Welcome to Commissioner Gretchen Corbin

 Commissioner Gretchen Corbin has been at the Department of Community Affairs since August 1, 2013. We sat down with her to ask about her philosophy and approach to community and economic development as the first new Commissioner in ten years.

*We’re delighted that you’re here and are looking forward to your leadership.* While you were at Economic Development, you were very successful in growing Georgia’s international trade, and bringing international companies to Georgia. How will you translate those successes with businesses into working with local governments? There are many parallels between the private sector and government. Just like a corporation, a community has a business plan and is working to achieve certain goals. I look forward to partnering with local governments as we all strive for a common goal articulated by Governor Deal: creating jobs for Georgians. Each local government in our state has a role in creating a healthy environment for individuals and companies to thrive and grow jobs, and I understand that they are focused on creating the best community possible for their citizens. The Department of Community Affairs is the state agency intended to help local governments achieve their goals - we can help communities achieve their unique visions, and in so doing, create a strong foundation for economic development and job growth.

You’re a Georgia native and have lived in several parts of the state - what do you see as some of the greatest opportunities for Georgia in the 21st century? First, some of our greatest opportunities lie in matching our secondary and technical education institutions with technological advances in the private sector. Our University system and our Department of Technical and Adult Education provide so many opportunities for our citizens and businesses in Georgia. We’ve seen great advancement in technology jobs and diversification in all of our industry segments - we cover the gamut from service to industry to high tech jobs. Continuing to diversify and matching specific industry sectors to communities and citizens statewide is an incredible opportunity for Georgia. Second, Georgia is recognized around the world as a leader in the Southeastern United States, with the busiest airport in the world, our ever-growing port system, and our strong University System, to name a few. These assets are statewide resources, not just for Atlanta and the Georgia coast. DCA can work with communities to leverage these assets to benefit their citizens, as well as their community's marketing efforts.
On behalf of Governor Nathan Deal, Commissioner Gretchen Corbin announced this month that Georgia has awarded over $37.5 million in federal assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the State's Community Development Block Grant Program. "The CDBG program provides an essential resource to Georgia's smaller more rural communities in their efforts to support projects that will create jobs and assist low and moderate-income citizens. As communities large and small are making difficult choices, these awards represent an important investment in various local health and safety, economic development and job creation programs, insuring Georgia's communities are prepared for economic development opportunities," said Commissioner Corbin.

Over $33 million is allocated for CDBG awards to support capital projects in 69 Georgia communities. Projects include upgrading water supplies, provision of basic sewer services, health facilities, senior citizen facilities, flood and drainage improvements and other neighborhood revitalization projects. The Department recently invested an additional $4.5 million for economic development projects in ten Georgia communities. The public funds for these projects will leverage over $138 million in private investments for economic expansions that will create over 1,000 jobs for Georgians. Please see the CDBG webpage for complete information and a list of funded projects.

How has working abroad and with so many international corporations shaped your philosophy about state and local government? Having marketed Georgia on an international scale, I've learned to understand our strengths and where we can improve. Observing communities of all sizes around the world has given me insight to Georgia's local strengths and opportunities. Any community in Georgia can be competing with another province or region of another country, not just another county in Georgia or a different state in the USA. Here at the Department of Community Affairs, we have the opportunity to assist our Georgia communities in making sure they are ready for international competition. We partner with them to complete needed infrastructure, community wide high-quality housing, and economic development product. As a state agency, we want to promote the concept of complete communities that provide a high quality of life in order to be successful on a worldwide stage.

Community improvement continues to be about the citizenry of today and tomorrow. When Georgia's children are making decisions for themselves about - quite literally - where in the world they choose to live their adult lives, we want Georgia communities to be their first choice. If we can work with our Georgia communities to develop environments that provide outstanding quality of life and professional opportunities to attract the young talent of tomorrow, we will have been successful.

In your first few weeks as the Commissioner of Community Affairs, what's one of the most interesting things you've learned or seen? I've been impressed by the innovative openness that DCA staff bring to problem-solving. They're very talented at matching up appropriate resources with specific communities and their needs. This agency has great technical assistance and funding resources, and already I've seen staff mix the two for positive results across the state. The depth and breadth of the Department's partners is striking, too. From Governor Deal's office and our executive branch partners like Economic Development and Technical and Adult Education; to the General Assembly, to the University System and all its resources, DCA is adept at joining forces to make a difference in our communities. I'm honored and gratified to have the opportunity to work with this organization and I'm looking forward to helping Georgia expand its opportunities in the 21st century.

Welcome to New Board Members and Officers

At its August 7, 2013 meeting, the Board of the Department of Community Affairs welcomed new board members and newly-elected board officers.

L-R: Commissioner Gretchen Corbin, Chair Billy Croker, Frank Turner, Past-Chair Carolyn Crayton, Steve Nygren, Joyce C. Stevens, Chip Mitchell, Trip Tollison III, Secretary Al Hodge. Not pictured: Vice-chair Simon Bloom.
Recycling Is Job Growth

The Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation and the Georgia Recycling Coalition are showing the economic value of Georgia's recyclable materials. In the August 2013 edition of Georgia Trend Magazine, KGB Executive Director Sarah Visser and GRC Executive Director Gloria Hardegree take a look at the facts.

"Georgia now has the second largest infrastructure for end-use recyclable materials ...in the nation," says Gloria Hardegree. "We have found 130 businesses who use recycled materials in manufacturing...we are in an enviable position, to have ten paper mills using 100 percent recycled content; glass, plastic and aluminum recycling and manufacturing companies; and with Atlanta seeking to become a zero-waste city through its Sustainable Atlanta and EcoDistrict program, we are becoming a leader in the nation." The full article provides a wide range of facts and figures about the economic value of Georgia's "trash."

Georgia's Regional Commissions Win National Innovation Awards

The National Association of Development Organizations presents annual Innovation Awards to those organizations that have had significant and positive impacts on their regions through innovative

Mr. Billy Croker of Cedartown will serve as the Chair of the Board, while Mr. Simon Bloom of Atlanta will serve as Vice-Chair. Mr. Al Hodge of Rome takes over the role of Secretary. The board welcomed new members Chip Mitchell of Grayson and Trip Tollison, Ill of Savannah; and congratulated reappointed members Frank Turner of Covington, Steve Nygren of Chattahoochee Hills and Joyce C. Stevens of Good Hope.

Ninety New Jobs in Rabun County Opportunity Zone

The Rabun County Development Authority is proving the power of partnerships to make positive change. By partnering with Banks and Habersham Counties to pool resources, they used OneGeorgia Authority funds to become part of the North Georgia Network and provide fiber optic cable access to the Rabun Business Park; and through their partnership with the Department created an Opportunity Zone for that park. These investments and incentives were what Gap Partners, Inc. needed to locate 90 jobs in the former Fruit of the Loom facility.

"We're proud of Rabun County for what they've done to recover from the closing of the Fruit of the Loom business, and this innovative reuse of that massive manufacturing facility. With DCA's Opportunity Zone designation last year, this park is poised to be a job creation center for the region," commented Commissioner Gretchen Corbin at the August 8 ribbon cutting. "Thank you for helping us meet the Governor's challenge, making job creation the number one priority for Georgia -and congratulations on an exciting new step for Rabun County and Gap Partners."

UPCOMING DEADLINES, EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES

Main Street Georgia Applications Due August 31, 2013

The Office of Downtown Development is pleased to announce the competitive selection process of the Georgia Main Street Program.
approaches to problem solving and program delivery. This year, seven of Georgia's Regional Commissions won ten awards:

- Coastal RC
- Central Savannah River Area RC
- Georgia Mountains RC
- Middle Georgia RC
- Northeast Georgia RC
- Southern Georgia RC
- River Valley RC

Congratulations, and thanks for all the work you do in Georgia!

As of June 30th, HomeSafe Georgia has assisted over 3,700 individuals and families, committing over $77 million in U.S. Treasury funding to help keep homeowners from foreclosure.

The Georgia Main Street Start-Up Program is a competitive selection process that allows communities to demonstrate their abilities to enter the Georgia Classic Main Street network and successfully achieve National Accreditation on an annual basis. We encourage interested communities to complete the application online. Applications are due by August 31, 2013. The Start-Up Program will be offered every two years, and the next application round will be held in 2015.

For questions about the program, please call our office at 404-679-3101 or email mainstreet@dca.ga.gov.

CHIP Application Workshop: September 4 and CDBG Recipients' Workshop: September 5-6, 2013 in Savannah

Register now for the 2013 CHIP and/or CDBG Recipients' Workshop at the Hyatt Regency in Savannah, September 4 and 5-6.

The CHIP Application Workshop has limited availability and is open on a first come, first serve basis. Registration is free until August 23 and $75 thereafter. The Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) uses a portion of Georgia's federal HOME funds to assist local governments, nonprofit organizations and public housing authorities to address the needs of affordable housing development in their communities. CHIP funds may be used to provide down payment assistance or homeowner rehabilitation funding to eligible low-income and moderate-income households. Eligible communities are those outside of a HUD-designated Participating Jurisdiction as defined by the HOME Program.

The CDBG Recipients' Workshop is appropriate for new CDBG grant recipients, especially elected officials, staff and administrators; as well as community groups interested in improving local quality of life, learning about the Community Development Block Grant program and meeting Commissioner Gretchen Corbin, who will be hosting the workshop for the first time.

The workshop will provide a broad overview of program management requirements and detailed briefings on compliance with Environmental Review, Labor Standards, Financial Management, Administration and Fair Housing Equal Opportunity standards.

CHIP Conference Registration

CDBG Conference Registration and Payment ($175 for full conference, $50 for second day only)

Hotel Registration

For more information, please contact Lisa Smith at (404) 679-5276 or by email at lisa.smith@dca.ga.gov.

Home Help Resource Fair in Macon:
Georgia citizens need quick and easy access to affordable housing options and we can 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 is easier with GeorgiaHousingSearch.org - the key to linking tenants with landlords. We offer FREE property posting, bilingual assistance, and a toll-free number (877-428-8844) available to those without internet access.

Landlords can register in a five-minute process or work with DCA staff to register large-scale listings. For more information, please contact Ron Pounds at 404-327-6864 or ron.pounds@dca.ga.gov.

**September 14, 2013**

The Department of Community Affairs, the Office of Congressman Sanford Bishop, and Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Middle Georgia will host an event at Central Georgia Technical College, 3300 Macon Tech Drive, Macon; September 14, 2013 from 10 AM - 2 PM. The day will feature one-on-one opportunities to speak with certified housing counselors; seminars on housing tools, budgeting, schemes and scams; and information from vendors. For more information contact Cynthia Harrison at cynthia.harrison@dca.ga.gov.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCING**

**July Financial Awards**

**Region Five**

**City of Monticello**

- $420,000 in Employment Incentive Program (EIP) funds
- Generates $2.6 Million in private investment
- Generates $1.3 Million in public (non-DCA) investment
- Creates 42 jobs
- Funds used to build a rail spur and improve drainage facilities for a new industry

**Region Six**

**Eatonton Downtown Development Authority**

- $200,000 in Equity funds
- Generates $509,000 in public (non-DCA) investment
- Will spur creation of 30 jobs
- Funds used to make improvement to City Park, including event stage, landscaping and parking

**Region Eight**

**Development Authority of Macon County**

- $235,000 in Equity funds
- Generates $10 Million in private investment
- Generates $770,000 in public (non-DCA) investment
- Creates 38 jobs
- Funds used to construct a railroad track extension assisting in plant expansion

**City of Cordele**

- $200,000 in Equity funds
- Generates $10.7 Million in private investment
- Generates $950,000 in public (non-DCA) investment
- Creates 50 jobs
- Water and sewer improvements to serve the location of a
Region Nine
City of Cochran

- $9,000 in Immediate Threat and Danger funds
- Generates $27,000 in public (non-DCA) investment
- Assists 5,140 people
- Assistance in making repairs to the Iron Removal Plant

Joint Development Authority of Jeff Davis County, Hazlehurst and Denton

- $239,000 in EDGE funds
- Generates $91 Million in private investment
- Creates 100 jobs
- Assists in the location of a wood pellet manufacturing facility