



Capitol Connection E-Newsletter- August 2015

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2015 Legislative Leadership Conference Brings Key Leaders to Jekyll

The 2015 Legislative Leadership Conference will provide Georgia's county officials with the opportunity to hear from state leaders on key issues. The conference agenda covers significant topics from transportation to information on the state's newest department, the Georgia Department of Community Supervision. Conference attendees will hear from top state leaders in those respective areas such as former Georgia House Transportation Committee Chairman and GDOT Planning Director Jay Roberts, Department of Community Supervision Commissioner Michael McNail, and Department of Revenue Commissioner Lynne Riley.

Click [here](#) to view the conference agenda.

GASB Issues New Requirements on Disclosing Tax Abatements

On August 14, 2015, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) released guidelines on disclosing information on tax abatements. The new guidelines require state and local governments for the first time to disclose information about tax abatement agreements. The new requirements detailed in the official report, *GASB Statement No. 77, Tax Abatement Disclosures*, will become effective on **December 15, 2015**.

With Statement 77, governments are now required to disclose information about their own tax abatement programs. In doing so, government officials must provide the following information:

the purpose of the tax abatement program; the tax being abated; dollar amount of taxes being abated; the types of commitments made by tax abatement recipients; and other commitments made by a government in tax abatement agreements such as to build infrastructure assets.

Click [here](#) to read the official news release on GASB Statement No. 77.

Click [here](#) to view GASB Statement No. 77 in its entirety.

County officials may contact ACCG Legislative Director Clint Mueller with any questions. He can be reached at cmueller@accg.org or (404) 522-5022.

ACCG Policy Committee Meetings are in Full Swing

ACCG and Georgia's county officials are beginning to prepare for the 2016 legislative session with policy committee meetings. Each of the seven committees, with a specific policy area focus, will meet to discuss the association's stance on pertinent issues to ultimately compile a set of recommendations for the ACCG County Platform in which the membership will vote during the business session at this year's Legislative Leadership Conference. Just as last year, the 2015 meetings are equipped with webinar capacity allowing county officials to tune in remotely if their schedule prevents them from traveling.

Meetings began on Tuesday, August 18. ACCG encourages all county officials to attend as these meetings serve as one step in ensuring the voices of Georgia's county governments are heard during the legislative process. Click [here](#) for more information or if you have yet to register for a meeting!

Save the Date for Fall District Meetings

ACCG is asking that all county officials mark their calendars and save the dates for the 2015 Fall District Meetings. Join your fellow county colleagues and the ACCG policy team for discussions with area legislators on what to expect for the upcoming session of the Georgia General Assembly. The meetings will take place in each of ACCG's 12 districts throughout the state and will begin in late October. Click [here](#) for more information.

Registration for these meetings is forthcoming, so please be sure to monitor the association website. All questions or concerns regarding District Meetings can be directed to ACCG Legislative Policy Coordinator Ines Owens at iowens@accg.org or (404) 522-5022.

Department of Revenue to Host Regional Meetings Beginning in September

The Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR) will begin hosting its regional meetings in September. The DOR regional meetings present an opportunity for county commissioners and staff to address any issues they have with sales tax collections, prepaid 911, tax assessor and tax commissioner trainings, tax digest compliance, utility digests, new state hotel tax, heavy truck fee, fuel excise tax, and TAVT with the department's commissioner, Lynne Riley, and her staff. County commissioners are encouraged to attend.

Click [here](#) to obtain the meeting schedule and for further information such as location and time.

*Note: DOR asks that those attending the meetings notify Legislative Aide William Gaston. Gaston can be reached via email at William.gaston@dor.ga.gov or by telephone at (404) 725-5265 (cell) and (404) 417-2286 (office).

Counties Receive New Alternative Ad Valorem Tax (AAVT), aka IRP, from DOR

As a result of the passage of Senate Bill 82, your tax commissioners should have received a distribution from the Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR) on or around August 1, for Alternative Ad Valorem Tax for International Registration Program (IRP) trucks. SB 82 helped ensure that as many as 40 counties would not be adversely impacted in their IRP distributions by amending the distribution formula in law to be more consistent with where the revenue is being generated. The revenue for the August 1 distribution was nearly double that of 2013.

If you have any questions, please contact ACCG Associate Legislative Director Shaun Adams at sadams@accg.org or 404-522-5022.

Georgia EPD Offers Training on New Electronic Permit System

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is hosting training throughout the state on its new electronic permit application system. The training will provide officials with insight on the Department's new system for municipal wastewater permits and Title V air quality permits.

The next training sessions will be held in Macon-Bibb County on August 26 and 27 at Middle Georgia State University.

More information can be obtained [here](#).

State Funds Available to Clean Up Scrap Tire Dumps

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has announced the availability of funding from the State Solid Waste Trust Fund for local governments to clean up illegally dumped scrap tire piles around the state. Local governments and solid waste authorities can apply for funding to cover the cost of transporting and processing tires that have been removed from identified, state-listed dumps where the owner is either financially unable to clean up the tires, unknown, or the local government has determined that the property owner is a victim of illegal dumping.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and awarded first come first served, contingent on funding availability demand.

The official news release from the Georgia EPD can be accessed [here](#).

Click [here](#) to obtain further information and materials such as the grant application and the program guidance document.

County officials may contact ACCG Associate Legislative Director Todd Edwards with any questions or concerns. He can be reached at tedwards@accg.org or (404) 522-5022.

Georgia EPD Accepting Project Applications for FY16 Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants

The Watershed Protection Branch of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is now accepting project applications for FY16 Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants. Funding is distributed via a competitive process to projects that will lead to direct reductions in pollutant loads and measurable water quality improvements. The maximum amount of individual Federal awards is \$400,000, over a maximum timeline of three years. Public agencies such as local, regional, or state governments; authorities that operate service delivery programs (e.g. sewer, water); regional development centers; agricultural conservation councils; and school and university systems qualify for grants.

The deadline for pre-application meetings is October 15, 2015.

The deadline to submit program applications is November 2, 2015.

Visit the [Georgia EPD website](#) for additional information.

GTIB Grants Available

The State Road & Tollway Authority (SRTA) is now accepting grant applications for transportation infrastructure improvement funding. The SRTA announced in early August that \$29 million in grant and loan funding is available for local governments and community improvement districts through the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank program. The deadline to submit grant applications is **Monday, October 5**.

The official press release containing additional information can be viewed [here](#).

Any questions regarding this grant opportunity can be directed to Malika Reed Wilkins at mwilkins@georgiatolls.com or (404) 893-6103.

Time to Update the CLC Network

As the County Legislative Coordinator (CLC) Network serves the purpose of keeping county officials engaged in the legislative process while the General Assembly is in session, ACCG encourages counties to designate someone to serve as their CLC. Since its inception, the CLC Network has grown to show benefit to county officials not only while legislators are in session but year-round.

To confirm, update, or appoint your county's CLC please contact ACCG Legislative Policy Coordinator Ines Owens at iowens@accg.org or (404) 522-5022.

Boards of Equalization and Appeals Course Available Online

Members of county boards of equalization may now take their training course online. The University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government and the Georgia Department of Revenue developed an online, self-study course for members and alternate members of county

boards of equalization. The online course fulfills the 8-hour annual continuing education requirement for those board members.

Click [here](#) for more information on the course and to register.

Local Government Financial Portal Provides All of Your Information Needs

The Local Government Financial Portal provides users with various local government and school system financial information in a format that is more user-friendly with tools such as maps and options to download reports and spreadsheets without a user login requirement like the Tax and Expenditure Data Center (TED). The new portal also serves as the home for other reports that are required by various pieces of legislation over the last few years. It can be accessed on georgiadata.org, the site that includes important agricultural, demographic, economic, and education data (much of it imported from the Georgia County Guide).

Click [here](#) to visit the portal.