



# Georgia<sup>®</sup> Department of Community Affairs

January 2016

## IN THE NEWS

### Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Tribute event highlights social progress

*DCA and the MLK Jr. Advisory Council honored the legendary leader of the Civil Rights Movement at Capitol celebration in January*



*The DCA-sponsored Martin Luther King, Jr. Advisory Council celebrated the life and contributions of the visionary civil rights leader with more than 250 guests and dignitaries on Friday, January 15, at Georgia's State Capitol building in Atlanta. Opening with musical selections by the Wadsworth Magnet School Orchestra and the Atlanta Boys Choir & Alumni, the 31st Annual*



*Community Done Right success stories are a result of local governments adopting a partnership attitude with DCA and with each other and are examples to follow for all Georgia communities.*

## REGION 4:

### City of Griffin and community partners team up to bring a neighborhood back to life

For several years the City of Griffin and the Griffin Housing Authority (GHA) have led a concerted effort to address blighted properties and lack of adequate housing. This effort is supported by a team of over 40 businesses and organizations, including the Spalding Collaborative (an association of local businesses and organizations), Southern Crescent Technical College, the Chamber of Commerce, Spalding Regional Hospital, Spalding County, and the Salvation Army.

The team decided to focus on the Park District, which includes the Meriwether Homes public housing site and which

would have the greatest impact for the residents and the City of Griffin. They developed a plan to transform a blighted community and create a vital neighborhood of 300-plus affordable housing units. This plan would connect the residents to social programs, new transportation enhancements, improved educational platforms, create new economic and job opportunities, and dramatically improve the quality of housing in the community.

The Oaks at Park Pointe development was the first phase of three that came out of the team's plan. Built in 1952, the site previously had 120 units of multi-family housing. The redevelopment created a new mixed-income housing development and addresses a major need identified in the City of Griffin's 2012 Comprehensive Plan.



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

The Oaks opened in October 2015 and includes 84 affordable units. The townhomes are Earthcraft-certified for energy efficiency. The financing for the project included Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) from DCA, Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program (AHP), and local housing authority and city funds.

***Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Tribute recognized the leader with appearances and challenging words from present-day leaders in government and in social change.***

***Photo highlights:***

- 1) "We are the world!" The Atlanta Boys Choir & Alumni set the tone for the MLK, Jr. Holiday Tribute.
- 2) Sen. Emanuel Jones and Lt. Governor Casey Cagle presented members of the King family with a proclamation signed by Gov. Nathan Deal.
- 3) Trailblazing civil rights activist Xernona Clayton inspired MLK, Jr. Holiday Tribute guests with her keynote remarks.
- 4) DCA Commissioner Camila Knowles and Sen. Jones recognized the work of Representative Dee Dawkins-Haigler, far left, as the Chair of the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus.
- 5) Sen. Jones, DCA Commissioner Knowles, Lt. Gov. Cagle, and members of MLK Jr. Advisory Council honored the City of Stockbridge for outstanding public service. The City also presented a new street sign honoring the legacy of M.L. King, Sr., father of MLK, Jr., with the Heritage Trail signage.
- 6) The Martin Luther King High School Color Guard presented the flags to begin the celebration.

**DCA Housing leaders featured on CW69 Focus Atlanta talk show and in Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition video**



DCA Affordable Housing Program Specialist Philip Gilman shared with host Keisha Lancelin on the CW69 Focus Atlanta talk show in December how \$25.8 million in federal tax credits were awarded in Georgia recently. A highly competitive program and the most successful one of its kind in the nation, Georgia DCA's Housing Tax Credit program promotes safe and affordable housing for families, for those in the workforce, and for those



The second phase, called The Iris at Park Pointe, will provide 85 units for senior citizens and caregivers once completed. The senior living facility will include an on-site wellness center and walking trail sponsored by the Salvation Army to support aging in place.

The third phase in the Springhill area will provide for more than 100 additional affordable housing units and will expand beyond the current footprint of the Park Pointe redevelopment, connecting it with the park and medical districts. This phase will eliminate additional substandard housing and transform a blighted neighborhood into a community for low- to middle-income residents convenient to the medical district.

The plan also includes investments to support neighborhood sustainability, increase access to high quality services, retail, and potential job opportunities within the Park District. The City has committed to over \$675,000 in infrastructure improvements, which include sidewalks, curbs, refinishing streets, street lights, and other improvements to the Meriwether neighborhood.

In addition, the Three Rivers Commission has begun the Park District Shuttle to provide transportation to the residents in this neighborhood with stops at the City Park, City Hall, the Spalding Hospital, as well as shopping stops.

For more information on developments like this one as well as program opportunities offered through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in Spalding County and the surrounding area, contact DCA Region 4 Community Services Division Representative Corinne Thornton at [Corinne.Thornton@dca.ga.gov](mailto:Corinne.Thornton@dca.ga.gov).

living with disabilities. The program keeps rent levels at a more manageable level, below the national average in fact, which helps families stretch their paychecks.

Using the federal tax credits, DCA's Housing staff will work with investors and developers to build new and rehabilitate 33 energy-efficient properties across the state, with units ready for move-in during 2017. The developments will represent \$330 million in investments across Georgia.

### [Watch Philip Gilman's CW69 Focus Atlanta interview](#)

DCA Housing Finance & Development Division Director Laurel Hart was featured in a video developed by the Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition (AHTCC) and released in January across its social media platforms and website to promote the increase of opportunity for all citizens nationwide through the benefit of affordable housing.

Founded in 1988, the AHTCC is a trade organization of housing professionals who advocate for affordable rental housing financed using the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. AHTCC's for-profit and non-profit members - including syndicators, investors, lenders, developers, legal and accounting professionals, and state allocating agencies like Georgia DCA - seek to preserve, expand and improve the Housing Credit and complementary programs through legislative outreach and education.

For more information about the Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition, visit [www.taxcreditcoalition.org](http://www.taxcreditcoalition.org).

### [See Laurel Hart in the AHTCC promotional video here](#)

## Georgia Main Street Program Launches New Website

GEORGIA MAIN STREET

GROWING BUSINESS. PRESERVING HISTORY.

MONTHLY REPORTING

ABOUT DESIGN SERVICES MAIN STREETS STATEWIDE RESOURCES TRAINING CALENDAR CONTACT

THOMASVILLE, GEORGIA

ROME, GEORGIA

WELCOME

"Georgia Main Street has been synonymous with economic development and community revitalization. Georgia Main Street communities provide the impetus for business recruitment, building renovations, downtown events, tourism, partnerships, residential living, volunteerism, and historic district designation." - Connie Tabor, Toccoa Main Street

DCA's Office of Downtown Development (ODD) launched an updated, improved and interactive new website to serve the Georgia Main Street

## IN OTHER NEWS

### Georgia awards first Early Education Empowerment Zone Child Care Expansion Grant



DCA, in partnership with the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), is offering economic development incentive packages to expand early education capacity in designated areas throughout Georgia. This grant program is being offered as part of the national Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant initiative. Round 1 of this grant opportunity resulted in one recipient.

Angels in Motion Learning Center is a new child care facility that has been opened by an experienced provider. The center was awarded \$82,293 in grant funds to support the purchase of classroom equipment and salary subsidies for employees. Angels in Motion is located in Winterville and is part of the Clarke County E3Z, or Early Education Empowerment Zone.

When Georgia won the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant in 2013, we promised to devote resources to developing infrastructure in the Early Education Empowerment Zones," said Kristin Bernhard, deputy commissioner for system reform at the Georgia DECAL. "These first grantees represent a significant step towards linking and aligning both the infrastructure and the quality improvement pieces needed to provide children with meaningful and effective early learning experiences."

Network in December. The website, located at [www.georgiamainstreet.org](http://www.georgiamainstreet.org), was developed by the ODD staff in cooperation with Look Listen and Sky Design as a part of ongoing efforts to improve and diversify the program's technological communication and social media presence with its constituents here in Georgia and across the United States.

The website development and implementation was led by Jessica Reynolds, director of the Office of Downtown Development. The project included updating existing information about the revamped Main Street Approach™, designation tiers, directory of participating communities, as well as dozens of other important details.

"It is our hope that Downtown Managers and Community Development Professionals alike will find our newly available Resource Library, comprehensive training calendar, and financial tools a valuable asset in their revitalization tool-kit," said Reynolds.

The ODD staff says they are confident the new, improved website will become a resource to the communities it serves and that the site will remain a part of their own downtown development success.

For more information on the Georgia Main Street Program, visit [www.georgiamainstreet.org](http://www.georgiamainstreet.org). For additional information on the National Main Street Program, visit [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org).

### Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice public comment period extended

Please take some time and review the State's draft "Georgia Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice." This document will be used as part of DCA's planning and activities related to housing and community development. We welcome your feedback and comments. Please email your comments to [aicomments@dca.ga.gov](mailto:aicomments@dca.ga.gov). You may also mail them directly to 60 Executive Park South NE, Atlanta, GA 30329.

If you need to review this document in an alternative format or language, contact [Antonette.Sewell@dca.ga.gov](mailto:Antonette.Sewell@dca.ga.gov) or call (404) 679-5291.

The Analysis of Impediments serves as the substantive, logical basis for fair housing planning; provides essential and detailed information to policy makers, administrative staff, housing providers, lenders, and fair housing advocates; and assists in building public support for fair housing efforts. It is a review of impediments or barriers that affect the rights of fair housing choice. It covers public and private policies, practices, and procedures affecting housing choice.

**The public comment period has been extended until February 28, 2016.**

For more information, visit [DCA's Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice web page](#).

Two- and three-star Quality Rated child care programs are eligible to apply for funding to serve additional infants and toddlers in an E3Z by expanding their current child care program or by opening a new child care program. Georgia's E3Zs include the following eligible counties: Bibb, Brooks, Catoosa, Clarke, Colquitt, Cook, Echols, Gilmer, Gordon, Lowndes, Murray and Whitfield.

DCA is currently accepting applications for Round 2 of the grant application process, and applications are due February 5. For more information, please go to [www.dca.ga.gov/E3Z](http://www.dca.ga.gov/E3Z).

## GHFA's State Home Mortgage Receives Top Servicing Rating from HUD



State Home Mortgage, Georgia Housing & Finance Authority's servicing entity, received a Tier 1 designation from the United States Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) for its performance during HUD's fiscal year 2015. The Tier 1 designation, which is HUD's highest rating, recognizes those servicers that are closely following HUD and FHA servicing guidelines, ensuring borrowers receive timely and appropriate assistance with their mortgage. This is the third consecutive year State Home Mortgage has received Tier 1 designation. State Home Mortgage's Tier 1 designation is a significant accomplishment as only 30 percent of HUD-approved servicers received this top tier designation in fiscal

## UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

### HomeSafe Georgia: Year-end wrap-up and January/February events

# HomeSafe Georgia®

Free  
Mortgage  
Payment  
Assistance

### 4th Quarter 2015 HomeSafe Georgia Stats



During 2015's fourth quarter, 358 Georgia homeowners were approved for HomeSafe Georgia.



1,461 individuals and families were approved for HomeSafe Georgia in 2015, a 24% increase compared to the total approved during the program's first four years.



Since the program began in 2011, 7,591 individuals and families have received funds to pay their mortgages and avoid foreclosure.



Nearly \$34 million was paid to mortgage companies on behalf of homeowners during the past 12 months to help them keep their homes — a 26% increase compared to the amount paid out over the previous 3½ years.

#### January event:

January 30: 9 AM - 1 PM, Home Ownership & Small Business Development Resource Fair, City of Lithonia Government Center, 6920 Main Street in Lithonia

#### February event:

February 27: 11 AM - 7 PM, The Black Family Expo, Georgia International Convention Center, 2000 Convention Center Concourse in Atlanta

#### About HomeSafe Georgia:

*It is a free, state government program to help homeowners who are unemployed, underemployed or face other types of financial hardships save their homes from foreclosure. There is no cost to apply and no fee if approved.* A homeowner who has experienced a financial hardship within the last 36 months -- such as the loss of a job, military service, death of a spouse, or medical problems -- may be eligible for assistance. For more information, visit [www.HomeSafeGeorgia.com](http://www.HomeSafeGeorgia.com).



year 2015. Congratulations to DCA's State Home Mortgage partners for this honor!



## GET to KNOW DCA: January Topic of the Month

**Notice of Funding  
Availability (NOFA):  
Community HOME  
Investment Program (CHIP)  
Grant**  
*Applications due March 18*

DCA released a grant application on January 22, 2016, for approximately \$4 million in new Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) grants. CHIP uses a portion of DCA's HOME funds to assist local governments, nonprofit organizations, and public housing authorities to address the needs of affordable housing development in their communities.

### Eligible Activities:

**Homeowner Rehabilitation** - CHIP funds may be used to assist existing low-income homeowners by providing rehabilitation assistance to their homes.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCING

### December 2015 Financial Awards

#### **Region 8: Crisp County**

Crisp County was awarded \$332,446 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Employment Incentive Program (EIP) funds for a \$312,500 loan to benefit Synergy Solutions Crisp County, L.P. The EIP loan will be used to finance the purchase of ethanol production facility equipment. The EIP loan will leverage \$5,718,086 in private investment from the company with a total project cost of \$6,208,032. Synergy Solutions is committed to create 88 net, new full-time jobs. At least 51 percent, or 45 jobs, will be made available to low- and moderate-income persons.

#### **Region 9: Laurens County**

The City of Rentz was awarded \$28,810 in CDBG Immediate Threat and Danger (ITD) funds to assist with removal of sludge from the Water Pollution Control Plant treatment pond. 304 persons will benefit of whom 56 are low- to moderate-income.

#### **Region 9: Dodge County**

The City of Rhine was awarded \$4,188 in CDBG Immediate Threat and Danger (ITD) funds as a reimbursement for repairs made to an elevated tank and back-up well. The project will benefit 293 persons of whom 213 are low- to moderate-income.

#### **Region 10: Worth County**

The City of Poulan was awarded \$17,076 in CDBG Immediate Threat and Danger (ITD) funds as a reimbursement for repairs made to its primary well and assistance to make repairs to the back-up well. 851 persons will benefit of whom 170 are low- to moderate-income.

## CONNECT WITH DCA

**New Construction** - CHIP funds may be used to build single family homes for low-to-moderate income home buyers.

The application and instructions are available on the [DCA website](#). A webinar with details about the application is scheduled for January 29 at 2:00 p.m. and will be archived to be viewed later.

Important links:

[Webinar access information](#)

[Webinar registration](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Questions about the grant or webinar, contact:

Samanta Carvalho

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## Follow DCA and its affiliate programs on Social Media



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[\*Camila Knowles, Commissioner\*](#)

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