

## News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE  
**GATES PORTAL**

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**GRA CONFERENCE - Sept. 5 - 7 SEE BELOW**  
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**HAPPY NEW YEAR - New People,  
New Fiscal Year, New Agency**



*By Dawn A. Randolph, MPA*  
**People - wins and losses in the Primary**

Well, the dust has settled from last Tuesday's primary contests. As expected there were winners and losers. Unexpectedly we have lost two amazing champions for disability issues in Georgia, Senator Johnny Grant (R-Milledgeville) and Representative Judy Manning (R-Kennesaw). Both legislators had leadership positions in their chambers and always looked at bills in terms of making life better and opportunities more abundant for people with disabilities, their families and those providing services and supports. On a personal note both have been my mentors and they will be missed during the cold, dreary winter months hammering out public policy issues. On the Democratic side Rep. Keith Heard (Athens) lost his primary, a constant fighter for disability services and budget investments.

There were clear Primary victories among **long-term disability champions** who had challengers in their Districts. Here is a breakdown by District by:

*Those with NO opposition in the General Election*

- Sen. Horacena Tate (D-Atlanta) won 77.17%
- Rep Jay Neal (R-LaFayette) won 56.96%
- Rep Pat Gardner (D-Atlanta) won 62.72%

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[Happy New Year](#)

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Special  
Announcements



**GVRA Board**  
**September 12,**  
**2012**  
**1:00 PM**  
**Location:**  
**2 Peachtree St.,**  
**ATL - Board Room**

**State Use**  
**Council**  
**Meeting**  
**September 27,**  
**2012**  
**10:00 AM**  
**Location: TBD**

- Rep Margaret Kaiser (D-Atlanta) won 82.11%
- Rep Pam Stephenson (D-Atlanta) won 81.01%
- Rep Debbie Buckner (D-Junction City) won 55.33%
- Rep. Nikki Randall (D-Macon) won 64.15%

Those with opposition in the General Election

- Sen Ed Harbison (D-Columbus) won 73.40% and has General opposition from Republican Candidate David Brown
- Rep Simone Bell (D-Atlanta) won 58.67% and will have General opposition from Republican Candidate Earl Cooper
- Rep Dar'shun Kendrick (D-Lithonia) won 70.44% and will have General opposition from Republican Candidate C. Tina Hoffer

Because of redistricting we will have many new faces this year and it is critical we get to know them and they get to know the people and services offered by GATES members. There are still run-offs to take place on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Remember that a few legislators will face a General Election contest. Some of these races may not be settled until November, even though it is unlikely given the tightly packed districts that ensure a Republican or Democratic voting majority. There will be some very tight races this fall. Now is the time to bring all those candidates in to see your programs and visit with your clients.

The Primary voter turnout was 31.48% with the lowest turnout under 20% in Chattahoochee and Liberty counties and the highest over 60% in five rural counties sprinkled throughout the southern part of the state. You can check the status of state and county political races at the Georgia Secretary of State's Office ([www.sos.ga.gov](http://www.sos.ga.gov)) for general information and then click on the link to [Election Results](#).

**Money - State Budget Update**

The state budget ended FY 2012 with very slow growth. May had a 2.1% revenue increase over May 2011 and June had a 2.6% revenue growth over last year. The state budget only realized 4.8% revenue growth, resulting in \$721.1 million more than the previous year. Georgia collected \$16.05 billion in revenue for FY 2012, still \$3 billion less since the recession began.



We now begin a new budget cycle where State Agencies must submit their budget recommendations for FY 2013 Amended and FY 2014 to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget by September 6<sup>th</sup>. Governor Deal has instructed all agencies, except Education, to cut their budgets 3% in the current year and another 3% for FY 2014 for a total of 6% cuts. The Medicaid and PeachCare budget will have to carve out another 2% for a total of 8% in FY 2014.

**GVRA Board**  
 October 10, 2012  
 1:00 PM  
 Location:  
 2 Peachtree St.,  
 ATL - Board Room

**ARMS Meeting**  
 October 12, 2012  
 Time: TBD  
 Location: TBD

**GATES Board Meeting**  
 October 19, 2012  
 9:30 AM  
 Location: Goodwill  
 of CSRA - Augusta

**GVRA Board**  
 November 14, 2012  
 1:00 PM  
 Location:  
 2 Peachtree St.,  
 ATL - Board Room

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*THE PORTAL is a regular publication of GATES. If you have staff or others associated with your organization that you would like to receive THE PORTAL, please send their email address to: Charles Hall, [chall@asqinfo.net](mailto:chall@asqinfo.net)*

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The good news is the Governor has asked agencies to find programs to cut instead of spreading the 3% across the board requiring every program and service to be sliced. This would result in over \$500 million cut to the state budget. It is hopeful the economy will grow and these cuts will not be necessary, but programs will be in jeopardy if budget projections fall short of actual revenue expectations.

### **Organization - New Agency is born**



The NEW Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services Agency met for its first official Board meeting on July 24, 2012. The board introduced its members and the new Executive Director Greg Schmiege (*photo on left*).

The Board Members were appointed June 29, 2012:

1. Sandy D. Adams, teacher in Elbert County Schools
2. James N. Defoor, retired assistant commissioner at VR in DOL
3. Marsha T. Farrow, Vision Rehabilitation Services, Smyrna
4. Richard R. Green, retired state coordinator of deaf-blind services at DOL
5. Louise Hill, University of Georgia Fanning Institute
6. Gregory M. Kirk, Executive Director for Kirk Advocacy and Consulting Inc
7. Fay R. Loggins, attorney
8. Amy A. O'Dell, founder and Executive Director of Jacob's Ladder
9. Donald W. Parks, retired from north district of the Div of Rehabilitation Services under DHR

Jimmy DeFoor was elected Chair of the Board, Louise Hill Vice Chair, and Marsha Farrow Secretary. They divided the nine-member board into three sets of three-year terms and established a board schedule to meet the second Wednesday of each month at 1pm. Director Schmiege gave an overview of the five programs the agency is responsible to administer and emphasized the goal to serve the consumer. He acknowledged the critical need to work with all the providers and advocacy communities critical to consumer success, specifically mentioning GATES as a key player.

The most illuminating part of the meeting occurred during the budget discussions when Director Schmiege displayed the current budget allocations and his goal to draw down every available federal dollar. The current budget for all programs is \$164 million with \$78,779,078 allocated to the state VR program or 110 Program. The amazing revelation came in the admission that the state has not drawn down the full amount available from the federal 110 Program. Georgia is eligible to draw down \$103 million and has turned back \$27 million in FY 2012 and \$33 million in FY 2011. Director Schmiege asked for everyone to work with him to maximize the request and appropriations for more state

matching funds to draw down Georgia's full allocation.

Having an agency with open board meetings, an open discussion of the budget goals and offer to partner in the advocacy process is quite a change from the past decade. So far this new agency is really stepping up to make VR services in Georgia better.

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## GRA Conference - September 5-7, 2012



The poster features a green background with blue and white text. On the left, it reads 'GRA 2012 ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE' with a circular logo containing 'ABA'. To the right is a silhouette of a city skyline with the text 'DREAM BIG Dare to Fail'. Below this is a photograph of the Marriott Savannah Riverfront hotel. The dates 'SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2012' and location 'SAVANNAH, GA' are prominently displayed. A large blue graphic says 'SAVE THE DATE'. A dark blue box at the bottom right contains reservation details: 'DEADLINE FOR ROOM RESERVATION: AUGUST 4, 2012', 'ROOM RATE: \$135.00', and 'PARKING RATE: \$12.00'. A final dark blue box at the bottom states 'CRC and CEU credits will be offered'.

**GRA**  
**2012**  
**ANNUAL TRAINING**  
**CONFERENCE**

**DREAM BIG**  
Dare to Fail

**SAVE THE DATE**

**SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2012**  
**SAVANNAH, GA**  
**MARRIOTT SAVANNAH RIVERFRONT**

DEADLINE FOR ROOM RESERVATION: AUGUST 4, 2012  
ROOM RATE: \$135.00  
PARKING RATE: \$12.00

CRC and CEU credits will be offered

Come and experience this year's GRA conference in Savannah, GA. The theme this year is "Dream Big Dare to Fail" and with the exciting program that is planning - it will not disappoint you!!

Savannah in the Fall will be a perfect time to come together and share GRA's passion for advocacy. The conference speakers promise that you

will leave motivated, energized, with your passion restored as we ALL  
Dream Big and Dare to Fail.

<http://www.georgiarehab.org/conferences-2012.html>

## 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](mailto:chall@asginfo.net)



## GATES

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