. The State of Georgia has committed to ninety percent compliance statewide with the International Energy Conservation Code by the year 2017, and this study provides an assessment of our current compliance. The Office of Codes and Research will use the data from the study to determine the best use of state resources to meet the compliance requirement by 2017. A work group of industry stakeholders (including home builders, utility companies, building officials, construction suppliers and others) is facilitating the search for buildings to be used in the study.

With the financial support of the [Southeastern Energy Efficiency Alliance](#), we have completed the building officials survey and the new commercial buildings portions of the pilot study. The [Georgia Environmental Finance Authority](#) is funding the remaining portions of the pilot study. All outstanding portions of this study should be complete by December 2011. For questions or comments about the Georgia State Energy Code Compliance Pilot Study, please contact Austin Hackney at 404-679-3127 or austin.hackney@dca.ga.gov.

UPCOMING EDUCATION, EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND DEADLINES

Advisory Planning Rules Task Force Meets August 16, 2011

The Board of the Department of Community Affairs established an Advisory Planning Rules Task Force to provide input and guidance as the Office of Planning and Environmental Management develops new Local Planning Requirements for Georgia's local governments. Board member Steve Nygren will chair this group as it revises the existing rules defining a basic local comprehensive plan, Developments of Regional Interest, and solid waste management planning. The Department has invited representatives from the following organizations to help with this important task:

- Association County Commissioners of Georgia
- Georgia Association of Chamber Executives
- Georgia Association of Regional Commissions
- Georgia Association of Zoning Administrators
- Georgia Conservancy
- Georgia Economic Developers Association

*Georgia Dream First Mortgage
Combined with Any
Georgia Dream Downpayment
Loan:
FHA/VA/RD
Conventional Uninsured
5.125%*

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. 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 8,581 applications
- Recruited 64 loan servicers to participate in the program
- Closed 84 loans
- Processed 1,542

- Georgia Municipal Association
- Georgia Planning Association
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- Georgia Department of Transportation
- Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority
- Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
- Homebuilders Association of Georgia
- Livable Communities Coalition
- Urban Land Institute

The first meeting is at 1:30 PM, Tuesday, August 16 in the DCA Board Room, 60 Executive Park South, Atlanta. For more information, please contact Jim Frederick at jim.frederick@dca.ga.gov.

Community HOME Improvement Program (CHIP) Listening Session: August 25, 2011

The Housing Finance Division invites current grant recipients and prospective grantees to participate in an upcoming Listening Session on August 25, 2011. The session begins at 8:30 AM at the Macon CentrePlex, 200 Coliseum Drive in Macon. Your feedback is important to us: we will use what we learn at this Listening Session to help finalize the SFY 2012 CHIP Program Description. Please visit our web site at: <http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/housingdevelopment/programs/homeinvestment.asp> for registration information.

CHIP Applicants' Workshop: September 22, 2011

The Housing Finance Division will host a CHIP Applicants Workshop on September 22, 2011 at the Macon CentrePlex. The workshop will provide a broad overview of application requirements and criteria used to evaluate submitted applications. The deadline for submission of CHIP applications is December 15, 2011. Please check our web site: <http://www.dca.ga.gov/housing/housingdevelopment/programs/homeinvestment.asp> for continued updates on the Workshop and the State Fiscal Year 2012 Program

THE DEPARTMENT IN DEPTH

Focus on the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism

applications

- Determined 722 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



Governor Deal (right) visits the Georgia Sea Turtle Center on Jekyll Island.

The [Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism](#) (GCSV) was created by Governor Zell Miller in 1993 with the

mission of using national service programs like AmeriCorps and the power of volunteerism to solve community problems. AmeriCorps, often called the "domestic Peace Corps," engages Americans in intensive service to meet the nation's critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment.

Each year, the GCSV conducts a competitive funding process that begins by accepting and reviewing proposals from non-profit organizations, schools of higher education, and local governments for AmeriCorps grant funding. The proposals outline the applying agency's plan to effectively meet a community need through AmeriCorps service. Agencies demonstrating the strongest program design and capacity to manage the program are awarded an AmeriCorps grant through the Department of Community Affairs. The federal funds come from the [Corporation for National and Community Service](#).

The AmeriCorps grant is both an investment and a partnership with local communities. Each AmeriCorps grant must be matched with local funds, usually from the private sector, foundations, and/or local governments. The outcomes are kids reading better, seniors feeling safer in their neighborhoods, children with safe after-school activities - even a deeper public understanding of our fragile and interconnected ecosystem. Since AmeriCorps Members recruit, train, and support volunteers, many communities with AmeriCorps programs experience an increase in people who want to give back through service. In the past year, nearly 50,000 Georgians volunteered to serve alongside 670 AmeriCorps members in our state.

AmeriCorps Members commit to a rigorous but meaningful year of service. Most AmeriCorps Members serve full-time but others serve in less than full-time capacity. In exchange for a full year commitment to serve, AmeriCorps Members receive a modest stipend and may be eligible to receive health benefits and childcare. Members who complete their service commitment receive an AmeriCorps education award that can be used to help pay educational costs or repay student loans.

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

Since its first year, AmeriCorps Members funded by GCSV have provided several million hours of community service hours across Georgia - in fact, about 540,000 hours just in the last ten months. In Fiscal Year 2012, DCA / GCSV will award \$5 million in federal funds for local agencies to meet specific needs in their communities. "From the [Family Connection](#) program in Blue Ridge up in the mountains to Jekyll Island's [Georgia Sea Turtle Center](#) on the coast, our GCSV programs fulfill the AmeriCorps pledge to get important things done for America," said GCSV Executive Director John Turner. Thank you, GCSV, for your commitment to Georgia!

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCE DIVISION

Awards by Region - July 2011

Region Three

- Development Authority of DeKalb County
 - \$500,000 in REBA funds
 - \$1,500,000 in private investment
 - Creates 150 jobs
 - Retains 156 jobs
 - Assist in equipment purchase for CCP North America
- Development Authority of the City of Marietta
 - \$624,000 in REBA funds
 - \$9,000,000 in private investment
 - Creates 350 jobs
 - Retains 146 jobs
 - Assist in relocation and expansion of technology center for TASQ Inc.

Region Four

- City of Villa Rica
 - \$300,000 in Appalachian Regional Commission funds
 - \$20,000,000 in private investment
 - \$1,005,098 in public (non-DCA) investment
 - Creates 50 jobs
 - Public sewer improvements to serve Turano Georgia Bread, LLC

Region Seven

- City of Millen
 - \$500,000 in EIP funds
 - \$57,000,000 in private investment

- \$3,761,814 in public (non-DCA) investment
- Creates 200 jobs
- Assist with construction of public water system to serve Corrections Corporation of America

Region Eight

- City of Fort Gaines
 - \$15,064 in Immediate Threat and Danger funds
 - Benefits 1,110 people
 - Repairs to collapsed sewer main, replacement of wastewater treatment pipe

Region Nine

- City of Ailey
 - \$5,835 in Immediate Threat and Danger funds
 - Benefits 349 people
 - Repairs to pump station

Region Eleven

- City of Homerville
 - \$500,000 in EIP funds
 - \$350,000 in OneGeorgia funds
 - \$2,640,000 private investment
 - \$330,000 public (non-DCA) investment
 - Creates 74 jobs
 - Land purchase and building acquisition for Okefenokee Berry Center, LLC

IN MEMORIAM

Martha Reimann

The Department of Community Affairs family mourns the loss of our dear friend and irreplaceable colleague, Martha Reimann. Martha's passing on July 17, 2011 will be remembered sadly by all of DCA's staff and many throughout the



State of Georgia. Martha's knowledge of community financing and redevelopment was matched only by her enthusiasm to create beautiful built environments through the blending of the old with the new. Her energy, humor, intelligence and compassion inspired

all who knew her, and we will remain forever grateful to have been her colleagues.

Martha completed her Master's of City Planning at the Georgia Institute of Technology and worked for the (then) North Georgia Area Planning and Development Commission before joining DCA in 1991. In the Department, Martha was instrumental in working through critical planning legislation throughout the 1990s, and became an expert in creative financing for local governments, as well as a tireless promoter of downtown preservation and development.

Commissioner Beatty shared, "I first met Martha eight years ago when I came to DCA. She was always cheerful, helpful and dedicated. Martha served our agency and state with commitment and passion. We will miss her talent and enthusiasm for DCA, but more importantly her special friendship. Please keep her family in your prayers at this difficult time."

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