



The Partner Connection

The Newsletter of DCA



In This Issue

[Exceeding Excellence](#)

[The Census is Coming!](#)

[Celebrating Leadership](#)

[DCA Gives First Time Home Buyers Rewards](#)

POPULAR RESOURCES



[American Recovery and Re-Investment Act](#)



[DCA Home](#)



[Georgia Census](#)

[Join Our Mailing List](#)

Exceeding

A message from the Commissioner about Celebrating Leadership...



We're fortunate to have strong local and state leaders in Georgia, and February 8th was an opportunity to both celebrate this leadership, and prepare new leaders for their future roles. My thanks go to the Georgia Rural Development Council (GRDC), who sponsored the 9th Annual Leadership Day at the Capitol, for their ongoing role in advocating for rural Georgia and for the role they play in bringing together leaders of all ages and all walks of life in this once yearly celebration.

We also have committed leaders working for you at DCA, and I'd like to take this opportunity to mention that Ms. Patrice Williams, who coordinates our Communities of Opportunity Program (and will continue to do so), has recently accepted a new role as Executive Director for the GRDC. Dennis Williams and Saralyn Stafford have also accepted increased responsibilities, and have new roles in Internal and External Affairs respectively for the agency.

During this time of challenging budgets, our team at DCA continues to accept those challenges while providing leadership so we can continue to "partner with communities to help create a climate of success for Georgia's families and businesses."

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Census is Coming!

The decennial Census is underway across America, and forms should be arriving at most Georgia residences the week of March 15th.

Commissioner Mike Beatty has co-chaired an active group of 43 Georgia leaders through a Census outreach campaign for the past five months since being appointed by Governor Sonny Perdue in October. (Pictured below at Census Awareness Day are Commissioner Beatty with Governor Sonny Perdue and Mrs. Perdue.)



Excellence

Did You Receive Excellent Service From A DCA Staffer? DCA's "Exceeding Excellence" Customer Service Recognition Program Allows You To Recognize A Job Very Well Done. Please consider nominating a DCA staffer that's gone above and beyond! DCA's "Exceeding Excellence" recognition program affords DCA team members and our external customers the opportunity to recognize DCA team members for providing excellent customer service. Information is available from the DCA website front page - www.dca.ga.gov, Click on the "Customer Feedback" link and complete the information.



The Georgia Complete Count Committee has reached out to over 180 local Complete Count Committees to share best practices, up-to-date information, and encouragement for their efforts to help residents understand that the Census is Secure, Safe, and Essential.

A new feature the U.S. Census Bureau has developed for this Census is a tracking program so that local leaders can track the mail-back response rate within their own communities. **On March 22nd** you can visit this link <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/take10map/> to see how your community is doing! Georgia's overall response rate for the 2000 Census was 65% - our goal is to greatly improve that mail-back response rate so that the federal tax dollars we all send to Washington every year will come back to Georgia for our needs at an increased percentage - based on a correct count of our residents.

We count, Georgia - fill it out and mail it back!

DCA's Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) One Year Later... 605 Successes Implemented and Beginning to Accelerate

The national and state economies continue to face challenges that were precipitated by the residential mortgage crisis. That mortgage crisis continues to exacerbate our economic challenges and by extension our neighborhoods, governments and lending community.

While the challenges are great, there are successes to report here at DCA; notably, 605 foreclosed and abandoned residential units have been returned to stability as safe and affordable housing for low and moderate-income families.



Approximately one year ago, the Department made awards using \$77,085,125 under the Housing and Economic Recovery Act signed into law by President Bush on July 30, 2008. The funds which flowed to the state through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) were designed to stabilize communities that have suffered from residential foreclosures and abandonment. Eligible activities were the establishment of financing mechanisms for the purchase and redevelopment of foreclosed homes and returning those homes to the market as safe and affordable housing for low and moderate-income families.

In March 2009, following an expedited program design that built on DCA's already successful grant and loan management capabilities, the Community Development and Finance Division (CDFD) awarded funds through formula to 24 different sub-grantees comprised of local governments, regional entities (including an award to a Regional Commission), and the Georgia Housing Finance Authority (GHFA) who received the balance of funding to implement a variation of their successful Georgia Dream down payment assistance program.

The NSP initiative's performance through the end of February 2010 is as follows:

- 1) Obligated \$19,216,106 or 25% of our grant funds with 16% of the obligated funds obligated being used to benefit households with incomes at or below 50% of Area Median Income (AMI). CDFD anticipates exceeding the 25% minimum expenditure on this group with the contractual obligation of several large Low Income Housing Tax Credit projects by July 1, 2010.
- 2) From the currently obligated funds, 605 foreclosed and vacant units have or will be returned to the local tax base as occupied units with fixed rate affordable mortgages.
- 3) At the current pace with no increase in resources, CDFD estimates that the total units assisted will exceed 2,400 units by program's end.

For details on the initiative design, see www.dca.ga.gov/communities/CDBG/programs/nsp.asp.

**Pictured 1 of 605 - Carrollton Celebrates a NSP Success*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Celebrating Leadership throughout Georgia

About a month after the Georgia Rural Development Council's (GRDC) 2010 Leadership Day, the old Georgia Freight Depot is a lot quieter. That's quite the contrast to the hustle and bustle of activity and energy generated from the enthusiastic crowd that attended the 9th annual Leadership Day program held on Monday, February 8th.



"Every year we look forward to being a part of this event. We recognize how important it is to give the youth and adults the opportunity to exchange ideas and to meet with their elected officials," said Roy Campbell, GRDC Vice Chairman. "The GRDC is proud to support the ongoing efforts of these committed leaders," said Campbell.

At the event, Governor Sonny Perdue extended greetings to the attendees, and Georgia State University Head Football Coach Bill Curry gave the keynote address. Curry discussed MAGNANIMATAS - meaning "greatness of spirit". Magnanimatas is something you give to every effort. He encouraged everyone there to get beyond any intolerance they may have for others and to focus on their talents.

The annual Leadership Day program is sponsored by the Georgia Rural Development Council. The Fanning Institute of the University of Georgia, Georgia 4-H, Georgia Academy for Economic Development and DCA staff play major roles in coordinating the program.

The Georgia Rural Development Council advocates for rural Georgia, champions new development opportunities, and partners with public and private initiatives to strengthen rural communities. The GRDC is administratively linked to DCA. For additional information about the GRDC, please visit www.ruralgeorgia.org.

**Pictured Commissioner Mike Beatty, his high school football coach, James Lofton, Lane Sorrow, and Coach Bill Curry*

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Recognizes DCA



David Stovall, Chairman of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, attended the February DCA Board meeting in order to make two presentations. On behalf of the GMRC, he presented the Chairman's Award to Commissioner Mike Beatty, and the Appointed Official of the Year Award to James Thompson with DCA's Appalachian Regional Commission office.



Georgia Commission for Service & Volunteerism



The Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism has been approved for a 13-member AmeriCorps VISTA project that will begin in the early fall of 2010. AmeriCorps VISTA is the national service program designed specifically to fight poverty. VISTA members commit to serve full-time for a year at a nonprofit organization or local government agency, working to fight illiteracy, improve health services, create businesses, strengthen community groups, and much more. The two-year project will place one VISTA member with the commission and a VISTA member in each of Georgia's 12 Regional Commissions. The goals of the project will be to increase support and recognition for volunteerism throughout the state, to help Regional Commissions with DCA's Communities of Opportunities initiative, to create and support disaster volunteer reception centers, and to create local programming unique to each region. GCSV Program Officer Candice Gunn will direct the VISTA project. Funding for the \$255,000 project comes from the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism has been designated as the state agency to receive and administer the Learn & Serve America K-12 grants allocated to Georgia by the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Georgia State School Board, which formerly administered the grants, voted on Feb. 11 to transfer the Learn & Serve America K-12 grant authority to the commission. The grants, which are awarded annually on a state formula basis, total \$686,100 for Georgia for 2010. The purpose of the grants is to fund service learning projects for Georgia schools.

DCA's Launches New Online Service

In our continued efforts to better serve Georgia's local governments, we are happy to announce that the Office of Research has just launched a new online contacts information update system. This new online service will allow local governments to visit our website at anytime to update contact information for 20 different local government positions/functions. More detailed information has been mailed to local government Chief Elected Officials.

Historically, DCA has attempted to maintain current contacts information using decentralized piecemeal methods which have proven to be less than ideal. This system, however, will allow local governments to help ensure that applicable correspondence from the various service areas administered by DCA will be directed to the appropriate local government officials more efficiently.

The Community Planning Institute is Coming to Savannah, April 13-14, 2010



Register now for the popular Community Planning Institute! Class size is limited to allow each participant a full opportunity to learn in small groups and take part in class discussions. The Community Planning Institute provides training for citizens, staff and elected officials involved in planning and land development in their communities. There is an emphasis placed on the importance of a community vision in planning for the future, the role of the planning commissioner in helping define that vision and how to work with the citizens and governing body to make that vision a reality. For more information:

<http://dca.ga.gov/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/DOCUMENTS/Publications/CPI/2010Calendar.pdf>. To register, contact Annette Henson at Annette.henson@dca.ga.gov or by phone at 404-679-5279. We look forward to seeing you there!

SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Georgia Department of Community Affairs Gives First Time Home Buyers REWARDS for Good Credit!

REWARDS is the newest lending option offered by DCA's **Georgia Dream Homeownership Program**.

REWARDS offers Georgia home buyers who have worked hard to maintain or rebuild to a minimum 660 credit score \$5,000 in down payment assistance if the purchase price is \$150,000 or less and \$7,500 if the purchase price is more than \$150,000.

The Georgia Dream REWARDS program provides down payment assistance to Georgia borrowers with annual household incomes up to:

- \$71,000 for a one to two person household and \$82,000 for households of 3 or more in the Atlanta MSA.
- \$61,000 for one to two person household and \$72,000 for households of three or more persons in the remainder of the state.

Eligible borrowers must meet the credit requirements for a FHA, VA or USDA first mortgage loan.

For more information on the Georgia Dream Homeownership Program and for a list of lenders go to www.dcaloans.com or call 1-800-359-HOME (4663).



GEORGIAHOUSINGSEARCH.ORG - Providing Georgians with More Housing Choices!

Now, more than ever, Georgia citizens need quick and easy access to affordable housing options and GeorgiaHousingSearch.org is here to 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 keeps becoming easier with GeorgiaHousingSearch.org.

There are thousands of vacant units in the rental housing market available statewide right now and GeorgiaHousingSearch.org is the key to linking tenants with landlords! The additions of Atlanta and Marietta Housing Authorities underscore the commitment to meeting community needs and have dramatically increased the pool of housing units listed on the site. This expansion is particularly critical for planning ahead to serve displaced persons during other crises, a vital function during hurricane season.



GEORGIAHOUSINGSEARCH.ORG

GeorgiaHousingSearch.org offers FREE property posting, is bilingual, and has a toll-free number (877-428-8844) available to those individuals without internet access. The website also provides information on rental assistance, community resources and special needs housing. Landlords can register in a five-minute process or work with staff to register large-scale listings. Property owners are encouraged to post their affordable rental units to help make this site as useful as possible. For more information, please contact Sheila Barry at 404-679-4855 or sheila.barry@dca.state.ga.gov DON'T HESITATE, VISIT WWW.GEORGIAHOUSINGSEARCH.ORG TODAY!

Save the Date: Residential Green Building Code

The Residential Green Building Code Task Force held their fourth meeting on February 18th at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. This residential green building code will be based on the ICC-700, National Green Building Standard, developed by the International Code Council (ICC) and the National Association of Home Builders.



The Green Building Standard will be for one-and-two family dwellings including townhomes. The Administration, Energy & Efficiency, and the Materials & Resource Work Groups will hold their final meetings in March and make a final report to the Task Force at the March 16th meeting. The Task Force will make their final report of proposed amendments and any recommendations regarding its adoption at the April 22nd State Codes Advisory Committee meeting.

This email is prepared and emailed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. If you wish to be removed from the email list, please be sure to click on the SafeUnsubscribe button below.