



Mike Beatty, Commissioner

**For Immediate Release**  
Thursday August 13, 2009

**CONTACT:** Cynthia Harrison,  
(404) 502-6176

## **The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing Program Successfully Graduates Five More Communities**

*Group Completes 3-Year Program That Helps Communities Address Housing Needs*

**Atlanta, GA** – Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Office of Special Housing Initiatives Director Don Watt, Housing and Demographics Research Center (HDRC) Associate Housing Director Tom Rodgers, Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Deputy Director Bill Thornton, Georgia Power Company Urban Advisor Steve Foster, and USDA Rural Development Single Family Housing Program Director Ed Peace presented awards to leaders from Colquitt, Metter, Milledgeville, Newnan, and Tifton recognizing each community's completion of the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) program. The event was held at the Georgia Baptist Conference Center in Toccoa from August 12 – 14, 2009.

"Safe, clean, secure and affordable housing is essential for any community. If a community lacks housing resources, its growth potential is limited," said DCA Commissioner Mike Beatty. The GICH program is essential to the economic health of Georgia's communities. The program is not designed as a quick fix, but instead, the multi-year program places value on understanding, developing, and implementing housing strategies that respond to each community's specific housing needs.

Launched in November 2004, GICH grew out of Georgia's experience with the National League of Cities' Affordable Housing Program. GICH offers communities a three-year program of collaboration and technical assistance. During a community's participation, it works to create and launch a locally-based plan to meet its housing needs.

DCA, along with GMA and UGA's HDRC, serve as GICH's primary partners. Funding is provided by the Georgia Power Company, Wachovia Foundation, the USDA Rural Development, and AGL Resources Foundation. Georgia Electric Membership Corporation and UGA's Archway Partnership Program serve as GICH's implementation partners.

"We extend congratulations to the communities and citizens of Colquitt, Metter, Milledgeville, Newnan, and Tifton on their successful completion of the program. Their commitment to the enhanced, GICH-developed housing strategy can only serve to make their communities stronger," continued Beatty. The graduating communities join the ranks of Camden County, Cartersville, Dalton/Whitfield County, Fort Valley, Hall County, Moultrie,

Sylvester, Thomasville, Valdosta, Waycross, and Waynesboro who completed the program in 2007 and 2008.

Other communities throughout Georgia have also been quick to recognize GICH's value. The cities of Calhoun, Cordele, Douglas, Griffin, and Toccoa were accepted into the program in 2008. These cities are scheduled to complete the program in 2010.

The communities of Brunswick, Hawkinsville, Rome, Sandersville/Tennille/Washington County, and Vienna were accepted into the program in 2009. These communities are scheduled to complete the program in 2011.

GICH accepts applications from prospective program participants each year. Applications for GICH's next class are being accepted through September 4, 2009. For additional information about GICH, please contact Program Director Karen Tinsley at (706) 542-4949 or [klt@uga.edu](mailto:klt@uga.edu) or visit <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/hace/hdrc/gich.html>.

-----  
The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) was created in 1977 to serve as an advocate for local governments. As outlined in its mission statement, DCA seeks opportunities that support "*partnering with communities to help create a climate of success for Georgia's families and businesses.*" DCA operates a host of state and federal grant programs; serves as the state's lead agency in housing finance and development; promulgates building codes to be adopted by local governments; provides comprehensive planning, technical and research assistance to local governments; and serves as the lead agency for the state's solid waste reduction efforts. For more information, please visit the DCA website at <http://www.dca.ga.gov> .

# # #