



Capitol Connection E-Newsletter- December 2014

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Don't Forget to Register for District Days at the Capitol

ACCG will host the District Days at the Capitol in 2015. The District Days will take place in lieu of the Capitol Connection Conference. District Days are designed to allow county officials to spend time with their respective legislative delegation, get briefed on key policy issues by the ACCG policy staff, and attend important committee meetings. Each day will provide county officials with a glimpse into the work and efforts of the General Assembly. Please contact your county clerk to register.

Click [here](#) for more information.

REMINDER: Immigration Reports Due on December 31

Immigration reports for the reporting period of December 1, 2013- November 30, 2014 are due to the Department of Audits and Accounts by December 31, 2014. No changes were made to the reporting system or county requirements during the 2014 legislative session. You may contact the DOAA at immhelp@audits.ga.gov or visit their website at www.audits.ga.gov/ if you have any questions about filling out the report.

Annual SPLOST Reports Also Due before December 31

State law (48-8-122) requires each county and city to publish an annual special purpose local options sales tax (SPLOST) report in their local newspaper and on their website before **December 31, 2014**. Please remember that, in addition to the current SPLOST funds, the reporting requirements apply to all previous SPLOST projects where the county has not spent all the collected proceeds. Counties are not responsible for reporting on any city projects.

Click [here](#) to get a copy of the ACCG model report. The model report may also be found in the back of the ACCG SPLOST Guidebook.

Please contact ACCG Legislative Director Clint Mueller at (404) 522-5022 or cmueller@accg.org if you have any questions.

Update on Ethics Disclosure Reports and Upcoming Deadlines

Many changes have occurred to the ethics filing process over the course of 2014, and additional changes are still pending. One recent change that impacts local officials involves the Exemption Affidavit for those who intend to raise or spend less than \$2,500 or between \$2,500-\$5,000 in an election cycle. Since an election cycle runs from the day after the general election through the next general election, candidates who filed an Exemption Affidavit earlier this year and were up for election in 2014 had their election cycle end on November 4, 2014. These candidates need to file a new Exemption Affidavit by December 31, 2014, in order to maintain the reduced reporting exemption. This also means that their fundraising and spending tallies will start over at zero beginning on November 5, 2014. For those who were not up for election in 2014 but filed an Exemption Affidavit, their affidavit is still good through their next general election date. For officials who do not qualify for an Exemption Affidavit, or have not completed one because they typically exceed the threshold, this change does not impact their reporting schedule.

Please click [here](#) for the reporting schedule that includes information such as filing dates for the Campaign Disclosure Reports (CCDR) and the Personal Financial Disclosure Statements (PFD). Please note that everyone up for election in 2014 has a December 31, 2014, CCDR filing deadline unless they file a new Exemption Affidavit by such date. For non-election year officials, the next CCDR filing deadline is January 31, 2015.

Lastly, everyone, regardless of whether they filed an Exemption Affidavit, must file a Personal Financial Disclosure (PFD) statement in 2015 for the 2014 calendar year. If 2015 is a non-election year then the PFD can be filed anytime between January 1 and July 1 (no grace period). If an official is up for election in 2015, they can file the PFD any time after January 1 as long as it is filed no later than 15 days of the date of qualifying.

A copy of any of the disclosure forms or affidavits can be accessed [here](#). The CCDR is #9, PFD is #23, and the Exemption Affidavit is #43.

For additional inquiries, please contact ACCG Associate Legislative Director Shaun Adams at (404) 522-5022 or sadams@accg.org.

ACCG Friday Legislative Meetings

During each legislative session, ACCG holds weekly informal legislative briefings for county officials, appointed lobbyists or staff. This is a great opportunity to review and discuss a variety of legislative issues under consideration by the General Assembly, develop a strategy, and support one another in our legislative efforts.

The 2015 weekly meetings will resume on **Friday, January 16, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in room 328 of the Coverdell Legislative Office Building located at 18 Capitol Square, Atlanta, Ga. 30334.** Please contact ACCG Legislative Policy Coordinator Ines Owens if you plan to attend any of this year's meetings. She can be reached at (404) 522-5022 or iowens@accg.org.

2015 Legislative Session is One Month Away: Stay Connected, Informed, and Engaged!

The start of the 2015 legislative session is now less than one month away. As we get ready to head into the New Year, ACCG wants all counties to be aware of the many resources that are available for them to stay connected, informed, and engaged. Resources such as the [2015-2016 County Platform](#), the [2015-2016 Legislative Agenda](#) and the [2015 Top Legislative Priorities](#) in addition to many others are available to counties. Counties are encouraged to monitor the legislative tracking database and to watch for ACCG Action Alerts throughout the session.

Click [here](#) to read the 2015 Legislative Preview in ACCG's *Georgia County Government* magazine.

Please feel free to contact a member of the ACCG policy staff if you have any questions or concerns once session is underway. Their contact information can be obtained [here](#).

Remember to Update Your County's CLC

ACCG is updating the county legislative coordinator (CLC) network to help improve communication with county officials while the General Assembly is in session. Each county is asked to designate a county legislative coordinator to: 1) help keep county commissioners and county management updated on legislation of importance to counties and 2) provide county-specific information to ACCG, as requested, to help legislators assess the impact of proposed legislation. County chairs were asked to officially designate the county legislative coordinator by passing a resolution at a commission meeting.

As we head into the 2015 legislative session, ACCG wants to update the list of county legislative coordinators by doing the following:

- 1. If your county legislative coordinator is the same person designated for 2014, please confirm and send their current contact information.**

- 2. If your county legislative coordinator has changed or your county did not designate a legislative coordinator in 2014 and you would like to do so for 2015, ACCG recommends that a [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 addresses of your county's designee. **Please fax the resolution to (404) 589-7843.****

Please [click](#) here to review the list of counties that need to confirm (from 2014 for 2015) or appoint their CLC. To update, confirm, or appoint a CLC, please contact ACCG Legislative Policy Coordinator Ines Owens at iowens@accg.org.

Eastern Federal Lands Access Program Call for Projects Alert

The Federal Highway Administration Eastern Federal Lands (EFL) is now accepting Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) applications in order to develop a four year program of projects for Fiscal Years FY 2015 through FY 2018. There will be an estimated \$2.3 million per fiscal year available through the program; however, awards are subject to the availability of funds.

The FLAP was created under MAP-21 and provides funding for projects or studies consisting of improvements to a public highway, road, bridge, trail or transit system which is located on, adjacent to, or provides access to, federal lands for which the facility title or maintenance responsibility is vested with a state, county, city, township, tribal, municipal, or local government. Generally, a 20 percent matching share of the project total is required for this program. All projects must be submitted using the [EFL Access Program Application form](#). Tips for preparing a FLAP application can be viewed [here](#).

Applications should be **submitted via email** to EFL.planning@dot.gov by **March 13, 2015**. Please visit the EFL FLAP [website](#) for more information such as the state's program goals, the call for projects standard operating procedure, and associated scoring criteria.

Click [here](#) to read the official message from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Please contact ACCG Associate Legislative Director Shaun Adams if you have any questions. He can be reached at (404) 522-5022 or sadams@accg.org.

Deadline to Apply for the Rural Health Network Development Program Approaching Soon

The January 9, 2015, deadline to apply for the Rural Health Network Development Program is approaching soon. The Rural Health Network Development Program is a funding opportunity offered through the Office of Rural Health Planning. This one-year, community-driven program is targeted to assist in the planning and development of integrated health care networks in rural communities. For grantees, this funding provides an opportunity to implement new and innovative approaches to adapting to a changing health care environment that may serve as a

model to other rural communities to better align and coordinate local health care services. Network planning activities that model evidence-based frameworks or models that work are encouraged. Previously funded projects include topics such as workforce, behavioral health, telehealth, care coordination, health information technology, and outreach and enrollment.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Please contact Amber Berrian if you have any questions. She can be reached at aberrian@hrsa.gov or (301) 443-0845.

NACo News: CROmnibus Bill Includes Some Victories for Counties

The U.S. Congress recently agreed to pass a \$1.1 trillion omnibus funding bill for FY15 that includes some victories for counties. The bill, known as CROmnibus, would fund the federal government through September 2015 with the exception of a Continuing Resolution that would fund the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through February. Some victories for the nation's counties include an extension of the Internet Tax Freedom Act through October 1, 2015, as opposed to a permanent prohibition; \$372 million dedicated to the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program; and instructions for the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to withdraw the interpretive rule regarding the applicability of the Clean Water Act, in addition to others.

Click [here](#) to read the official news story from the National Association of Counties which details the bill's impact on counties.