The Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) Tourism Council recently published a guide to the Appalachian Region's most distinctive local food destinations. Georgia is well-represented in Bon Appetit! Bon Appalachia!, which features all things foodie: Farmers' Markets, Farm to Fork Restaurants, Farm Tours, Festivals & Events, Vineyards and Wineries; and Craft Breweries and Spirits.

Find the guide at: www.visitappalachia.com. Both the interactive website and the paper map feature locations selected through an online nomination process that took place in 2013. The interactive version includes almost 650 destinations across the 13 states of Appalachia, while the paper map highlights 283 of these locations.

The Appalachian Regional Commission is a regional economic development agency whose mission is to be a strategic partner and advocate for sustainable community and economic development in Appalachia. DCA manages Georgia's ARC program, which serves 37 counties in north Georgia. Commissioner Gretchen Corbin serves as Georgia's Alternate (to Governor Deal) on the ARC governing board.

DCA Recognized for Staff Generosity to State Charitable Contribution Fund

In June, the Georgia Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) recognized the outstanding achievements of the Department of Community Affairs and twenty other state agencies and members of the University System of Georgia at the annual State Charitable Contributions Program (SCCP) awards ceremony. In the last 17 years, the program has raised over $43 million to help support local and nationwide charities.

To promote giving, the DCA SCCP team, headed by Haley Allison, rallied the staff throughout the fall of 2013, with a series of events whose proceeds went to the SCCP. The work of this dedicated team encouraged staff to increase their contribution by a whopping 100 percent over the 2012-2013 SCCP campaign.
Many DCA staff members make frequent presentations to a variety of groups statewide. Learning to become better public speakers helps our staff and makes our presentations more enjoyable for our audiences. To cultivate our speaking skills, DCA staff started a Toastmasters International club.

Now, in just its third year, the DCA Toastmasters Club has achieved Distinguished Club Program status, thanks to an ambitious agenda set by its immediate past president and members. The club had to meet five of the ten Toastmasters International Club goals to achieve this status, which is a challenge for clubs as young as DCA’s.

“We are extremely proud that our immediate past-president, Leonard Newsome, had the vision to push the club to this designation,” said Christy Barnes, DCA Toastmasters Club president. “We have many unsung heroes as well, especially those officers who attended training and Toastmasters competitions on weekends and evenings.”

DCA’s Toastmasters Club meets the first and third Tuesday of each month, and is open to all, not just DCA employees. President Barnes would love to see you there! For more information, contact Brian DiNapoli at brian.dinapoli@dca.ga.gov.

“Huge congratulations are due to every one of our employees who contributed and a big thanks to our spirit committee for leading the agency down the path to success,” said Commissioner Corbin. “I’m not surprised at the heart of our DCA family, and I’m very glad that everyone else knows about it, too.”

DCA had a 77 percent rate of employee participation in the State Charitable Contribution Program for 2013-2014. These team efforts and our employees’ generosity resulted in DCA winning an unprecedented three awards for state agencies of 101-500 employees:

- Governor's Award for Largest Increase in Contributions Total
- Governor's Award for Highest Level of Employee Participation
- Commissioner's Award for the Highest Contribution per Employee

DOAS Commissioner Sid Johnson announced that Commissioner Gretchen Corbin will serve as the honorary chair for the 2014-2015 campaign.

“I can't wait to see what our generosity, here at DCA and statewide, will bring in the 2014 campaign. I look forward to the honor and challenge of chairing the SCCP campaign this year and to the opportunity to provide significant funds to so many of Georgia’s worthy causes,” said Commissioner Corbin.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Homeowners who became unemployed or underemployed within the last 36 months may be eligible for up to 24 months of temporary mortgage payment assistance; and homeowners who have experienced other financial hardships within the last 36 months, including those associated with military service, death of a spouse, or medical hardships, may be eligible for HomeSafe Georgia assistance. We encourage potentially eligible homeowners to attend one of these events, at which DCA staff will partner with the Department of Labor and other agencies to provide information and answer questions:

- **July 19:** Back to School Health Fair; 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.; Wal-Mart, 6149 Old National Highway, College Park
- **July 23:** Veterans Education, Benefits and Employment Fair; 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.; Wiregrass Technical College, Brooks Hall, Building 500, 4089 Val Tech Road, Valdosta
- **July 24:** T.E.A.M.26 Jobs Fair; 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.; VFW Post, 2872 Sunset Drive, Athens
- **July 30:** Annual Job and Resource Fair; 8:30 a.m. - noon; South Georgia Technical College, John M. Pope Technology Center Auditorium, Americus
Has your local Keep Georgia Beautiful affiliate done a small scale, low cost and environmentally friendly roadside beautification project? The Association of County Commissioners Georgia (ACCG) is looking for examples of roadside projects that counties across Georgia can implement to enhance their communities' visual appeal.

Please forward a short description of your project to Kanika Greenlee at kanika.greenlee@kgbf.org

Save the Date
Community Planning Institute
October 10-11

The Office of Planning and Environmental Management (OPEM) will host the Community Planning Institute at Unicoi State Park, October 10-11. We encourage elected officials, local government staff, and planning and zoning commissioners to attend. For more information, see the OPEM webpage.

July 31: Veterans Helping Veterans Job/Career Fair; 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.; American Legion Post #294, 3282 Florence Road, Powder Springs

August 7: Veterans' Career Fair and Diversity Job Expo; 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Atlanta Motor Speedway, Hampton

August 9: JOBS Fair; 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.; Georgia Regents University, Christenberry Fieldhouse, Augusta

August 16: 10th Annual 13th Congressional District Health Fair; 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Mundy's Mill High School, Jonesboro

For more information: www.homesafegeorgia.com

Follow HomeSafe Georgia on Twitter: #HomeSafeGeorgia

Georgia Initiative for Community Housing
Now Accepting Applications

The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) is now accepting applications for participation in the three-year program. Applications are available on the GICH website and are due by September 5. Interested communities are encouraged to submit a letter of intent by July 31.

Vibrant neighborhoods with safe, decent and affordable housing are essential to any community’s economic vitality. Since 2004, the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing, a partnership of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the Georgia Municipal Association, and the University of Georgia Housing and Demographics Research Center, has been helping communities across Georgia address housing and community development needs. Many local leaders have a vision for their communities but need assistance getting started. GICH helps communities develop a clear road map for achieving their vision.

This program provides a platform for thinking of creative solutions and networking ideas with housing professionals, city officials and staff, as well as community volunteers from across the state.

For questions, contact Karen Tinsley at 706-542-4949 or klt@uga.edu.

Georgia Downtown Association Conference: August 20-22 in Decatur
It's National Park and Recreation Month and what better way to celebrate than with a trip to one of Georgia's State Parks or Historic Sites?

Did you know that many of our state parks are near or in a Main Street city? Try the Dahlonega Gold Museum or take the ferry from Darien to visit the Reynolds Plantation on Sapelo Island for great glimpses into Georgia's history; or take a camping trip to Sweetwater Creek near Douglasville, or General Coffee near Douglas. Our Georgia communities are full of natural and historic treasures!

Register now for the 2014 Georgia Downtown Conference, co-sponsored by the Georgia Downtown Association and the Department of Community Affairs. This educational and inspirational opportunity is appropriate for staff, elected officials, DDA members, volunteers and anyone else interested in downtown development and offers the added bonus of two days in downtown Decatur.

Registration Deadline: August 8. For more conference and hotel information, and to register, see the conference webpage.

Georgia Academy for Economic Development Registration

The Georgia Academy for Economic Development provides participants with an understanding of the complexities of economic and community development, and tools to assist in the development of their region. The program, through a variety of defined activities, takes an in-depth review of possible economic development opportunities and strategies. The multi-day program combines lecture, exercises, guest expert presentations, and other formats to keep the program interesting and interactive.

Registration for fall 2014 is underway. Contact the DCA representative in your region for more information and to register.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCING
June Financial Awards

Region Four
Carrollton Payroll Development Authority
$200,000 in EDGE funds
Spurs $36 million in private investment
Spurs an additional $35,000 in public (non-DCA) investment
Creates 230 jobs
Assists with the location of Yachiyo Manufacturing of America

Region Eight
Quitman County Development Authority

- $160,000 in Equity loan funds
- Spurs $65,000 in private investment
- Retains 121 jobs
- Creates 15 jobs
- Will assist D&J Plastics, a fishing lure company, with a facility expansion

Region Nine
Joint Development Authority of Jeff Davis County and Hazlehurst

- $500,000 in EDGE funds
- Spurs $10 million in private investment
- Spurs an additional $65,000 in public (non-DCA) investment
- Creates 250 jobs
- Assists in the location of EP American Footwear

City of Cochran

- $50,000 in Immediate Threat and Danger (ITD) funds
- Will assist in the rehabilitation of city sewer lines
- Will benefit 53 people

City of Scotland

- $50,000 in ITD funds
- Will assist in installing a radon removal treatment facility on the city water system
- Will benefit 366 people

Region Ten
Development Authority of Bainbridge and Decatur County

- $300,000 in EDGE Funds
- Spurs $10 million in private investment
- Spurs an additional $1.4 million in public (non-DCA) investment
- Creates 100 jobs
- Assists in the location of Bainbridge Manufacturing
Previous issues of The Partner Connection

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