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The Partner Connection

The Newsletter of DCA

September 2012

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Commissioner Beatty announced more than \$40 million in awards to Georgia's local governments through the **Department of Housing and Urban Development's** popular **CDBG** program. More than \$36 million will go to local governments for capital improvements including water, sewer, streets, sidewalks and community facility projects. Another \$3.7 million will go to local governments for economic development activities. For a list of awards and project descriptions, click [HERE](#).

NEWS AND EVENTS

Georgia's Downtowns Are Open for Business!



Commissioner Beatty, Senator Johnny Isakson, and State Representative Randy Nix (R-LaGrange) show their support for Georgia's downtowns.

Open for business was the theme of the 2012 **Georgia Downtown Association's** annual conference in LaGrange. Association President Billy Peppers of Woodstock highlighted Georgia's economic growth with these impressive numbers:

In 2011, Georgia's downtowns:

- Became home to 5,453 new businesses
- Rehabilitated and reused 365 buildings
- Helped spur \$123.6 million in public and private investment.

Commissioner Beatty challenged the crowd to embrace change, saying, "Georgia has been a national leader for vibrant job creation in downtowns. We're going to help make change happen as partners with our downtowns, and help our downtowns be economic engines for our counties and our state." Senator Johnny Isakson provided a national overview and encouraged our downtown leaders to stay the course and



All local governments and agencies administering public benefits in Georgia are required by law to submit an annual report of the public benefits they administer and note each public benefit for which **SAVE** authorization for verification has not been received. The Department of Community Affairs will provide a list of all agencies, organizations and governments that have duly reported to the Governor's office on November 10, 2012, to close out the 2011 reporting period.

As a result of the recent Attorney General clarification on the official reporting period for Public Benefits Reporting, the Department invites all governments and agencies to enter the Public Benefits Reporting System and complete reports for 2011, to ensure compliance for the twelve month period of December 1, 2010, through November 30, 2011.

The system will be open until November 1, 2012, for the 2011 reporting period. To register and/or complete a 2011 Report, click [HERE](#).



The Department will provide information on how to apply for HomeSafe Georgia's mortgage assistance program (including the program's eligibility requirements) throughout September at the following locations:

September 18 9 AM - Noon

set high goals.

"Make Georgia the talk of the nation when it comes to downtowns," said Senator Isaakson. The Department's Office of Downtown Development and BoomTown pilot project are working with leaders across the state to meet that challenge. For more information about BoomTown, contact Corinne Thornton at Corinne.thornton@dca.ga.gov. For more information about the Office of Downtown Development, contact Cindy Eidson at cindy.eidson@dca.ga.gov.

Our New Leadership Team



L-R: John Turner, Saralyn Stafford, John Ellis, Stephanie Green, Carmen Chubb, Joanie Perry, Laurel Hart, Brian Williamson, Dennis Williams, Cassandra Knight, and Commissioner Beatty. Not pictured: Phil Foil, Michael Harden and Al Howell.

Commissioner Beatty has named three Deputy Commissioners to head up his new leadership team as part of an overall agency-wide streamlining and reorganization. "This strategic realignment will help coordinate our efforts and strengthen our agency's focus on our mission and vision," said Commissioner Beatty in making the announcement.

John Ellis is Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration, and CFO for the agency, and will oversee strategy, policy, and implementation for two divisions. Stephanie Green will direct the Finance Division, which includes Accounting, Budgeting and Loan Servicing. Al Howell will direct the Administration Division, including Information Technology and Human Resources.

As Deputy Commissioner for Community Development and Finance, Brian Williamson will oversee strategy, policy, and implementation of two divisions. A new Community Development Division responsible for the agency's planning, codes, and community development programs will be directed by John Turner. A new Community Finance Division responsible for grant and loan programs related to community and economic development will be directed by Joanie Perry.

Carmen Chubb will oversee strategy, policy, and implementation of three divisions as Deputy Commissioner for Housing. The Rental Assistance Division will continue to be directed by Dennis Williams. A new Housing Finance and Development Division will be directed by Laurel Hart. A new Housing Policy and Administration Division will be directed by Cassandra Knight. The HomeSafe Georgia Office will continue to report to Carmen.

Department of Labor Job Fair:
Community House, Cornelia

September 19-20, 9 AM - 7 PM; **Wells Fargo Home Preservation Workshop**, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta

September 19-20, 9 AM - 1 PM; DOL and VFW Job Fair, VFW Post 665, Columbus

September 20, 9 AM - 2 PM, DOL Job Fair, **The Forum**, Rome

September 21, Noon - 3 PM, DOL Job Fair, **North Georgia Technical College**, Toccoa

September 27, 9 AM - 2 PM, **Veterans Career Fair & Diversity Job Expo**, Cobb Galleria

September 29, 9 AM - 3 PM, Youth Center, **Fairburn**

October 13, 9 AM - 4 PM, **Kaolin Festival**, Downtown Sandersville

October 18, 1-4 PM, Veterans' Fall Career Fair, **Moody AFB**, Valdosta

Homeowners who are unemployed or underemployed may be eligible for temporary mortgage payment assistance. Churches, clubs and community organizations are encouraged to inform others about the events and to help those without internet access to apply for these funds. For more information, please visit www.HomeSafeGeorgia.com.



The **Office of Planning and Environmental Management** is now accepting applications for the WaterFirst Community Program. Applications are due October 15, 2012.

If your community is interested in saving water and money, and serving as a model for other local governments in Georgia, the WaterFirst program can help you meet those goals. Click **[HERE](#)** for more information and an application

Phil Foil has been named Chief of Staff. Reporting to Phil are Saralyn Stafford as Director of External Affairs and Rural Policy, and Michael Harden as Director of Public Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs. Phil will also work closely with the deputy commissioners.

In making the appointments, Commissioner Beatty noted, "These leaders will work closely with me, and with Chief of Staff Phil Foil, on our goal of being the Best-Managed agency in state government. This new structure will help us improve the way we provide our services and collaborate with our partners to best serve the citizens of Georgia."

Disaster Resilient Building Codes

The State Codes Advisory Committee (SCAC) met July 26, 2012 and adopted the Disaster Resilient Building Code (DRBC) Appendices with a unanimous vote. The DRBC Appendices will be optional appendices for the 2012 editions of the International Building Code and International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings. Local governments can adopt these Appendices in whole or in parts to fit the specific needs of their communities for disaster resilient construction (construction above current code). The DCA **Office of Construction Codes** will provide workshops on the DRBC Appendices beginning in December 2012. These workshops will target jurisdictions that were most affected by recent tornado, hurricane, or flooding events, but will be open to all local governments.

For questions please contact Ted Miltiades, Director of Office of Construction Codes, at Ted.Miltiades@dca.ga.gov or (404) 679-3106; or the DCA Office of Construction Codes at constructioncodes@dca.ga.gov or (404) 679-3118.

Rental Assistance Division Launches Model Program; Estimates Savings of \$116 Million

The **Rental Assistance Division** has developed a model program, recently approved by the US **Department of Housing and Urban Development**, to utilize the **Housing Choice Voucher** (HCV) program to help our most vulnerable citizens have access to safe, decent and affordable housing across the state. This first-of-a-kind program will give priority to individuals with disabilities who meet the criteria determined by HUD and the Department. In partnership with the Georgia **Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)**, the Rental Assistance Division will provide vouchers to individuals currently using the DBHDD Georgia Housing Voucher Program (GHCV).

Over time, this priority will allow DBHDD to use its vouchers to provide assistance to a larger number of citizens with disabilities who transition into community-based settings per the Department of Justice settlement agreement with the State of Georgia. DCA anticipates that the use of HCVs to assist in meeting housing goals will save approximately \$116,000,000 over a ten year period.

RAD will transition households from the DBHDD GHVP over to its HCV program each year. This transition will increase the number of persons who will receive rental assistance through the DBHDD GHVP. Once individuals are stabilized on the GHVP and have established a rental

Contact Deatre Denion at deatre.denion@dca.ga.gov for additional assistance.



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.



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history, they can be transferred to the DCA's HCV Program and maintain their current housing. The GHVPs previously used by these individuals will be used to engage other "hard-to-house" individuals. The DBHDD GHVP was created to assist persons who would generally be ineligible for HCVs. Therefore these DOJ Settlement Agreement consumers who are considered the hardest to house would still have access to rental assistance.

The Department's new tenant selection preference extends to persons who meet the criteria for the Settlement Agreement target population who have not received assistance through the GHVP. These individuals will have direct access to DCA's HCVs. This tenant selection preference is the first of its kind and HUD envisions using Georgia's program as a model for other states.

"People with developmental and other types of disabilities are often the most vulnerable and underserved citizens in our society," says Dennis Williams, the Director of the Rental Assistance Division. "Giving them priority access to affordable housing options is the right thing to do, and we're proud that we've been able to work out a way to make that happen." For more information about this partnership, contact Dennis Williams at dennis.williams@dca.ga.gov.

UPCOMING EDUCATION, EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND DEADLINES

Save Water and Save Money: October 5-7, 2012

October 5-7, 2012 is a great time to commit to conserving Georgia's water resources by taking advantage of a sales tax holiday for **WaterSense**-labeled products. WaterSense products with a sales price of \$1,500 or less purchased for noncommercial home or personal use during the sales tax holiday will be Georgia state and local sales tax-free. Look for the logo!



Replacing a standard showerhead with a WaterSense-labeled model can save thousands of gallons of water a year. Replacing an old toilet with a water-efficient one will save more than two gallons a flush. Besides saving money on the sales tax, north Georgia residents who purchase a WaterSense-labeled toilet may qualify for a rebate. Details about which utilities offer rebates, either directly or through the **Metro Water District** are available at www.northgeorgiawater.org/toiletrebate.

Celebrating Rural Georgia: October 10, 2012 Governor Nathan Deal to Open Conference

Join the **Georgia Rural Development Council** in Tifton on October 10th to **CELEBRATE RURAL GEORGIA 2012 - Success and Opportunity**. Governor Nathan Deal will begin our Success session as the opening speaker, and after his remarks, will present the **OneGeorgia** Awards. Following Governor Deal an exciting line up of rural leaders will highlight recent Rural Georgia successes. Following lunch,



we'll hear about Opportunity, with a panel covering agriculture, technology, business growth and other key elements in a successful Rural Georgia future.

The CRG conference begins at 9 a.m. with a continental breakfast, with the kick-off at 9:45. Lunch will feature a delicious 'Georgia Grown' menu. The conference adjourns at 3 p.m.

Hosted at the **UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center**, online registration is available **[HERE](#)** - scroll to Celebrating Rural Georgia. For more information contact Annaka Woodruff at **annaka.woodruff@dca.ga.gov** or 706-566-4200.

Community Planning Institute: Water Resources October 11, 2012 in Rome

Make plans to attend this one-day seminar on water conservation opportunities for local governments.

The program is appropriate for elected officials, local government staff, planners, community volunteers and other citizens interested in responsible water resource management. Click **[HERE](#)** to register.



For more information, contact Deatre Denion at **deatre.denion@dca.ga.gov** or by phone: 912-704-4136.

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