



COUNTY LEADERS GRADUATE FROM THE GEORGIA ACADEMY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

November 19, 2019

The Board of the Georgia Academy for Economic Development announces graduates from the 2019 Region 7 Multi-Day Training Program. Class participants represented a number of professional and non-professional economic development fields, including elected officials, public servants, business leaders, educators, and social service providers from eleven counties in the Central Savannah River Area of Georgia. The Academy provided each of the graduates an opportunity to gain a unique understanding of the complexities of economic and community development on the local, regional, and state levels.

Augusta-Richmond County graduates included: Pictured: L-R: Araina Reaves, Georgia Electric Membership Corporation (Program Facilitator); Stephen King, Georgia Power; Teresa Cobb, Georgia Power; Sabrina Balthrop, Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce; Latisha McMillan, City of Augusta; with Program Facilitators Matt Forshee, Georgia Power; and Kelly Lane, Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Created in 1993, the Academy assembles a cross section of economic development professionals and resources to provide this training in all twelve service delivery regions in Georgia. The Board of Directors of the Academy represent public and private economic development organizations and agencies from across Georgia. Since its organization, the Academy has provided training for thousands of professional and non-professional economic developers around the state, and since 1998 the Academy has been offered annually in all twelve regions of the state. Georgia EMC and Georgia Power provide facilitators for the program, and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs provides staff support to this important program.

Georgia EMC's Vice President, Community and Economic Development (CED), Pat B. Merritt, CEcD says, "Our Community Development team is proud to partner with and provide facilitation and presentation services on behalf of Georgia's electric membership cooperatives. Involved since its inception, the team's work with the Academy graduates has enhanced levels of leadership capacity and community development preparedness for continued economic development progress throughout the Region."



“Georgia Power continues to play a major role in the State’s economic development. The Academy participants build relationships, share best practices, and learn about important issues and challenges facing our communities. We’re proud to be a partner in this important effort, preparing our leaders for continued economic growth throughout the state,” says Georgia Power Company Community Development Manager Kristy Rachal.

“One of the goals for the multi-day regional Academies is to encourage multi-county cooperation,” says Kelly Lane, Director of the Georgia Academy for Economic Development. “Many times the participants discover the issues facing their community are the same as those facing other communities in their region, and can then combine limited resources to address the issue.”

The Academy’s multi-day program, taught one day a month over a four-month period, includes training in the basics of economic and community development, plus specialized segments on business recruitment and retention, tourism product development, downtown development, planning, and other essentials for community success. In addition, the curriculum features specific leadership skills such as consensus building, ethics in public service, collaborative leadership and other segments needed for effective community leadership in economic development. Local elected officials may receive certification training credits through the Association County Commissioners of Georgia and the Georgia Municipal Association for completion of this program.

The next Region 7 Georgia Academy for Economic Development will begin in August, 2020. For more information on this, please contact Tina Hutcheson at 478.278.9434 or by email at tina.hutcheson@dca.ga.gov.