

LONGTIME HOGARC STAFF RETIRE



Pictured l-r: Robin B. Nail, Rafael C. Nail, and Senator Blake Tillery

Sen. Blake Tillery (R – Vidalia) presented Rafael Nail with Senate Resolution 730 honoring him for his 41 years of service to the state on the occasion of his retirement and thanking him for his dedication to the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission.

“I am honored to be able to recognize the accomplished career and dedication to our community that Mr. Nail has given over these 41 years,” said Sen. Tillery. “Mr. Nail has given his time, talents and energy to ensuring that southeast Georgia is one of the best places to live and work in the state. Working with 17 counties and 62 cities is no small undertaking, but Mr. Nail has done it with a great deal of success. He will be missed but I am sure that his impact on our community will still be felt for years to come. I wish him the best in his retirement and look forward to seeing our area build on the legacy he has left.”

and Planning Director of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission on January 5, 2018. In addition to authoring more than 40 Joint County Comprehensive Plans, Rafael was named the 1992 Planner of the Year by the Georgia Planning Association. In recent years, his leadership was instrumental in development and passage of the HOGA Region T-SPLOST.

Rafael began his career as a planner with the Altamaha Georgia Southern Area Planning and Development Commission in 1976 and retired from his position as Assistant Executive Director

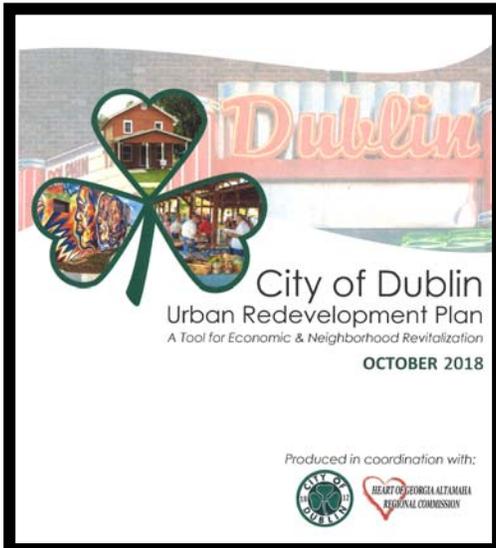
Linda Hunter was presented with a retirement resolution at the November 15th HOGARC Regional Council meeting. The retirement plaque contained a resolution of honor, gratitude and appreciation for Linda’s 38 years of service to the Region. Linda began her career in December, 1980 as a secretary with the Altamaha Georgia Southern Area Planning and Development Commission. Through the years, she advanced to positions of increasing responsibility within the Commission, including working in Planning, Governmental Management, and Workforce Development before joining the Area Agency on Aging staff in 1994. Linda retired from her position as Area Agency on Aging Director of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission on January 1, 2019.



Pictured Linda Hunter, AAA Director and Brett Manning, HOGARC Executive Director

Congratulations!

City of Dublin Adopts Urban Redevelopment Plan



The City of Dublin recently adopted a new urban redevelopment plan titled *City of Dublin Urban Redevelopment Plan: A Tool for Economic and Neighborhood Revitalization*. The plan was prepared by Regional Commission Planning staff in coordination with City of Dublin staff (available at: <http://bit.ly/dublinurp2018>). The plan is intended to serve as a foundation for incentives and development tools available for job creation and neighborhood revitalization. Many of the included action plans were developed as a result of the most recent comprehensive planning process in 2014. The plan seeks to examine various issues in detail and serve as the basis for future application(s) for Enterprise Zones, Opportunity Zones, and Revitalization Area Strategy designation through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. By creating one city-wide Urban Redevelopment Plan, the goal is to improve community services specific to potential sub-areas contained within the Urban Redevelopment Area. The objective for this plan is to encourage economic and neighborhood revitalization within the City of Dublin using a three pronged approach: responsible infill development, new economic growth, and neighborhood revitalization.

The planning process involved a series of meetings open to the public where action item specific discussions were held. Meetings were held in the target areas and were well attended by concerned citizens. To demonstrate the sense of disinvestment of these target neighborhoods, community statistics were examined, including population data and projections, reported violent and property crime statistics, City property code citations, and an accounting of the total number of parcels with primary structures valued less than \$10,000. The City hopes to build on the items identified with this plan and utilize the Urban Redevelopment Plan as the first step in gaining investment in areas of need.

Your community may benefit from an urban redevelopment plan and the many opportunities available after completion (Enterprise Zones, Revitalization Area Strategy Bonus points for CDBG applications among others). Contact HO-GARC Planning staff for more information regarding Urban Redevelopment Plans at pope@hogarc.org.

Did you know?

During the 2018 Legislative session, the Achieving Connection Everywhere (ACE) Act (S.B. 402) was passed which takes major steps to significantly improve accessible, high-speed broadband connectivity across Georgia's rural communities. The legislation tasked the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) with the development of a broadband grant program by July 1, 2019, and has given DCA flexibility in promulgating rules and regulations for the program. Grants may only be awarded to governmental entities ("eligible applicants"), such as development authorities, which will then contract with broadband service providers to provide broadband in unserved areas.

Legislators did not appropriate any state funding for the broadband grant program through FY19, but indicated that funding would be a priority in the 2019 Legislative session. In addition to the grant program, the bill establishes a "broadband ready community" program and a Georgia Broadband Ready Community Site Designation Program, both to be administered by DCA. To be eligible for this program and designation, your community must first adopt a new *Broadband Element* to your local government's Comprehensive Plan. If your organization determines a need for, and seeks to become a "Broadband Ready Community," please be sure to contact the Regional Commission Planning Department at pope@hogarc.org.

Johnson, Tattnall, and Wilcox Comprehensive Plans Latest Completed

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Planning Staff recently successfully assisted all the local governments in Johnson, Tattnall, and Wilcox counties in meeting the Georgia Department of Community Affairs certification compliance deadline of October 31, 2018 to prepare and adopt new comprehensive plans under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. These local governments not only maintain their required Qualified Local Government (QLG) status with plan adoption, but also have new blueprints and a guiding framework to manage their future growth and development, and help make their communities improved places to live, work, do business, play, and visit. QLG status is necessary to be eligible for state grants, loans, and permits, but more importantly, the comprehensive plans identify important local needs and opportunities; a community vision for a better tomorrow; and locally determined goals, policies, and actions to help address issues, make improvements, and help bring about the desired community. A new Broadband Services element was included with each comprehensive plan due to anticipated changes and opportunities available as a result of SB 402 – Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act. By including a Broadband Services element in the comp plan, local governments will be able to apply for the impending new state designation, “Broadband Ready Community.” In keeping with the strong emphasis on local delineation of desired community and improved future, the joint countywide comprehensive plans have locally selected titles designed to focus and describe local vision, and generate community-wide interest and support. The comprehensive plans are truly designed to be local guides to action, and not just a document to meet state standards. The chosen titles of the three 2018 comprehensive plans are: Friendly, Favorable, Future (Johnson); The Place of Opportunity (Tattnall); and Everlasting Wilcox (Wilcox). These plans can be viewed at www.hogarc.org/publications/.

Regional Commission Planning Staff are scheduled to assist the local governments of Evans, Lau-

rens, Toombs, and Wheeler counties with preparation of new comprehensive plans in 2019. This will continue new rotation of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission’s local governments preparing new comprehensive plans under DCA’s latest local planning standards adopted October 1, 2018 to include Broadband Services. Local governments are required to update comprehensive plans every five years under the new DCA standards, while Service Delivery Strategy updates and solid waste management plans remain on a ten year update schedule.

HOGARC’s Local Plan Update Schedule

County	Comp Plan	Service Delivery Strategy	Solid Waste	Comp Plan Update
Appling	2022	2027	2027	2027
Bleckley	2021	2021	2026	2026
Candler	2022	2027	2027	2027
Dodge	2021	2021	2026	2026
Emanuel	2022	2027	2027	2027
Evans	2019	2024	2024	2024
Jeff Davis	2021	2026	2026	2026
Johnson	2023	2023	2023	2028
Laurens	2019	2019	2019	2024
Montgomery	2020	2025	2025	2025
Tattnall	2023	2023	2023	2028
Telfair	2020	2025	2020	2025
Toombs	2019	2019	2019	2024
Treutlen	2021	2026	2021	2026
Wayne	2020	2020	2020	2025
Wheeler	2019	2024	2024	2024
Wilcox	2023	2023	2023	2028

Transportation Investment Act Update

The Georgia Department of Transportation, administrators of the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) program, recently met in Dublin to discuss the progress of TIA projects in the HOGA Region with the state appointed Citizens’ Review Panel (CRP). The CRP is comprised of five appointed members of the public who are responsible for oversight of band change requests, and ensuring the TIA project funds are spent according to law. The panel meets three times each year, whereby the chairman of the CRP is responsible for sending a year-end review to the Governor to voice satisfaction or concerns with the progress of TIA administration. Kenneth Franks, State TIA Administrator, highlighted the following information at the year-end CRP meeting held November 30, 2018.

- After 6 years of TIA, 486 TIA projects have been completed and an additional 35 projects have advanced to construction.
- \$166,376,723 has been collected in total to date in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha (HOGA) Region. \$124,782,542 of these funds were allocated to the Approved Regional Investment List; \$41,594,181 were distributed among the HOGA local governments for the Local Discretionary funds.
- Original revenue forecast for the HOGA Region was \$213,451,364; to date our region’s collections are behind forecast by -22.1%, totaling \$166,376,723. This is a slightly higher percentage compared to the other 2 TIA regions (CSRA, -16.6%, River Valley, -18.1%); however, GDOT is confident in their ability to save on project delivery by advancing projects when prices are low and/or geographically near each other.
- 2018 Highlights
 - 95 TIA projects let to construction in 2018
 - 66 TIA projects Completed in 2018
 - \$75,459,582 TIA Program Expenditures in 2018

Have questions about TIA? Visit www.ga-tia.com for project information, collections and distribution reports, and Frequently Asked Questions.



A WIOA SUCCESS STORY



Pictured l-r: Cecila Adamson, Adult Ed Instructor, Rebecca Horning, and Savannah Perkins, WIOA Case Manager

Rebecca Horning from Laurens County had her life changed through participation in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program. She was a 17 year old single mother in foster care when she enrolled in WIOA in September, 2016. Her children lived with another foster family because Rebecca was unable to care for them herself. The WIOA case manager worked with Rebecca's foster care case worker and the Oconee Fall Line Technical College (OFTC) Adult Education program to get her enrolled in GED classes. Rebecca also began participating in Work Experience under WIOA at Kids Kingdom Day-care. She excelled with the children at the daycare, while at the same time, progressing through her GED classes. Because of Rebecca's increased stability, the WIOA case manager worked with her GED instructor to write a recommendation letter to the foster care program, which helped her get her children back.

In late 2017, Rebecca was named OFTC's 2017 Exceptional Adult Georgian in Literacy Education (EAGLE) winner. The statewide EAGLE Program celebrates adult learners in pursuit of excellence and honors students who demonstrate exceptional achievement in statewide adult education classes. She was later recognized and spoke at the state competition.

By February, 2018, Rebecca had obtained full-time employment at Fairfield Inn and Suites while still working toward her GED. She received her GED in May, 2018 and participated in graduation from OFTC the next month after successfully completing the WIOA Youth Program. WIOA paid for all of Rebecca's GED testing fees. In August, 2018, she spoke at the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission's Workforce Development Board Annual Retreat to share her experiences and accomplishments through the WIOA Youth Program.

Today Rebecca is 19 years old and continues to work at Fairfield Inn and Suites and raise her children. She is currently enrolled in classes at OFTC in the Certified Nursing Assistant Program. Congratulations to Rebecca for her accomplishments made possible with the help of the WIOA Program!

Wrightsville Receives \$750,000 CDBG Award



The City of Wrightsville plans to use \$750,000 in CDBG funds for sewer improvements along Milton, Chester, Alabama, Washington, Oglethorpe, and Georgia streets. The proposed project will consist of 6,410 linear feet of 8" pipe-bursting, 1,487 linear feet of cured-in-place 8" main, and manhole replacement and renovation. The project will benefit 166 persons, of whom 130 (78.31%) are of low or moderate income. The total project cost is \$869,478, with \$119,478 in local match and leverage.

Pictured l-r: Brett Manning, HOGARC Executive Director; DCA Commissioner Christopher Nunn; Kayla Johnson, HOGARC Community Development Planner; and Hugh Darnley, HOGARC Director of Economic and Community Development

Assistant Executive Director James Pope Completes AICP Certification



Assistant Executive Director and Planning Director James Pope recently completed the American Planning Association's AICP certification process. Members of the American Institute of Certified Planners pledge to uphold high standards of practice, ethics, and professional conduct, and to keep their skills up to date by continuously pursuing advanced professional education. AICP is the only nationwide, independent verification of planners' qualifications.

Jeff Davis County Receives \$99,730 USDA RBDG Funds

Community Development staff from the Regional Commission recently assisted Jeff Davis County in applying for the construction of a farmers market through the competitive United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) program. RBDG grants must be used on projects to benefit small and emerging businesses in rural areas and require a low matching amount. The grant was awarded to Jeff Davis County in the amount of \$99,730.

The farmers market is part of a continued joint effort between Jeff Davis County and the City of Hazlehurst to develop a recreation area along the U.S. 341-Baxley Highway. A popular splash pad was recently completed on the site, in addition to efforts by the Jeff Davis County Recreation Department to develop two soccer fields. The farmers market construction completes planned revitalization efforts at the park east of Hazlehurst.

Applications for the RBDG program are accepted once per year by USDA. If your community is interested in applying, watch your email closely for grant opportunities and contact Regional Commission Community Development staff for details.

HOGARC Staff Recognized for Years of Service



Lisa Livingston, AAA Director was recognized for **20 years of service.**

Pictured l-r: Secretary Bernie Weaver; Lisa Livingston; Brett Manning, Executive Director.

Lynn Joyner, Aging Planner/Monitor was recognized for her **10 years of service.**

Pictured l-r: Secretary Bernie Weaver; Lynn Joyner; Brett Manning, Executive Director.



James Pope, Assistant Executive Director/ Planning Director was recognized for his **5 years of service.**

Pictured l-r: Secretary Bernie Weaver; James Pope; Brett Manning, Executive Director.



SENIOR FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM



Once a year for the past 11 years, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) comes to each of the 17 counties in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region. The SFMNP is a United States Department of Agriculture program that is currently funded by the 2014 Farm Bill. This year, Georgia received \$229,518 to implement this program. The funds were divided by population between the Area Agency on Aging regions across the state. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha area Wellness Program received \$13,160 worth of vouchers (\$20 vouchers for 658 seniors). The purpose of the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program is to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, improve access to fruits and vegetables, promote Georgia agriculture, and support farmers and the local economy.

Jennifer Crosby, Wellness Program Coordinator for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC Area Agency on Aging, organizes this program for our area seniors. First, the seniors attend a mandatory information session (held at their local senior center) to overview their rights and responsibilities with the program and to confirm income eligibility. For a household of one, the annual income must be at or below \$22,459 in order to be eligible to receive a voucher (other categories exist for households of larger sizes). Once this is established and the paperwork completed, each senior is placed into the Farmers Market computer database. The second part of the program is redeeming the vouchers to receive fresh, Georgia-grown fruits and vegetables. On the day of the county's designated market, the vouchers are securely printed for each senior to sign and given directly to the farmer.



Senior Produce Recipient

This year, there was a market in each county. On market day the USDA approved farmer travels to each senior center and sets up their produce. Volunteers bag the fruits and vegetables for each senior based on their shopping lists. The seniors not only receive the fresh, locally grown produce, but also nutrition education. The seniors were given guidance on the importance of consuming fruits and vegetables and how to add more fruits and vegetables to their diet. A total of 658 seniors were served in June, July, and August, 2018 with this program. Several people were impressed with the quality of the produce and how much they got for \$20. Overall, they were grateful to receive the produce.

The SFMNP is intended to help not only the seniors, but Georgia farmers as well. Two HOGA Region farmers were used this year: Mrs. Darquitta Riley out of Jacksonville, Georgia and Mr. Pete Jackson from Swainsboro. Mrs. Riley could not say enough about how the program has helped her and her husband. She calls this program "a blessing and an answer from God." Mrs. Darquitta and her husband, Charlie, are seniors themselves making a living with their farm. She does not know what they would have done without this program. With the money they earned from this year's markets, they were able to plant more produce and afford the everyday needs of the farm like purchasing plants, seed, fertilizer, and gas for the tractor.

This program has run smoothly for 11 years due to the hard work and dedication of AAA staff, Senior Center staff, and volunteers. We are looking forward to being involved in the SFMNP in 2019. For more information, please call Jennifer Crosby at 888-367-9913.



Farmers and Volunteers