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**LEADERS GRADUATE FROM THE  
GEORGIA ACADEMY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

***May 21, 2014***

The Board of the Georgia Academy for Economic Development announces graduates from the 2014 Region 9 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 12 counties in the Heart of Georgia/Altamaha region. 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.

***Bleckley County graduates at the recent ceremony included: pictured L-R:***

***Jim Lovett, Georgia Power, Ray Gibson and Mike Stoy of Bleckley County and Jenny Robbins of Georgia Electric Membership Corporation***

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



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1998 the Academy has been offered annually. Georgia EMC and Georgia Power provide facilitators for the program, and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs provides staff support to this important program.

“One of the goals for the multi-day regional Academies is to encourage multi-county cooperation,” says Corinne Thornton, 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



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Association County Commissioners of Georgia and the Georgia Municipal Association for completion of this program.

The next Region 9 Georgia Academy for Economic Development will begin in February 2015. For more information on this, please contact Tina Hutcheson at 478-278-9434 or by email at [tina.hutcheson@dca.ga.gov](mailto:tina.hutcheson@dca.ga.gov).