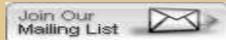




The Partner Connection

The Newsletter of DCA

April 2013



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April is Landscape Architecture Month



From the **State Botanical Garden** in Athens, to the squares of **Savannah** and the Rose City of **Thomasville** great landscape architecture, trails, and public parks abound in our great state! Take some time this month to appreciate the beautiful places that help make your community special, and be sure to thank a gardener.

Great Promise Partnership Service Learning

NEWS AND EVENTS

April is Fair Housing Month: Our Work Today Defines Our Tomorrow

At DCA, we help create the future every day for thousands of our fellow citizens, in partnership with communities, lenders, elected leaders and others. **The Fair Housing Act**, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended, prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions.



President Johnson signed the landmark Fair Housing Act into law on April 11th of that year, prohibiting discrimination in the sale or rental of housing based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, familial status or disability. HUD administratively enforces executive orders and regulations designed to afford all persons an equal opportunity to live in housing of their choice.

From **Georgia Dream** (providing down-payment assistance) through our **Rental Assistance** program, plus multiple programs targeted to people with disabilities, veterans and elderly citizens, we are committed to ensuring that our policies and procedures do not deny anyone the opportunity to participate in, or benefit from, access to any of DCA's programs, services and activities. DCA prepares an **Analysis of Impediments for Fair Housing Choices** in order to make sure that we, as a state, are providing adequate fair housing choices to those who need them most.

As we celebrate Fair Housing month, DCA team members will participate in housing events statewide organized by local housing professionals in recognition of Fair Housing month, and distribute Fair Housing Posters to libraries, community centers and other community centers across the state to inform all our citizens of their rights and responsibilities regarding housing options.

For more information on the Fair Housing Act, contact Antonette Sewell at



The **Great Promise Partnership (GPP)** students at DCA organized their second annual service-learning project this spring! In a spirit of intergenerational support, the teens decided to bring a little cheer to the A.G. Rhodes Nursing Home during the Easter season. After a successful "Bunny Drive," in which they collected nearly four times as many stuffed bunnies as they had anticipated, the students spent an afternoon sharing their time and the bunnies with nursing home residents.

Arthur Simmons, a GPP student and this year's Easter Bunny project originator says, "Organizing the project was difficult but fun too! When we passed the bunnies out, I felt emotional. I felt sad because some residents hadn't had a visitor in several years; but, I felt really happy to bring joy to some of their bedsides."

The GPP staff and support team at the DCA site are honored to work with these young people, and are encouraged by their desire to reach out and make their community a happier place.

For more information about the Great Promise Partnership, contact Lori Bodine at lori.bodine@dca.ga.gov.

The 2013 Main Street Institute



antonette.sewell@dca.ga.gov.

Georgia's Neighborhood Stabilization Program: The Nation's Best

In 2009, in response to the national real estate crisis and recession, HUD created the **Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP1)** to provide assistance for the redevelopment of abandoned and foreclosed homes across the nation. HUD allocated funds to each state based on need, and Georgia received \$77,085,125 in NSP funds (the seventh largest allocation in the nation). The Community Finance Division administers the program funds for the state.

By the end of 2012, Georgia has spent or obligated the entire allocation, a year ahead of the HUD deadline, and is the only state in the nation to do so. Among the seventeen states awarded more than \$40 million, Georgia ranks:

- FIRST in percent of total awarded amount used in this three-year timeframe
- FIRST in generating program income (as a percentage of the grant award) (The program generates income when it sells rehabbed houses. This income can then be returned to the program to use for other properties.)
- SECOND in percent of grant funds committed (we're second by 1.83 percentage points)

The Georgia NSP 1 program is a partnership effort among DCA and local governments and has:

- Generated \$21 million in program income (that we can now use to purchase and rehab additional units)
- Purchased/rehabbed and resold 1500 individual housing units
- Revitalized entire neighborhoods in Covington and Macon
- Developed multifamily affordable housing complexes in Cobb County and Macon

DCA has worked diligently, along with many partners in local governments across the state, to meet the challenges of designing a new program even while the program itself kept changing.

For more information about Georgia's NSP, contact Glenn Misner at glenn.misner@dca.ga.gov.

Opportunity Zones - Redeveloping Our Historic Structures

The Sears Building in Atlanta is big enough to qualify as its own **Opportunity Zone** - at 2,100,000 square feet, it's one of the largest buildings in the southeastern United States. Since its designation as an OZ in 2011, the property's owners have unveiled ambitious plans to convert it into a mixed-use

development with national and local retail anchors, restaurants, boutiques and offices, and residential units, as well as plans for rooftop gardens where local restaurants can grow food. The property owners plan to



The **Office of Downtown**

Development (ODD) hosted the 2013 Main Street Institute at the Tift Theatre in Tifton March 20-21, 2013. Local government staff, board volunteers, elected officials and community leaders from across Georgia gathered to learn how to improve their downtowns using the Main Street Approach. Topics included marketing, downtown design, housing, financing economic development, budgeting and management of downtown programming. We're focused on rebuilding and reenergizing our downtowns, and Main Street staff and volunteers are leading the way!



HomeSafe is making steady progress, assisting Georgia homeowners avoid foreclosure as they search for employment. As of March 2013, the program has:

- Assisted over 3,200 Georgia individuals and families in retaining their homes
- Committed over \$71 MM

in U.S. Treasury funding to help keep homeowners from foreclosure.

- Recruited credit counseling partners statewide to help participants navigate the application process (at no charge): CredAbility, CCCSI - Savannah, CCCSI - Middle Georgia, D&E Financial Group and JCVision. Click [HERE](#) for a map showing our partners' service areas and contact information for the HomeSafe program.

Homeowners assisted by HomeSafe Georgia have a 99.54% success rate after 12 months and a 100% success rate for 24 months.

complete renovations by early 2014 and then add the building to the **National Register of Historic Places.**

The historic structure, in a walkable neighborhood with access to universities and a young workforce, has attracted **Athenahealth**, a Boston-area company that will locate up to 700 healthcare IT jobs in 120,000 square feet of the building. Because of its location in an Opportunity Zone, each of those 700 jobs will qualify for a \$3,500 Georgia tax credit.

For more information on Opportunity Zones, and how your community can use them to help redevelop historic properties and attract jobs, contact Joanie Perry at **Joanie.perry@dca.ga.gov.**

UPCOMING DEADLINES, EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES

HomeSafe Georgia

The Department will provide information about how to apply to the HomeSafe program for mortgage assistance at the following events:



Salute to our Heroes Hiring Expo: April 18, 2013; 9 AM - 3PM; **VFW Post 2681 Marietta**, 140 Powers Ferry Road SE, Marietta

Congressman David Scott's 10th Annual Jobs Fair: April 19, 2013 10 AM - 3 PM; **Georgia International Convention Center**, 2000 Convention Center Concourse, College Park

2013 Glennville Career Expo, April 25, 2013 9 AM - Noon; **Glennville National Guard Armory**, 1200 E. Barnard Street, Glennville;

Operation Stand Down Columbus: April 27, 2013; 7 AM - 3PM; **Columbus Convention and Trade Center**, 801 Front Avenue, Columbus

GA Department of Labor & Army Career and Alumni Program Job Fair 2013: May 7, 2013; 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM; **U.S. Army Reserve Center**, Building 14401, 15th Street & Lane Avenue, Fort Gordon; (9:30 - 10:30 open to Wounded Warriors only; open to all 10:30 - 2:30)

Athens Veterans and all Job Seekers Career Expo 2013: May 9, 2013; 9 AM - Noon; **VFW Post 2872** 835 Sunset Drive, Athens

Department of Labor and Savannah Technical College Job Fair: May 16, 2013; 2 PM - 6 PM; **Savannah Technical College**, 5717 White Bluff Road, Savannah

Fitzgerald Community Event: May 18, 2013; 10 AM - 3 PM; 921 E. Oconee Street, Fitzgerald

As always, more information, eligibility requirements and applications are available on the HomeSafe webpage:

<https://www.homesafegeorgia.com/>.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCING

March Financial Awards



Effective
April 11, 2013
at 5:00 pm

3.25%

Georgia Dream First Mortgage
FHA/VA/RD/Conventional Uninsured
with or without a
Georgia Dream Down Payment Loan

For complete information, click [HERE](#).



GEORGIAHOUSINGSEARCH.ORG

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.

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.

GeorgiaHousingSearch.org

is 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.

Region Three

City of Sandy Springs Development Authority

- \$350,000 in REBA funds
- \$500,000 in private investment
- Creates 101 jobs
- Assists in the location of an information technology and creative services center

Region Six

City of Byron

- \$374,377 in Employment Incentive Program (EIP) funds
- \$2MM in private investment
- \$27MM in public (non-DCA) investment
- 132 jobs created
- 112 jobs retained
- These funds assist with the public roadway and sanitary sewer line improvements to benefit The Medical Center of Peach County, Inc.'s proposed 67,500 square foot, single-story 25-bed new critical access hospital in Byron, Peach County.

Region Seven

Development Authority of Richmond County

- \$350,000 in EDGE grant funds
- \$124MM in private investment
- \$675,000 in public (non-DCA) investment
- Creates 144 jobs
- Assists in the location of a food processing facility

Region Eight

City of Ideal

- \$8,446 in Immediate Threat and Danger funds
- Funding for repairs made to two of the city's lift stations. The project will benefit 499 persons of whom 322 are low to moderate income.

City of Richland

- \$432,133 in Redevelopment Grant funds
- \$123,990 in private investment
- \$76,026 in public (non-DCA) investment
- Creates 2 jobs
- Funds used to eliminate "blighted" conditions in eight adjoining historic properties that house four downtown businesses.

Region Eleven

City of Alma

- \$284,211 in Employment Incentive Program funds
 - \$2.4MM in private investment
 - \$284,221 in public (non-DCA) investment
 - Creates 100 jobs
 - Funds will assist with the purchase of existing building for a new company.
-



Thanks to you, our readers, Constant Contact named The Partner Connection one of its 2012 All Star Award Winners! We work to share the most current information about the Department of Community Affairs with you each month. If you have ideas or requests for information about DCA that you'd like to read here, click [HERE](#) to share them with us.

We're here to partner with communities to create a climate of success for Georgia's families and businesses!



For previous issues of **The Partner Connection**, click on our logo or [HERE](#).

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