



May 2012

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**Valerie Gelmini:
Exceeding Excellence**



Valerie Gelmini, right, with Nancy Dove, Athens Rental Assistance Office Director.

Congratulations to Valerie Gelmini, this quarter's Exceeding Excellence Winner. Valerie is a Family Housing Counselor in the Athens Rental Assistance Office. She serves **Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program** participants in Gwinnett and Barrow Counties. Additionally, Valerie's caseload includes 25 veterans participating in the

NEWS AND EVENTS

Zell Miller Hero Award



L-R: US Senator Zell Miller, Lamar Paris, Shirley Miller, Cathy Cox, Mike Beatty

On May 6, 2012 Commissioner Mike Beatty presented the first Zell Miller Appalachian Hero Award to former Governor and US Senator Zell Miller for his service to Georgia and the Appalachian Region. "We are very pleased to honor Zell Miller's service to Georgia and Appalachia. He is a true Appalachian Hero and a personal hero of mine," stated Commissioner Beatty. "We hope this award will become an annual event to honor others who serve Georgia's Appalachia."

"It is truly an honor to receive this award and I am very grateful to Commissioner Beatty and the **Georgia Association of Regional Commissions** for recognizing me in this way," said Senator Miller. In addition to the award, Commissioner Beatty pledged a gift of \$1,500 to the Zell Miller Scholarship Fund at Governor Miller's alma mater, **Young Harris College**.

Young Harris College President Cathy Cox, Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris, the US Economic Development Administration Regional Director Phil Paradise and Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Director Danny Lewis and many others were on hand to recognize Senator Miller's achievements

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing

(VASH) program. She has worked to provide these former homeless veterans with permanent housing in Gwinnett County. She encourages her clients to use the Housing Choice Voucher Program as a stepping stone toward independence and economic self-sufficiency rather than adopting assistance as a permanent lifestyle. In a letter from a client leaving the program, a satisfied customer stated:

"Valerie, I just wanted to... let you know that I will miss our yearly visits. Even though they resulted in an increase in rent, I welcomed the financial challenge to become more aware of any and all unnecessary spending. I learned to differentiate between needs and wants. With last year bringing the biggest increase, I really had to buckle down and get creative with our finances. I used my income tax refund to become debt free, downsized my car, and also tightened up a few loose edges. Thanks to the housing market being what it is, we were able to get an absolute fantastic buy on a house. Our mortgage will be less than our monthly rent. While the first year will bring some challenges until we get the budget kinks worked out...we are both looking forward to turning this house into our home. Georgia has been very good to us. We have grown in our faith, healed some wounds, and accomplished more than if we had stayed in NH. Our good fortune has now opened the door for another family to receive some assistance in a tough economy. God Bless."

Well done Valerie! Thank you for providing excellent customer service. You truly exemplify a great work ethic and a commitment to positive results for the clients you serve.

**NATIONAL
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May is National Preservation Month and this year's theme is "Discover America's Hidden Gems." Communities from coast to coast are filled with unexplored historic treasures-and May's the month to celebrate

during the Georgia Regional Commission Economic Development Conference in Young Harris, Governor Miller's hometown. For more information, contact James Thompson at (404) 679-1584 or by email at james.thompson@dca.ga.gov.

Building Opportunity on Main Street



"What if we created a Kia plant a year worth of jobs in our downtowns across Georgia?" Commissioner Beatty posed that question to the six cities participating in the Building Opportunity on Main Street pilot program: **Columbus**, **Cordele**, **Ellijay**, **Jefferson**, **Madison** and **Woodstock**. These six communities are partnering with the Department, the **Georgia Municipal Association**, the **Georgia Cities Foundation**, each other, and an array of other resources for the next eighteen months to focus on job growth and creation in Georgia's historic downtowns. Meeting together in Woodstock for the first time on May 10, 2012, community leaders identified key elements for creating success in downtown:

- A common vision and universal message
- "Downtown infrastructure" including streetscapes, traffic management and housing opportunities
- Community services that support businesses including permitting and process assistance, clean-up services and city maintenance
- Employer incentives

Monica Branch, Main Street manager of Cordele, told the group, "We hear from our Industrial Development Authority that businesses interested in our community always want to see downtown. If we don't take care of our history and our families, how will we take care of new businesses?"

them! Reach out to a growing audience of neighbors, tourists, students and preservationists by promoting historic places in your community, and encourage newcomers to learn more about your local preservation programs. Click [HERE](#) for information and ideas to showcase the history of your community.



The Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA) created the **Georgia Energy Challenge** to help Georgians conserve energy and track how much we can save together. All state agencies have already committed to reduce energy consumption 15% in their facilities by 2020. Now everyone in Georgia can do the same. Your pledge will not only help save money on your energy bills, it will help the state attain national recognition for our commitment to energy conservation. Click [HERE](#) to take the challenge!

ESG and HOPWA Update

The **Emergency Solutions Grant** program provides assistance to families and individuals moving from homelessness into stable housing, and offers funding to prevent homelessness. The **Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS** program provides housing and service options for lower income individuals living with HIV or AIDS. In Fiscal Year 2012, the Department received 149 applications from local governments and non-profit organizations requesting \$9.7MM in ESG funds and \$2.6MM in HOPWA funds, proposing the following activities:

- 98 emergency shelters around the state
- 63 transitional housing programs
- 40 homeless services programs
- 31 Rapid Re-housing programs
- 16 outreach programs
- 12 Homeless Connect events

The Department, the Georgia Cities Foundation, the Georgia Municipal Association and these cities will apply a variety of tools and resources in the historic downtown core of each city, focusing on redeveloping areas to stimulate job growth. "We're focused on rebuilding our communities and making them places where families can live, work and play. What better place to start than in our downtowns, the places that are full of Georgia's history and culture, and already have water, sewer, electricity, streets and sidewalks in place?" asks Commissioner Beatty. "These six cities have demonstrated their desire and ability to make change - so we're going to partner with them to help them change the job scene in their downtowns."

Georgia's 100 Main Street® Cities generated 592 new businesses in 2011 in their downtowns, according to the Department's research. When the BoomTown pilot is complete, the Department's Main Street® program will take the lessons learned to cities across the state. For more information, contact Billy Parrish at billy.parrish@dca.ga.gov.

Cynthia Harrison:

HomeSafe Outreach Coordinator



The **HomeSafe** program is designed to provide mortgage assistance to Georgians who have lost employment during the national recession. In order to ensure that we are spreading that message as far and wide as possible, and helping as many Georgians as possible, the Commissioner has appointed Cynthia Harrison to coordinate all HomeSafe outreach activities statewide.

Cynthia will work with our partners on outreach events; including workshops in cooperation with **Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia's Regional Commissions, US Congressional district** office events, federal events, bank events and others. She will educate non-HomeSafe Georgia DCA staff and non-DCA volunteers to staff these events to increase public awareness of the HomeSafe program.

Cynthia has worked in state government since 1992 and before that as a teacher, bank teller, savings counselor, and mortgage loan closer. In 2007 she joined the **Office of Special Housing Initiatives** as a Community Initiatives Coordinator working with local governments, developers, non profits and others to inform them of the many housing programs offered by DCA. She also supported the Regional Commissions and the Department's Team Georgia Managers on housing issues. She played a key role for the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing and teaches housing classes to elected officials for the Georgia Municipal Association and Carl Vinson Institute for Government. Contact Cynthia at Cynthia.harrison@dca.ga.gov.

Georgia State Amendments to the

The Department has approximately \$5MM available for ESG awards and \$2.6MM for HOPWA awards. We will announce this year's grant recipients on July 1, 2012. For information about HOPWA, please contact Phillis Thomas at 404.679.0651 or at phillis.thomas@dca.ga.gov. For information about ESG, contact Christy Hahn at 404.679.5293 or Christy.hahn@dca.ga.gov.

HearthSide Towne Lake in Woodstock

In our **September 2011 Newsletter**, we highlighted an innovative project in Woodstock made possible in part through **ARRA** funds. On April 12, 2012 the **City of Woodstock** officially welcomed new residents to HearthSide Towne Lake, an independent senior living community. Congratulations to Woodstock and to **Norsouth** for their partnership and their ability to turn a formerly foreclosed, unfinished parcel into a vibrant neighborhood.



Photo credit: Duane Stork Photography



Do you know a homeowner who is recently unemployed, and might need mortgage payment assistance?

Please let them know about HomeSafe Georgia: www.homesafegeorgia.com! Since its inception in April of last year, the HomeSafe Georgia program has helped over 1000 homeowners facing unemployment and under-employment hardship remain in their

International Plumbing Code

The Board of the Department of Community Affairs adopted **Georgia State Amendments to the International Plumbing Code** that will take effect July 1, 2012. Specifically, the Georgia State Minimum Requirements for High Efficiency Plumbing Fixtures and Cooling Towers will affect all new construction, residential and commercial, permitted on or after July 1, 2012.

These new plumbing codes will reduce water consumption through higher efficiency standards, thus reducing water bills for families and businesses in Georgia. In addition, local governments will, over time, recognize significant water conservation, helping the state meet its water needs well into the future. For more information, please contact the **Office of Construction Codes** at 404.679.3118.

UPCOMING EDUCATION, EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND DEADLINES

State Small Business Credit Initiative Workshop: May 23, 2012 in Atlanta



The Office of Economic Development is hosting a workshop on Wednesday, May 23 to educate lenders from banks, credit unions and community

development finance institutions on Georgia's new State Small Business Credit Initiative. The seminar will offer how-to instructions on the lender qualification process, implementation procedures for enrolling loans, and the advantages in taking part in this program.

The national SSBCI program was created by the **Small Business Jobs Act of 2010**, which allocated \$1.5 billion of funding to support state-sponsored small business lending programs. **The US Treasury** approved the State of Georgia for \$48 million in funding. SSBCI will fund three new small business lending programs: \$10 million for the Georgia Capital Access Program (GCAP), a portfolio insurance program; \$17,808,507 for the Georgia Small Business Credit Guarantee (SBCG), a 50% credit guarantee with a conversion option into a loan loss reserve; and, \$20 million for the Georgia Funding for Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), a loan participation program. In accordance with US Treasury guidelines, Georgia's SSBCI programs are anticipated to leverage \$480 million in private financing for small businesses in Georgia.

For more information and to register for this workshop, please contact Ross Avina at ross.avina@dca.ga.gov or 404-679-1593.

Atlanta Regional Historic Preservation Forum: June 8, 2012

The **City of Atlanta** and the **Atlanta Regional Commission** are co-sponsoring an historic preservation forum on June 8, 2012 from 9:30-11:30 AM at Atlanta City Hall.

homes. Another 1400 homeowners are involved in the application review process now, and we have over 100 banks and mortgage companies working with HomeSafe Georgia to help prevent possible foreclosures. All of the program details and eligibility requirements are on the website.



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 Sheila Roberts at 404-679-4855 or sheila.roberts@dca.state.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.



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

Learn about ARC's latest GIS initiatives related to historic preservation and environmental review. Meet and reconnect with other historic preservation professionals in the region. Share your agency's or organization's latest historic preservation-related news and highlights. Collaborate on ideas for on-going historic preservation forums throughout the region.

For more information, contact Allison Duncan at aduncan@atlantaregional.com, Doug Young at dyoung@atlantaga.gov, or Denise Potts at dpotts@atlantaga.gov.

Project Homeless Connect in Atlanta:

June 15, 2012

Project Homeless Connect, funded in part with the **State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless** monies, will host a forum at **The Gateway Center** on June 15, 2012. Those attending will learn about housing, health care, employment opportunities, and legal services. For more information, contact Don Watt at don.watt@dca.ga.gov.

Martin Luther King, JR Advisory Council

Meeting: June 26, 2012

The next meeting of the Martin Luther King, JR Advisory Council will be held Tuesday, June 26, 2012 at 2:00 PM in the DCA Board Room. The Council will be discussing plans for a statewide celebration of Reverend King's "I Have A Dream" speech in August 2012. For more information, please contact John Turner at john.turner@dca.ga.gov.

Community Development Finance Division

April 2012 Awards by Region

Region Three

Development Authority of Fulton County

- \$500,000 in REBA funds
- \$13.5MM in private investment
- \$500,000 in public (non-DCA) investment
- Creates 91 jobs
- Assists in locating an information technology company in Alpharetta

Development Authority of Fulton County

- \$250,000 in REBA funds
- \$2MM in private investment
- Creates 300 jobs
- Assists in locating a company's customer service center in Alpharetta and a data center in Atlanta

Region Six

City of Jeffersonville

- \$22,800 in Immediate Threat and Danger funds
- Water system improvements
- Will benefit 707 people, 168 of whom are low-moderate income

Region Ten

City of Colquitt

- \$220,991 in Employment Incentive Program funds
- \$2.3MM in private investment
- Creates 12 jobs
- Retains 11 jobs
- Funds a rail spur into Colquitt-Miller Industrial Park to help existing business expansion

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