

GEORGIA PLANNER

Newsletter of the Georgia Chapter of the American Planning Association
MARCH 2009



American Planning Association
Georgia Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen



CONFERENCE + CANTON

by Jeff Watkins, AICP, GPA President-Elect

At the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and on the rise of the Piedmont, the roughly 429 square miles of Cherokee County offer pristine woodlands, beautiful lakes and convenient access to metropolitan Atlanta. Each of the five cities has its own character. Canton has always been the center of government. Ball Ground is known for its gems and minerals. Waleska is home to Reinhardt College. Woodstock has worked to revitalize their downtown with new development. Holly Springs has a quaint downtown surrounded by residential neighborhoods.

Over the past 30 years, the area has undergone a transformation from a primarily rural county to a full-fledged Atlanta suburb because of proximity to jobs, its abundance of vacant land and availability of affordable housing stock. In recent years, Cherokee County and the cities of Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, Waleska and Woodstock have experienced significant growth from 141,903 people in 2000 to 204,363 (estimated) in 2007. The current economic conditions have certainly slowed growth for the moment but the population and employment are still expected to increase significantly over the next ten to twenty years.

These dramatic changes pose a number of challenges to local planning. All of the communities within Cherokee County are grappling with the following issues:

- Balancing development with impacts on quality of life
- Making smart infrastructure investments
- Preserving valuable greenspace prior to development
- Diversifying the local economy to encourage the creating of a sustainable employment base
- Spurring redevelopment in historical community centers

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2009 SPRING CONFERENCE

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President

Ellen Heath, AICP
president@georgiaplanning.org
 404-870-5339

President-Elect

Jeff Watkins, AICP
jwatkins@cherokeega.com
 678-493-6107

VP/Programs

Jonathan Lynn
programs@georgiaplanning.org
 912-287-2944

VP/Chapter Services

Laura M. Keyes, AICP
chapter.services@georgiaplanning.org
 404-463-3269

Secretary

Tracy Dunnivant, AICP
tdunnivant@cityofnewnan.org
 770-254-2354

Treasurer

Eric Bosman, AICP
ebosman@urbancollage.com
 404-586-0277

Executive Director

Jessica Gibson
executive.director@georgiaplanning.org
 770-314-9646

Professional Dev. Officer

Gary Cornell, AICP
gary.cornell@jjg.com
 678-333-0229

Planning Officials Dev. Officer

Kellie Brownlow
kbrownlow@atlantaregional.com
 404-463-3212

Chair - Legislative Affairs

James Shelby
jshelby@atlantaga.gov
 404-330-6070

AICP Director at Large

David C. Kirk, AICP
david.kirk@troutmansanders.com
 404-885-3415

AICP Director at Large

Tim Preece, AICP
tpreece@arcadis-us.com
 770-431-8666

Non-AICP Director at Large

Diana Wheeler
dwheeler@alpharetta.ga.us
 678-297-6070

Non-AICP Director at Large

Kathleen Field
kfield@roswellgov.com
 770-594-6173

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY ELLEN HEATH, AICP, PRESIDENT OF THE GA CHAPTER

It seems that 2009 has barely started, but it's almost time for the spring conference and I'm looking forward to seeing all of you in Canton. Conference highlights are detailed elsewhere in the newsletter, but I wanted to point out just a few:

- We're pleased to welcome one of GPA's newest members, Georgia Tech's Dr. Bruce Stiftel, as our keynote speaker. Dr. Stiftel will talk to us about recruitment and retention of planners, how to define our profession more broadly, and the role of professional development.
- Jason Jordan of APA will lead two sessions on national legislative trends (stimulus, anyone?) and what we can do in Georgia to monitor and influence legislation.
- Mobile workshops to Ball Ground and Woodstock.
- The usual complement of social and networking activities.



Ellen Heath, GPA President

I'm pleased to make a couple of Board announcements:

- Our newest Board of Directors' member is Cheri Hobson-Matthews, whom the Board appointed to fill the unexpired non-AICP representative term created by Dr. Cheryl Contant's departure last fall.
- The Board also appointed Jonathan Lynn as VP for Programs. This vacancy was created by Laura Beall's resignation. Best wishes and many thanks to Laura for her dedicated and great service as VP for Programs since the fall of 2007.

Please consider volunteering to run for a spot on GPA's Board of Directors next year. All positions will be open with the exception of President-elect. Elections will be in August or September. President-elect Jeff Watkins will chair the Nominations Committee, so please let him or me know if you'd like to nominate yourself or another for a position (Board positions are listed along the left and right edges of these pages.) It's great fun and a great way to get to know planners around the state.

If you don't want to run for office, please consider also volunteering to serve on one of our committees; in particular, the membership and programs committees are always looking for new members. Contact Laura Keyes and Jonathan Lynn (respectively) if you'd like to volunteer.

Our programs and professional development committees have been active. In the past couple of months GPA has co-sponsored lectures with Georgia Tech and the Livable Communities Coalition (both with CM credit), and an AICP review session. Thanks to Dr. Steve French and several other Georgia Tech faculty members for making the review session possible. Please be a regular visitor to both GPA's (www.georgiaplanning.org) and APA's (www.planning.org) websites. Both offer frequent updates to programs and issues affecting planning in our state.

The Georgia Planning Memorial Foundation is also in full swing; look for the article in this newsletter and announcements later this year regarding fundraising and financial assistance for the GPA fall conference. Many thanks to Bill Ross and other foundation board members for their hard work, as well as David Kirk and Troutman Sanders who have donated legal services to the Foundation.

GPA will be co-hosting a reception for Georgia planners in April at the APA National Planning Conference in Minneapolis, so I hope to see many of you there, as well as in Canton at the end of this month. As always, thanks to our sponsors for making our programs possible, and thanks to our many volunteers who make the organization work. ■



CALENDAR OF EVENTS - please visit our website for more events

March 26 – 27, 2009 GPA Spring Conference	Canton, GA www.georgiaplanning.org
April 7 – 8, 2009 Planning Commissioner Training	Americus, GA www.dca.state.ga.us
April 16 – 28, 2009 Training for Planning Officials	Marietta, GA www.atlantaregional.com
April 16 – 28, 2009 Smart Code Workshop	Decatur, GA www.smartcodeworkshop.com
April 18 – 22, 2009 2009 Green Cities Conference and Expo	Canton, GA www.georgiaplanning.org
April 25 – 29, 2009 APA National Planning Conference	Minnesota, MN www.planning.org
April 25 – 29, 2009 ACCG Annual Conference	Savannah, GA www.accg.org
April 27 – 29, 2009 Georgia Water Resources Conference	Athens, GA www.gwrc2009.com
May 6 – 8, 2009 GEDA Spring Workshop	Brasstown Valley, GA www.geda.org
May 14 – 15, 2009 ArcGIS Desktop I	Atlanta, GA www.atlantaregional.com
June 3 – 4, 2009 Board of Zoning Appeals	Marietta, GA www.atlantaregional.com
June 20 – 23, 2009 Georgia Municipal Association Conference	Savannah, GA www.gmanet.com
July 7 – 8, 2009 Community Planning Institute	Rome, GA www.dca.state.ga.us
July 15 – 17, 2009 ArcGIS Desktop II	Atlanta, GA www.atlantaregional.com

Non-AICP Director at Large
(vacant)

District 1 Director
Larry Vanden Bosch, AICP
dceds@ngrdc.org
706-272-2300

District 2 Director
Adam Hazell, AICP
ahazell@gmrdc.org
770-538-2617

District 3 Director
Rob LeBeau, AICP
rlebeau@atlantaregional.com
404-463-3308

District 4 Director
Frederick Gardiner, AICP
fgardiner@cityofgriffin.com
770-233-4130

District 5 Director
Kristina Harpst
kharpst@mgrdc.org
t: 478-751-6160

District 6 Director
Paul DeCamp, AICP
pdecamp@augustaga.gov
706-821-1796

District 7 Director
Patti Cullen
pcullen@lcrdc.org
706-256-2910

District 8 Director
Paul Forgey, AICP
pforgey@swgrdc.org
229-522-3552

District 9 Director
(vacant)

District 10 Director
Beth Reiter, AICP
reiterm@thempc.org
912-651-1453

Planning Official
Fred Boykin
fboykin@bicyclesouth.com
404-636-4444

Planning Official
Eric Clarkson
ecent@mindspring.com
770-452-3000

Student Representative
Andrea Lytle
anlytle@yahoo.com

Georgia Chapter of the American Planning Association 2009 SPRING CONFERENCE

The GPA 2009 Spring Conference will feature two days of professional planning training. The City of Canton offers a traditional small town atmosphere along with benefits of being located in a metropolitan area. The conference will be held at the Northside Hospital Cherokee Conference Center at 1130 Bluffs Parkway, Canton, GA 30114 (off of I-575). Plug this address into Google Maps or MapQuest for E-Z driving directions.

The Conference includes several focused training sessions, professional certification credits, industry exhibitors, mobile workshops, professional networking and keynote presentations on current planning issues. Check the GPA web site for the list of conference programs and workshops, and for a list of nearby reduced-rate hotels.

COME JOIN US AND
REGISTER NOW!

For the Spring Conference

<https://www.regonline.com/gpaspring09>

SPRING CONFERENCE GUEST SPEAKER

The Georgia Planning Association is pleased to announce that we have a special guest coming to the 2009 Spring Conference in Canton on March 26 and 27.

His name is Jason Jordan and he is one of the foremost lobbyist/planners involved with the Stimulus package at the federal level. Jason Jordan, of APA, as well as a part of Advocacy Associates of Washington, D.C., an organization that aids professionals in working with government, will be a key speaker at the GPA Spring Conference in Canton. Jason works closely with APA, APTA, and T4 America in advising on federal legislative matters and bills.

He will be available to answer questions that any of us might have and provide guidance to the stimulus bill. Some questions that you might be able to receive answers on can include:

- What does the new stimulus funding source provide?
- What new programs could help your city or county?
- Will consultants benefit from new projects?
- What are the prospects for the next federal transportation bill?

Bring these and more questions to the GPA Spring Conference and get the answers from Jason Jordan. ■

DOES GEORGIA KNOW PLANNING?

By Dan Reuter, ACIP

The GPA Spring conference in Canton will feature many important and interesting sessions. Come to Canton to hear about new tools, community plans and success stories. But also bring your concerns, issues and opportunities.

At the Spring conference, I have proposed a session on the “State of Planning” in Georgia. We all have personal and professional experiences in our communities and knowledge from around the U.S. and perhaps internationally. So how does Georgia stack up?

Many things have gone right in Georgia’s history, community development, planning and implementation. Together through investments, programs and regulatory changes the public sector, private actors, non-profits and individuals have built a great state. But some planning and failure to take action has limited our progress as a state or even caused harm.

Come to the GPA Spring conference, learn and experience Georgia’s professional achievements. Consider attending my session on the State of Planning in Georgia and bring your concerns. I will document the discussion in a summary for a future GPA newsletter. ■

MEMORIAL FOUNDATION SETS 2009 PROGRAM

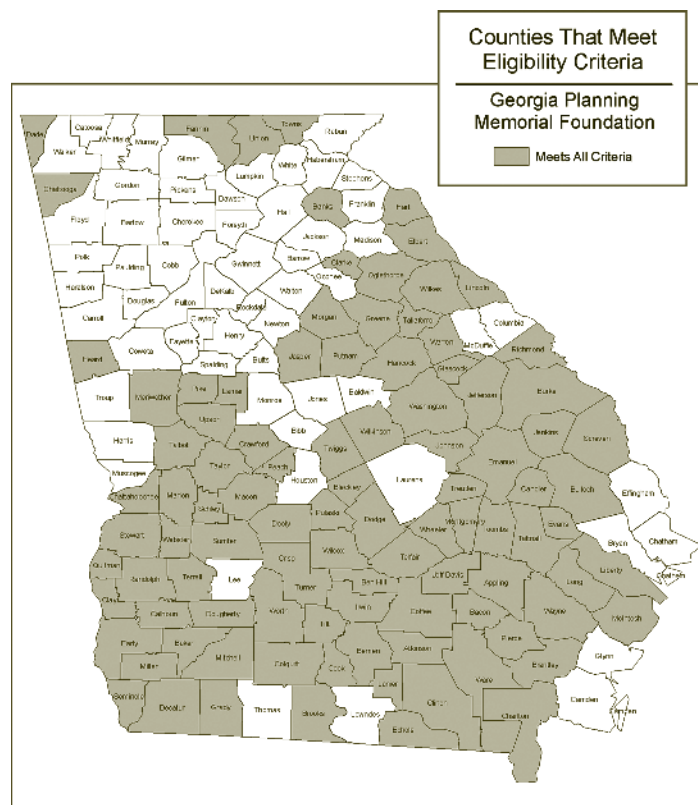
The Georgia Planning Memorial Foundation has established a focus for the financial assistance to be offered through the Denise Abboud Fund for 2009. This focus will be to cover or defray the travel costs of recipients to attend the GPA Fall Conference this year. Additionally, some registration costs for GPA members may be defrayed. By expending all of the money generously provided by the Foundation's Auction at the last Fall Conference, the Foundation anticipates having the opportunity to assist up to 10 people, depending on costs and needs.

The specific purpose of the Denise Abboud Fund is to help with the education and ongoing professional development of those who work in or serve rural or poorer Georgia communities that would otherwise not be able to obtain such opportunities. Those qualified to receive assistance from the Fund are planners, planning commissioners and other persons in similar official roles, who work in or serve such cities and counties.

As a first step, the Foundation adopted criteria to define eligible communities consistent with the Fund's specific purpose. Across Georgia, some 99 counties, and all of the cities within those counties, meet the eligibility criteria to apply for assistance from the Fund.

Secondly, the Foundation adopted criteria to guide the selection process among requests received from recipient localities. The criteria examine such factors as the extent to which the city or county meets the eligibility criteria, the need for assistance expressed by the locality, and the potential for lasting beneficial results.

For more information on the eligibility and selection criteria or on the Georgia Planning Memorial Foundation itself, visit the Foundation's page on the GPA web site at www.georgiaplanning.org. Watch also for the application form for assistance to be posted on the web in the months ahead. ■



GEORGIA PLANNING MEMORIAL FOUNDATION *DENISE ABBOD MEMORIAL FUND*



The Denise Abboud Memorial Fund was created to honor Denise's ideals and contributions to the planning profession during her life. The outpouring of love for Denise from friends and colleagues across the state following her tragic and sudden death, and the donations spontaneously offered to establish a lasting memorial to her work and legacy, resulted in creation of the Fund by the GPA Board.

The Denise Abboud Fund is dedicated to helping communities that otherwise could not afford it expand the skills and knowledge of their professional and citizen planners. This is particularly something Denise would have been interested in pursuing – she strongly supported GPA reaching out to include everyone in its programs and offerings, and she made sure that practical, useful programs were always included in the many conferences she put together as GPA Vice President.

The Denise Abboud Fund is now included within the umbrella of the Georgia Planning Memorial Foundation, established in 2008 as a 501(c)(3) corporation through the efforts of GPA and the pro bono assistance of David Kirk and his associates at Troutman Sanders. ■

SUCCESSFUL GPA LUNCHEON

District Luncheon a Success in Cartersville

Cartersville, a community of 20,000 people located 45 miles northwest of Atlanta, served as host city for the successful February 11 GPA District One Planners Luncheon. The topic of this event, which was eligible for Certification Maintenance (CM) credit, was “Historic Preservation Beyond Downtown.” This catered event, held at the Booth Western Art Museum, was fully “sold out” one month prior to the event date and had close to 100% turnout.

“We’re excited to have folks from Tunnel Hill down to Atlanta; people involved in government at the local and regional levels, and private practice lawyers, planners, and engineers,” said



Booth Western Art Museum

Richard Osborne, AICP, Cartersville City Planner and moderator of the event.

Discussion included the challenges and opportunities that follow designation of a community’s downtown and adjacent residential areas as historic districts. Examples were given from Cartersville, which has a designated business district as well as

three adjacent residential districts and has been a participant in the effort to maintain and enhance its heritage through historic preservation since creation of the first district in 2001.

Pete Alday, who coordinates work with the Cartersville Historic Preservation Commission, noted that “Cartersville calls its approval notices Certificates of Preservation since it sounds less authoritative and seems to make more sense to applicants” than Certificates of Appropriateness. Mr. Alday stated that some of the challenges in Cartersville’s historic districts have been metal roofs, the notion of forgiveness rather than permission, signage, working with property owners, and the appropriate size of districts.

In addition, economic development initiatives to achieve a more vibrant downtown were addressed. Cartersville, which has a Business Improvement District with an additional property tax of 2.5 mils, has been active in securing grants for improvements

to downtown facades, signs, streetscapes, and other projects. Discussion included the City’s efforts to help downtown evolve from nearly all office and institutional uses ten years ago to its current status of having an ever-increasing mix of restaurants, retail, museums, pubs, offices, and residences.



Historic Preservation

Liz Hood, Executive Director of the Cartersville Downtown Development Authority (DDA) & Main Street Program, stated that “it is essential in a downtown area to be financially creative, working with your DDA, State partners, and other funding sources.” Ms. Hood noted that selected design elements can create a common

theme throughout a downtown area. In the case of Cartersville, sidewalks, retaining walls, and tree planters have brick similar to that of the original 1873 county courthouse.

This session was designed to interweave the fields of Economic Development, Historic Preservation, and Planning together with particular emphasis on downtown and adjacent areas in an effort to show participants that these fields should be viewed as overlapping rather than as separate fields. Too often, new planners may view the profession with a myopic lens, and this event was designed to help broaden this view. ■



Support Our Sponsors!!

A Huge Thank You to 2009 GPA Annual Sponsors

Planners will have a full year of challenges and opportunities with regards to economic conditions and changing trends in all sectors of planning. The Georgia Planning Association stands ready to provide members with opportunities for networking, information and education. These services are made possible through the continued support of GPA annual sponsors and conference sponsors.

Please take time to review the list of 2009 annual sponsors and access their company websites via the GPA site at www.georgiaplanning.org.

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Urban Collage

Vinyl Siding Institute

We appreciate your support in 2009!

Laura Keyes, VP Chapter Services

New AICP Members

Congratulations to the following 29 members of Georgia Planning Association who passed the AICP Exam in 2008:

1. Michelle Alexander, AICP
2. Jason Barringer, AICP
3. Chirayu Bhatt, AICP
4. Marsha Anderson Bomar, AICP
5. Harry Boxler, AICP
6. Chris Collins, AICP
7. Edward Ditommaso, AICP
8. Timothy Hatton, AICP
9. Kristina Harpst, AICP
10. Kenwin Hayes, AICP
11. Vanishree Herlekar, AICP
12. William Herbig, AICP
13. Ulreen Jones, AICP
14. Drew Kane, AICP
15. Alison Moon, AICP
16. Kris Morley-Nikfar, AICP
17. Stephen O'Neil, AICP
18. Richard Osborne, AICP
19. Cristina Pastore, AICP
20. James Riker, AICP
21. Vaneetha Ross, AICP
22. Tracy Rye, AICP
23. Jaymie Sheffield, AICP
24. Brian Stockton, AICP
25. Andrew Szwak, AICP
26. Adella Weber, AICP
27. Rush Wickes, AICP
28. Matt Williamson, AICP
29. Anne-Marie Wolff, AICP

Gary Cornell, AICP

GPA Professional Development Officer

ARC KICKS OFF PLAN 2040

BY DAN REUTER, AICP, LAND USE DIVISION CHIEF, ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

The Atlanta region's "Plan 2040" development process during 2009-2011 is particularly significant for several reasons. First, a substantial number of local Comprehensive Plans as well as Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) studies and other work have been undertaken by local governments, ARC and planning partners during the past five or more years. The information and policy outlined in these plans will be integral in the development of updated regional plans. Second, substantial new planning models and data are available to inform better decisions in our planning. Information from our local and regional planning work is already being documented and evaluated by ARC staff.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Board approved new regional planning rules in November 2008. While Envision6 and other ARC regional plans during the past 10 years have integrated many aspects of land use and transportation issues, the new DCA rules offer a significant opportunity for more integration and implementation. Therefore, the next Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and DCA required Regional Development Plan (RDP) will be produced through a unified process. State, regional and local policy will be integrated to form a vision, projects and implementation program for the region.

During 2009, ARC staff will begin the Plan Assessment through an integrated review of the region's primary issues and opportunities. The data and mapping for the Plan Assessment has already begun. Many current issues and concerns in our region will be elevated through the Assessment so that projects, policy and actions can be supported in the plan.

Concurrent with the Plan Assessment, the Georgia DCA required Resource Plan will get underway in March. The Resource Plan will document the region's primary environmental and cultural resources that should be elemental to the plan development. A nomination process for regional resources will be a first step in the development of the Resource Plan. The draft process for nomination was made available in February for review.

We welcome the opportunity to brief planning partners, non-governmental organizations, local government staff and elected officials early in the process. If you would like to receive a presentation and become involved in the development of the region's plan with a more substantial role, please contact myself or Brad Calvert (404-463-3307). ■

CONFERENCE + CANTON *(continued from p. 1)*

Cherokee County and her cities have a long history of spearheading innovative planning initiatives in Georgia. In 1999, the Cherokee County Commissioners adopted the "Township Plan" as the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. Tony Nelessen conducted one of his now trademarked Visual Preference Surveys; one of the first Conservation Subdivision ordinances ever adopted in Georgia was crafted upon consultation with Randal Arendt and adopted in Cherokee County, and the Georgia Transfer of Development Rights enabling legislation was drafted by local representatives as a tool to implement the Township Plan. In the recent past, Growth Boundary Agreements with the cities of Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, and Woodstock and Cherokee County were adopted to coordinate future planning and capital investments.

The legacy of innovation in planning continues in Cherokee County. Between 2000 and 2006, the cities of Canton, Holly Springs, Woodstock and Cherokee County were all awarded Livable Centers Initiative grants by the Atlanta Regional Commission. These efforts have yielded a series of impressive awards; Downtown Woodstock - Development of Excellence by ULI, Holly Springs - 2007 Signature Community by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and Cherokee County's "Bells Ferry Design Guidelines" - 2007 Georgia Planning Association Outstanding Plan Implementation Award. Besides awards, the different jurisdictions within Cherokee County draw on each other for inspiration and support for these

redevelopment areas rather than competing.

More recently, local leaders and planning staff members have updated Comprehensive Plans for all jurisdictions based on character areas. Cherokee County planned jointly with the cities of Ball Ground, Waleska and Woodstock. This process allowed a tremendous amount of coordinated planning and developed mutual understanding between the jurisdictions. The implementation of these plans has begun to yield more examples of innovative Cherokee planning. The recent vote by County residents in favor of funding greenspace acquisition and parks projects has put Cherokee County in a favorable position to make an impact on preserving land for future generations. At the same time, Woodstock is working to implement their recently developed greenspace plan. Work is also underway on the Airport Area Master Plan to leverage the groundbreaking federal-state-local partnership on the expansion of the Cherokee County Regional Airport. This \$25 million dollar project is an opportunity to attract significant economic development around the airport and link it to the Bluffs of Technology Park, which is designed to create a major regional employment center along I-575 between Canton and Ball Ground.

Cherokee County and the cities of Ball Ground, Canton, Holly Springs, Waleska and Woodstock are pleased to welcome the GPA Spring 2009 Conference. The members of the host committee look forward to showing you what makes Cherokee County so special. ■

GOING GREEN!

The Georgia Planning Association (GPA) is taking steps this year to reduce costs and reduce waste. Each year, members receive four hard copy quarterly newsletters filled with valuable information on planning activities and trends in the State, events, AICP information and advertisements from GPA's annual sponsors. Starting this year, members will continue to receive four copies, but with March and September issues distributed as hard copy newsletters and the July and December issues distributed in electronic format. GPA believes that this effort will keep the Association in line with state of the practice efforts to be sustainable and will not reduce contact with members. We hope you enjoy these new changes. Please feel free to contact Laura Keyes, GPA Chapter Services, at chapter.services@georgiaplanning.org if you have any questions or comments.

To ensure you receive you quarterly e-newsletters, please make sure your email address is updated with the American Planning Association (APA). All contact information is maintained by APA, www.planning.org/myapa. Be sure to have your member number handy (it's on the mailing label of Planning magazine).

GAZA CM ACCREDITED

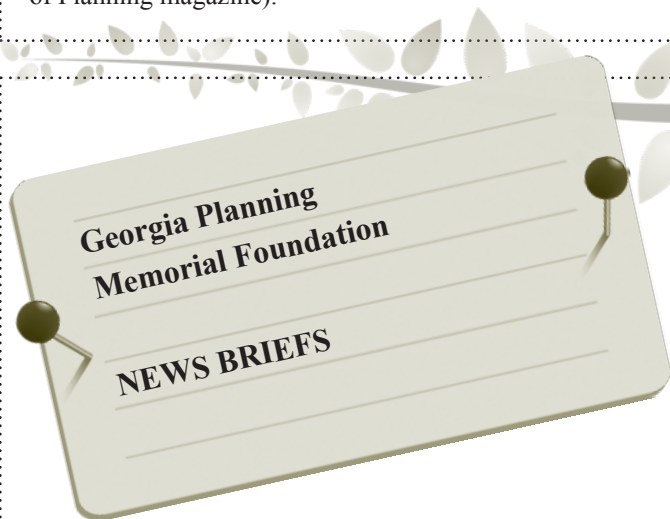
The Georgia Association of Zoning Administrators is now an approved provider of Certification Maintenance (CM) credits for AICP-certified planners through the American Planning Association (APA).

This underscores the quality of courses offered by GAZA during its conferences, which attract Zoning Administrators, Code Enforcement Officers, Planners, Building Officials, Planning Commission members, private-sector consultants and attorneys, and others in this statewide organization.

If you are an AICP-certified planner, please make sure to add GAZA course credits to your CM log. If you know AICP-certified planners who may not attend GAZA conferences, please encourage them to attend the upcoming Savannah conference August 12-14 for course credits.

For the latest on GAZA activities, please check out the website at www.georgiazoning.org and as always, all comments and suggestions are appreciated.

Richard Osborne, AICP
Cartersville Planning & Development



Elections Coming Up

The Georgia Planning Memorial Foundation Board will elect its Directors and Officers at its upcoming annual meeting in May. There is currently a vacancy on the Board, and additional positions may be available if the Board decides to expand.

So... we need you to let us know if you are interested in participating as a Board member in this most worthy enterprise and, frankly, richly fulfilling role.

Please contact Bill Ross at 404-355-4505 or bill@planross.com with your interest or questions.

Logo Competition

The Georgia Planning Memorial Foundation is seeking to adopt a unique logo for the organization and is inviting everyone to participate in this. We're looking for a logo that is consistent with the purpose of the Foundation – to help communities that otherwise could not afford it expand the skills and knowledge of their professional and citizen planners – without necessarily being an illustration of it.

If you have an idea for a logo, sketch it out and send it to the Foundation's Secretary, Glenn Coyne, by fax (404-870-6590) or email (glenn.coyne@edaw.com). Finished artwork is NOT expected, but neatness counts! Color is encouraged, but it also must reproduce well in black and white. The deadline, April 1, is fast approaching so whip up those creative juices (and don't forget to include your name and contact information separately, since judging will be done anonymously).

The winner of the competition and other notable entries will be recognized at the GPA Fall Conference, lauded with praise and showered with adulation, with full bragging rights conferred.



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The Georgia Chapter does not maintain address lists. All lists are maintained at the national office and are mailed to the local chapters each month. If you have moved, e-mail: addresschange@planning.org, go to Member Login at www.planning.org, or write to: American Planning Association, 97774 Eagle Way, Chicago, IL 60678-9770

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

If you are interested in joining GPA or the American Planning Association, contact the national headquarters at the address above or call (312) 431-9100 or visit their website at www.planning.org.

CONTACTS

Direct financial inquiries and address payments to the Treasurer. Direct questions about chapter records to the Secretary. Direct matters for the Board of Directors to the President. See mailing and email addresses inside.

SUBMISSION

The Georgia Planning Association welcomes articles, letters to the editor, photos of planning events or state happenings, calendar listings, job notices, planners on the move, etc. We are always interested in publishing items you think may be of interest to others throughout the state. Graphics are especially welcome. Articles may be edited for space. Articles printed in any issue of The Georgia Planner are not the expressed opinion of the Chapter.

DEADLINE


The deadline for the next issue is **May 31, 2009**.

Send items for the newsletter to: William F. Ross, ROSS+associates, 2161 Peachtree Road, NE Suite 806, Atlanta, Georgia 30309, Bill@planross.com

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