



Capitol Connection E-Newsletter- December 2015

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Registration Now Open for 2016 District Days at the Capitol

Registration for the 2016 District Days at the Capitol is now open. In lieu of the winter Capitol Connection Conference, ACCG will continue to host the District Days at the Capitol event. The 2016 District Days will take place on February 17, February 24, and March 2.

Wednesday, February 17 – Districts 9, 7, 11, and 12

Wednesday, February 24 – Districts 4, 6, 8, and 10

Wednesday, March 2 – Districts 1, 2, 3, and 5

Further details such as registration information and an agenda can be accessed [here](#).

Please contact ACCG Legislative Policy Coordinator Ines Owens if you have any questions. She can be reached at (404) 522-5022 or iowens@accg.org.

Stay Informed and Engaged: Appoint or Confirm Your CLC!

The start of the 2016 legislative session is one month away! ACCG asks that all counties appoint or confirm their county legislative coordinator (CLC). The CLC plays an integral role in assisting with ACCG's advocacy efforts during the session. CLC's help keep county commissioners and county management updated on legislation of importance to counties and provide county-specific information to ACCG, as requested, in order to help legislators assess the impact of proposed bills.

County chairs are asked to officially designate a CLC by passing a [resolution](#) at a commission meeting.

Click [here](#) to obtain the most recent list of CLC's. **If your county is on the list, your CLC has NOT been confirmed or appointed for 2016.** If your county is not listed, your confirmation for 2016 has been received.

Please contact ACCG Legislative Policy Coordinator Ines Owens at iowens@accg.org to confirm or appoint your county legislative coordinator as ACCG prepares for the start of the next session.

Reminder: 2015 Immigration Report Due at the End of the Month

The deadline to submit the annual immigration report to the Department of Audits and Accounts (DOAA) is December 31, 2015. This year's report covers the reporting period of December 1, 2014 – November 30, 2015. DOAA opened the report collection system on November 1, 2015, and is currently accepting reports. No changes were made to the reporting system or county requirements during the 2015 legislative session. The DOAA sent a letter to each county in October containing an overview of the requirements and a list of resources that they have made available for assisting with the reporting process.

A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).

Counties are encouraged to begin preparing to submit their reports to ensure they have all the information needed to file by the deadline. Any technical questions about filing the report should be directed to DOAA (Immhelp@audits.ga.gov or www.audits.ga.gov/). All questions regarding the legal requirements about the report should be directed to your county attorney.

Annual SPLOST Reports Also Due on December 31

State law (48-8-122) requires each county and city to publish an annual special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST) report in their local newspaper and on their website before December 31, 2015. 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 obtain 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.

ACCG Computing County Official Salary Guide for 2016 Now Available

ACCG's "Computing County Official Salary Guide for 2016" is now available. The guide assists county staff in calculating state mandated salaries for several county elected and appointed officials. It includes the 1 percent cost of living increase adopted by the General Assembly. It has been reviewed and approved by the Georgia Sheriff's Association, the Constitutional Officers Association of Georgia, and the Magistrate Judges Council.

The guide also explains newly enacted limitations to county paid supplements for superior court judges, district attorneys, circuit public defenders, and state paid employees in the district attorney's and circuit public defender's offices.

Click [here](#) to access the guide.

Time to Set Qualifying Fees for 2016 Election

The county governing authority is required to set and publish the qualifying fees for county offices (i.e., commissioners, sheriffs, tax commissioners, superior court clerks, magistrates, probate judges, state court judges, solicitors general, coroners, and surveyors) by **February 1, 2016**. Commissioners should adopt a resolution setting the qualifying fee for each office.

An explanation of how to calculate the fees can be found [here](#).

For more information, please contact the Elections Division of the Georgia Secretary of State's Office at (404) 656-2871.

Update on DOR's BOTSS Program

The Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR) continues to operate the Business Occupational Tax Submittal System (BOTSS) Program, which allows Georgia counties and municipalities the option to share information with the Department to help identify businesses that are unregistered for sales & use tax. By providing business occupational license information to the DOR, the DOR can determine which businesses should be registered.

Once this information is given to the DOR, they determine whether the business is already registered for sales & use tax. If not, they review the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code to see if registration is required for that type of business. These processes help identify which businesses to investigate further.

In order to participate, the county or municipality must pass a resolution authorizing participation and email a copy of the resolution to sharon.doughty@dor.ga.gov. A username/password will be assigned by the DOR upon receipt. Information may be submitted in batches or individually through the Georgia Tax Center at www.gtc.ga.gov. The DOR must have the business legal & trade name (DBA), mailing and location address, sales and use tax number, and the NAICS code number in order to process the submission. In addition, information such as the federal employer identification number (FEIN), ownership type (e.g., S-Corporation, Sole Proprietorship), owner name and social security number, and the business start date may also be requested.

Counties are encouraged to take advantage of this program, which helps ensure compliance with sales & use tax registration requirements, which leads to additional tax revenues for local governments as well as the State. Currently, over 70 counties and municipalities have participated in the program.

Click [here](#) for additional information on the program. Please direct questions to Rufus Payne at rufus.payne@dor.ga.gov or (404) 417-6548, or Donnie Walton at Donnie.walton@dor.ga.gov or (404) 417-6365. County officials may also feel free to contact ACCG Legislative Director Clint Mueller (cmueller@accg.org) or ACCG Legislative Policy Coordinator Ines Owens (iowens@accg.org) with any questions.

Federal FAST Act is Signed into Law

The president recently signed the "Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act" into law. The FAST Act is the longest surface transportation funding bill passed by Congress in more than a decade. It will provide \$305 billion in funding through FY2020.

The FAST Act will improve the nation's roads, bridges, transit systems, and rail transportation network. It also streamlines the environmental review and permitting process to expedite project completion, prioritizes spending on nationally significant freight corridors, and provides long-term certainty and more flexibility for states and local governments while also maintaining a strong commitment to safety. Benefits of the FAST Act for Georgians include over \$6.8 billion in funding allocated to the state through FY2020. That allocation is \$607 million above the funding levels set by the MAP 21 Act in 2012.

Click [here](#) for a complete summary on the FAST Act.

Contact ACCG Legislative Director Clint Mueller at (404) 522-5022 or cmueller@accg.org with any questions.

2016 Georgia Brownfield Seminar-Call for Abstracts

The Georgia Brownfield Association (GBA) has issued a call for abstracts for session discussions at its second annual Brownfield Seminar scheduled for Wednesday, April 20 in Fulton County. The seminar will provide a forum for discussions about the environmental, financial, regulatory, and community factors that guide the brownfield remediation and development. The Brownfield Seminar will educate attendees on a wide range of topics and allow them to network with professionals from various industries that include engineering, risk management, and economic development among others.

GBA is seeking abstracts for the event's discussions. Submission guidelines can be found [here](#). Abstracts should be submitted to Kelly@HLStrategy.com no later than December 31, 2015. Selected speakers will be notified by Wednesday, January 27, 2016.

Senate Committee on Assignments Announces New Chairmanships

The State Senate Committee on Assignments has announced changes to its list of standing committee chairs and vice chairs for the upcoming legislative session. Below is a list of the new appointments:

Sen. Brandon Beach (R-Alpharetta) – Senate Economic Development Committee Chairs

Sen. Frank Ginn (R-Danielsville) - Senate Natural Resources Committee Chair

Sen. Jack Hill (R-Reidsville) - Senate Rules Committee Vice Chair

Sen. Lester Jackson (D-Savannah) - Senate Urban Affairs Committee Chair

Sen. Bruce Thompson (R-White) - Senate Science and Technology Committee Chair

Click [here](#) to read the official news release from the Senate Press Office.