



## Capitol Connection E-Newsletter - October 2016

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### *County Platform*

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### **2017-2018 Final County Platform Now Available**

The ACCG membership approved the 2017-2018 County Platform during this year's Legislative Leadership Conference in Glynn County. The final version of the Platform is now available on the ACCG website. The 2017-2018 Legislative Agenda and Priorities are also available online.

Please contact a member of the policy staff should you have any questions about the items included in the County Platform.

### **[2017-2018 County Platform](#)**

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### *Reminders*

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### **Register for the 2016 Fall District Meetings**

Registration for this year's Fall District Meetings is now available. Taking place November 9-18 in each of ACCG's 12 statewide districts, these meetings allow county officials the opportunity to engage in candid town hall discussions with some of Georgia's state legislators. Meeting attendees will also receive information on key county issues as well as an update from the ACCG policy staff and legislators on what

to expect for the upcoming legislative session. So, mark your calendar and prepare to get engaged by registering for the meeting(s) of your choice!

County officials are encouraged to attend any meeting of their choice and to invite their legislators. Choose the meeting date that works best for your schedule. Registration links and additional details such as meeting dates, locations, and times are on the [ACCG website](#).

### **Time to Update the CLC Network**

As we head into the 2017 legislative session, ACCG wants to update the list of county legislative coordinators (CLC). ACCG established the CLC network in 2010 to help improve communications with members while the General Assembly is in session. The CLC will serve two primary roles: help keep county commissioners and county management updated on legislation of importance to counties and provide county-specific information to ACCG, as requested, to help legislators assess the impact of proposed legislation. Further details on the responsibilities of a CLC can be found [here](#).

County chairmen are asked to officially designate the CLC by passing a [resolution](#) at a commission meeting. ACCG is requesting counties' assistance in the following areas:

- 1) If your county legislative coordinator is the same person, please confirm that this is correct. If your county is on the following list, please confirm or appoint a CLC. [Please view the list of CLC appointees from 2016 as a reference](#).
- 2) If your county legislative coordinator will be someone else or your county did not designate one for 2016 and you would like to do so this year, ACCG recommends that the [resolution](#) be brought before the commission for consideration. Once the resolution passes, ACCG will need a copy of it for our files as well as the name, title, office and cell phone numbers and email address for your designee. Please fax the resolution to the attention of Nicole Logan at 404-589-7843.
- 3) Please confirm if you are willing to receive updates by text.

To update, confirm or appoint a CLC, please contact Nicole Logan at [nlogan@accg.org](mailto:nlogan@accg.org). She will be able to answer any questions and provide additional information if needed.

### **COUNTY ACTION NEEDED: Register to Receive DOR Notification of "Significant" Sales Tax Refund Claims**

New legislation that became effective July 1, 2016, requires the Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR) to notify each county affected by a "refund claim of local significance." For more information on the procedures counties should follow to ensure such notifications are received, please click [here](#).

Please contact ACCG Legislative Associate Brad Vaughan at [bvaughan@accg.org](mailto:bvaughan@accg.org) or (404) 522-5022 if you have any questions.

### **ACCG Seeks County Commissioners to Serve on DCA's Annexation Dispute Resolution Panels**

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), in conjunction with ACCG and GMA, is actively calling for local county and city elected officials who are willing to serve on annexation arbitration panels.

To ensure a fair, responsible annexation policy, Georgia created the annexation arbitration process in 2007 whereby counties may request that an independent panel step in and to help resolve a dispute. This arbitration panel is appointed from a pool of candidates established by the state to hear from the county and the city. When a county objects to a proposed annexation (under limited grounds) this independent arbitration panel is created to hear both sides of the dispute and to issue findings and recommendations. The panel has the power to impose conditions on the annexation, including land use limitations, for one year.

An arbitration panel is made up of the following members:

- Two people who are currently, or within the previous six years have been, county elected officials
- Two people who are currently, or within the previous six years have been, city elected officials; and
- One person who has a master's degree or higher in public administration or planning and is employed by a college or university in the state.

Volunteers will be required to complete some training before serving on a panel and will receive a per diem for their services. Panelists will not be asked to serve on more than two panels per year.

DCA manages the annexation arbitration panel process and maintains a list of eligible panelists. To learn more about the process, please contact Jon West, Local & Intergovernmental Senior Planning Coordinator at DCA, at (404) 327-6872 or [jon.west@dca.ga.gov](mailto:jon.west@dca.ga.gov).

To volunteer for the program, please email your name, the name of your county, your phone number and email address to Nicole Butler at [nbutler@accg.org](mailto:nbutler@accg.org) by November 4, 2016.

Click [here](#) for further information.

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### *Grants*

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#### **2017 State Revolving Fund Solicitation Period**

The Georgia Environmental Finance Authority is now accepting loan applications for the federally-funded Clean Water State Revolving and the Drinking Water State Revolving funds. The Clean Water State Revolving Fund provides funding for a wide variety of water quality projects as well as water and energy conservation initiatives. More specifically, the Drinking Water State Revolving fund provides funding for water supply projects that address public health or compliance issues.

The pre-application deadline for both opportunities is Friday, December 30, 2016, by 5:00 p.m. More information can be found [here](#).

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## *Additional News*

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### **SRTA Emergency Accounts**

Local law-enforcement agencies, fire and rescue agencies are eligible for an "Emergency Non-Revenue Account" that allows employees travelling on official business in authorized public safety vehicles to utilize Georgia's Express Lanes toll free. Additional [details](#) are available.

### **County Finances Progress Despite Adversity**

Despite the consistent productivity of U.S. counties, recent financial statements shine light on the impact the recession had on county budgets. Although monetary support from the government has declined, the cost to provide public service for communities has steadily increased causing an imbalance in county finances.

For more information on the correlation between the recession and county budgets click [here](#).