

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE GATES PORTAL

To all GATES members and friends,

In this issue of THE PORTAL our legislative consultant, Dawn Randolph, gives her opinion of the legislative session closure and the upcoming Democratic and Republican primaries. Please be sure to read the very important information she is sharing.

Labor Commissioner FORUM



Many of you attended the LABOR COMMISSIONER FORUM that GATES hosted at our Annual Meeting in June. We had very good attendance from our community at that FORUM (over 50 people), with three of the four candidates in attendance and answering our questions. Recently the Atlanta Journal and Constitution ran an article on the Labor Commissioner's race. You can find it at this link

http://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-politics-elections/what-do-labor-commissioner-564741.html?sms_ss=email

[back to top](#)

Early VOTING Starts NEXT WEEK - July 12

The primary election date is Tuesday, July 20, 2010 but you can beat the crowds and vote early. Early voting begins on Monday, July 12 in all Georgia counties. Please encourage your staff and clients to get out and vote for the candidate of their choice. We



In This Issue

[Labor Commissioner FORUM](#)

[Early VOTING](#)

[BOARD MEETING](#)

[GATES Central Non-Profit Agency](#)

[4th Quarter Update](#)

Special
Announcements



*Deaf & Hearing
Working
Together
Training
Workshop
July 16, 2010*

need to have a good turnout at the polls. I have voted early in the last three elections and the line is much shorter than on election day. VOTE!!

[back to top](#)

GATES BOARD MEETING July 23, 2010 - Creative Enterprises

All GATES members are invited to attend the GATES BOARD meeting on Friday, July 23 at the Creative Enterprises offices at 795 Hi Hope Road, Lawrenceville, GA 30043. The meeting will begin at 9:30 AM and should adjourn no later than 3:00 PM. JOIN US!!



[back to top](#)

State Use Council Designates GATES as Central Non-Profit Agency Approves State Use Operational Plan for FY11



At the Georgia State Use Council Meeting on June 24, 2010 GATES was again designated to serve as the Central Non-Profit Agency to coordinate the State Use Program. This designation confirmed the Council's confidence in GATES' ability to manage the program and work with CRP's and DOAS to expand Georgia Enterprises for Products and Services. In

addition, the Council approved the FY11 State Use Operational Plan, establishing critical success factors and goal measurements. The plan calls for GEPS staff, lead by Shawn Pursley, State Use Program Coordinator, to continue to identify both product and service contract opportunities for GATES members. If you have questions about the State Use Program be sure to contact Shawn at 404-521-1777.

[back to top](#)

Legislative Session Closure 4th Quarter Update

8:30 - 4:30
Macon - location
TBA
To make a
reservation or for
more information,
contact Joe Siman
Joseph.Siman

*GATES Board
Meeting*
July 23, 2010
Creative
Enterprises

*State Use
Council Meeting*
Thursday
Sept. 23, 2010
10 AM
Atlanta, GA

*GATES Board
Meeting*
Friday
Oct. 22, 2010
9:30 AM
location TBA

*THE PORTAL is a
regular publication
of GATES. If you
have staff or others
associated with your
organization that*



By Dawn A. Randolph, MPA
GATES Legislative Consultant

As the legislature extended into the entire month of April there were many starts and stops as leadership grappled with the budget realities. This was officially the longest session in well over a century. Many historians say you would have to go back to the 1800's to find a longer session.

First of all, in an election year it is all about posturing to see who can gain the upper hand. With both Chambers and the Governor's office under Republican Leadership it was a tough struggle between balancing a budget, considering the various needs of local and statewide constituents while also grappling with taxes to fill the financial gap. As I reported in April in the Portal it was so tough that Senators Preston Smith (R-Rome) and Judson Hill (R-Marietta) both lost their chairmanships when they voted no on the hospital tax, even though it had been sweetened with tax cuts down the road. Senator Preston Smith did not bow out quietly and the next voting day took the time to explain the arm-twisting he believed violated his ability to represent his constituents. Senator Smith is now running in the Republican primary for Attorney General.

So with all the anxiety concerning revenues over, the House and Senate Conferees agreed to the Amended FY 2010 Budget hopefully ending the fiscal year at \$17.1 billion, down \$1.5 billion from the first try last session. Legislators were only able to reach this point by pulling back \$300 million in federal stimulus money from the FY 2011 Budget and the Governor lowering the revenue projections while cutting nearly every state program and service. The Chairman of Senate Appropriations, Senator Jack Hill (R-Reidsville), commented that we are back to 2004 budget levels.

By the end of the session the Georgia State Budget has fallen from a high of over \$22 billion in FY 2008 to just above \$17 billion for FY 2011. That is a \$5 billion cut or nearly 24% in state funding to everything from education to senior services to veterans homes to vocational rehabilitation services. Some agencies have seen as much as a 30% cut in their services while only Medicaid and the services in Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities have seen an increase. Medicaid has been helped greatly by the federal stimulus money and the eventual negotiation of the hospital tax, while mental health and developmental disabilities benefit from federal action in terms of US Department of Justice intervention (mental health) and a lawsuit (Olmstead) for DD.

Fortunately all along the way Community Rehabilitation Providers have held the line on the percentage of cuts to contracts for services. During the House subcommittee, full appropriations committee and the final floor vote the state portion of the cut remained at \$288,627 across programs. In these very tight budget times, when so much uncertainty and anguish has occurred over every budgetary decision, it was a great victory to hold the line.

you would like to receive THE PORTAL, please send their email address to: Charles Hall, chall@asginfo.net

Unfortunately the budget revenue for May was still down 6% over last year. This puts the budget off 10.3% for the eleven months of the fiscal year or about \$1.45 billion dollars. While the largest amount lost is from a decline in income tax revenue (\$43.2 million) it was a 6.5% decline. Sales tax was down 7.9% or \$34.9 million. Corporate taxes were down an amazing 60.6% but only accounted for \$9.8 million. The one bright spot was in the motor fuel tax that grew 29.4% or \$17.9 million. However, these funds are exclusively used for highway maintenance and construction.

The State fiscal year ended last week and June numbers along with year-end figures should be published by the middle of July. While unemployment hovers around 10% it will be difficult for revenues to increase since income tax comprises 44% of state revenues and sales tax 28%. Another concern for the FY 2012 budget will be when ARRA (stimulus) money is gone. Many economists are not predicting a solid recover at all levels of the public and private sector until 2014.

Election Projection

Running for office was the fashionable thing to do this April. During the last week of the session candidates had to qualify on the second floor of the Capitol instead of in the Chambers because they were still in session. It wasn't until the last day, after the session ended at midnight, that each party accepted the final round of candidates. There were some surprises in qualifying, especially when Commissioner Michael Thurmond made it official he would run for the US Senate against Senator Johnny Isakson. This opened up the Labor Commissioners Office and two candidates on each side qualified. Former Speaker Terry Coleman (D), Darryl Hicks (D) and Rep. Mark Butler (R) participated in the Candidate Forum, organized and sponsored by GATES, that gave us all good insight into their understanding of the Labor Department and the Division of Rehabilitation Services.

There are hundreds of new faces running for office from the top of the ticket all the way to the local county commission and city council. Since GATES is a non-profit organization we have to be very careful and non-partisan in our election time activity. But it is very important to stay connected with candidates who have served and have a strong commitment to GATES and services for people with disabilities. Individual citizens can engage in political activity on their own time and with their own resources. I urge each of you to follow your local elections and maintain or create relationships with returning or newly elected officials.

Don't forget July 20th is the primary with early voting beginning on July 12th. During that week is a great opportunity to get out and vote in your community. Primaries are just as important as the General Election since some races are decided at this level. So please get out and vote and take someone with you.

[back to top](#)

Call for Information

THE PORTAL is a communication tool for GATES and GATES members. If you have stories about your organization, staff announcements, program descriptions, or other information you want to share with other GATES members, please send the info to Charles Hall, chall@asginfo.net



GATES

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports

44 Broad Street
Suite 503
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 404-523-6674

[Forward email](#)



This email was sent to by callen@asginfo.net |
Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



GATES | 404-523-6674 | 44 Broad Street | Suite 503 | Atlanta | GA | 30303