



In this Issue:

- Special Session on Reapportionment Gets Underway
- Guidelines for Local Legislation
- GDOT Holds Public Meetings on STIP Project List
- DCA Convenes Advisory Task Force for Revising Local Planning and DNR Rules
- Governor's Office of Workforce Development Offers Town Hall Meetings on Soft Skills Education

Special Session on Reapportionment Gets Underway

Legislators returned to the State Capitol on August 15 for the start of the Special Session on Reapportionment. The Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office released the first version of the reapportionment maps on August 12. To review the current maps, click [here](#).

The maps may change several times before they are approved by the General Assembly and the Special Session adjourns. The final reapportionment maps must be approved by the U.S. Department of Justice or a panel of federal judges of the federal court for the District of Columbia.

The call issued by Governor Nathan Deal also allows the General Assembly to consider three additional issues besides reapportionment during the Special Session: 1) changing the T-SPLOST election date from the July 2012 primary to the general election date of November 8, 2012; 2) extending the suspension of Georgia's gas tax which took place on July 1; and 3) local legislation (see additional information in the next section). The ACCG Policy Council met by conference call on August 15 and recommended that ACCG remain neutral on the proposal to change the T-SPLOST election date.

In addition, several legislative committees have also scheduled meeting or hearings while legislators are in town for the Special Session. The purpose of these sessions is to allow legislators to discuss or receive more information on legislation expected to come before the General Assembly in 2012. Issues to be discussed include changes to the open meetings and open records laws, the legalization of horse racing, hotel/motel tax collection for online resellers and the rewriting of the juvenile justice code. Watch for more information on ACCG on the dates and locations of these important meetings. If you would like to testify on any of these issues, please contact ACCG Legislative Director Clint Mueller at cmueller@accg.org or (404) 522-5022.

Guidelines for Local Legislation

Local legislation may be considered during the Special Session, but it is limited to what the General Assembly "deems necessary to avoid unreasonable hardship, or to avoid undue

impairment of public functions if consideration or enactment thereof is postponed." Counties that may have local legislation that they want to have considered should contact their local delegation as soon as possible to determine if it meets the established guidelines. ACCG has confirmed that the General Assembly will consider local redistricting legislation. For more information on the public notice and legislative process for local redistricting legislation, click [here](#).

ACCG Federal Policy Meeting Scheduled for August 29

The ACCG Federal Committee will hold its inaugural meeting to review and set the 2012 federal policy agenda on Monday, August 29 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Centers for Disease Control Global Communications Center in DeKalb County. This meeting offers an opportunity to review ACCG's work on federal issues to date and prepare the ACCG Federal Committee section of the County Platform for 2012. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

House Judiciary Committee Schedules Aug. 30 Hearing on HB 397 - Open Meetings and Open Records Legislation

Attorney General Sam Olens has made it clear that he intends to seek changes to the open meetings and open records legislation during the 2012 legislative session. In May, the ACCG General County Government Committee hosted a forum on this issue to provide an overview of the proposed changes and give county officials an opportunity to provide feedback, express concerns and make recommendations. Since that time, ACCG has been discussing many of the issues with the Attorney General.

The House Judiciary Committee has scheduled a hearing on HB 397 on August 30 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 132 of the State Capitol. It is extremely important that county officials' voices are heard on this important topic. If you are willing to testify at the hearing, please contact ACCG Legislative Director Clint Mueller at cmueller@accg.org or (404) 522-5022 as soon as possible.

Register Now for ACCG / GMA Joint Training on Illegal Immigration Requirements for Local Government -- Sept. 19 & Sept. 26

ACCG and the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) will hold joint training sessions on Georgia's Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act (House Bill 87) on September 19 (Hall County) and September 26 (Tift County) for counties and cities. These sessions will provide an overview of mandated local government immigration verification requirements. While E-Verify and SAVE compliance has been required of Georgia's counties and cities for three years, the passage of HB 87 during the 2011 legislative session imposes various new reporting mandates and penalties for noncompliance, ranging from loss of qualified local government status, fines, and possible jail time and removal from office for elected and appointed officials. Space is filling up quickly! For more information on the upcoming sessions or to register, click [here](#).

ACCG Legislative Leadership Conference Coming Soon - Oct. 3 -- 4

More than 100 county officials from throughout the state have already registered to attend the ACCG Legislative Leadership Conference scheduled for October 3 -- 4 at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis in Fulton County. ACCG encourages at least one person from each county attend this meeting to serve as the registered delegate to vote on the amended 2011 -- 2012 County Platform which will guide the work of the policy team during next year's legislative session. In addition, ACCG is offering several informative Standard of Excellence sessions on hot topics such as the proposed criminal justice reform, community redevelopment tools, public safety communication mandates and much more. For the full agenda and to register, click [here](#).

GDOT Holds Public Meetings on STIP Project List

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) oversees the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which identifies federally funded transportation projects in areas such as highway, maintenance, bicycle and pedestrian. STIP is a four-year work program that is updated annually, exclusively for Georgia's non-urbanized areas. GDOT is hosting public meetings this month to review and receive comments on the STIP project list for Fiscal Years 2012 -- 2015. To review the project list, click [here](#). For the meeting dates and locations, click [here](#).

DCA Convenes Advisory Task Force for Revising Local Planning and DNR Rules

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has named the Task Force for Revising Local Planning and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Rules and will begin work this week. County officials on the Task Force include: Gwinnett County Chairman Charlotte Nash, Oglethorpe County Chairman Billy Pittard and Putnam County Manager Paul Van Haute.

This Task Force was formed following the passage and subsequent veto of Senate Bill 86 during the 2011 General Assembly. The Task Force will review current comprehensive planning and other reporting requirements and work with DCA and DNR officials to develop recommendations for changes.

Governor's Office of Workforce Development Offers Town Hall Meetings on Soft Skills Education

The Governor's Office of Workforce Development is hosting a series of 31 public town hall meetings on Soft Skills in Education throughout the state between now and November 17. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss establishment of a statewide certification in soft skills such as punctuality, ability to learn, appropriate business attire, and ability to work as a team for Georgia's schools. The Governor's Office of Workforce Development has asked ACCG to encourage county officials to attend the meeting in their area. For more information and a list of the meeting dates and locations, click [here](#).

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