

MAY 12, 2011

## A Report from the Georgia Commission for Service and Volunteerism on Disaster Recovery Efforts

The 15 devastating tornadoes that struck Georgia April 27-28 have created tremendous needs for many communities and thousands of our citizens in impacted areas of our state. Our communities are reeling from 15 deaths, 143 injuries and massive property damage. Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) are open in 13 Georgia counties, seven days a week from 7am – 7pm, to assist storm victims with needed services and support. Over the last week, GCSV staff members have served in the centers and Georgia AmeriCorps programs have been deployed to various sites to help throughout the state.



Above: Operation REACH Program Director Darrell Grant in Trenton May 7

### AmeriCorps Answers the Call

In the midst of tragedy and loss, Georgia AmeriCorps programs answered the call to help disaster stricken communities with eagerness and skill. As officials learned of the immediate needs throughout the state, the Georgia Emergency Management Agency requested help, calling for teams to manage Volunteer Reception Centers. Twenty five AmeriCorps members and 4 staff answered that call by serving 240 hours. Here are reports from the programs on their contributions this past weekend:

#### **Saturday Day of Service – May 7, 2011**

##### **Clayton State University**

- 1 staff and 10 members served approximately 90 hours in Floyd County

A local family's farm was hit very hard by the tornado. They lost 4 buildings and most of their fencing so members spent the entire day going through the debris separating it into burn piles, recyclable piles, and metal piles. Overall, the amount of debris members cleared would be equivalent to two and a half to three dumpsters worth of debris.

##### **Hands On Atlanta**

- 1 staff and 3 members served 36 hours at GEMA Headquarters and in Griffin

Members answered volunteer calls at the Operations Center in Atlanta and then went to Spalding County where they cleared debris for two seniors in the community.

##### **Operation REACH**

- 1 staff and 3 members served 44 hours at Dade County, Trenton GA

Members helped coordinate 50 volunteers, cleared debris, and helped cook and serve dinner for families.

##### **Outward Bound Atlanta**

- 1 staff and 4 members served 27 hours in Meriwether County

Assisted at the local fire station. Members helped construct one shelf unit so that donated food items could be stored properly. Members then sorted and organized all of their existing donations, including purging expired food items and cleaning the storage area.

##### **Youth Villages and Georgia State University**

- 4 members from Youth Villages and 2 members from Georgia State University served 43 hours in Spalding County, Griffin, GA

Members registered and coordinated community volunteers.



# Georgia Communities Are Recovering With the Help of Volunteers



Damage in Ringgold



Operation REACH AmeriCorps members pictured with the Honorable Barton Harris, Mayor of Trenton

*“It is almost as if a sense of calm permeates in spite of the chaos and destruction, as truly neighbor is helping neighbor”.*



## **GCSV VISTA Team Coordinates Volunteers**

GCSV's VISTA Team has been an important part of the recovery efforts.

Atlanta VISTA Shawn Leach-Manley assisted in coordinating volunteers in Spalding County. At the Griffin Disaster Recovery Center, Shawn provided over 56 individual volunteers with directions and instructions to GEMA Field Commands. On Monday, GEMA officials asked Shawn to assist in distributing and coordinating aid to Meriwether County residents through Operation Good Neighbor located in the City of Manchester. Shawn coordinated the intake of clothing, furniture and appliance donations collected by local Volunteer Fire Departments.

**Totals: 3 AmeriCorps VISTA members served 57 hours over the Mother's Day weekend coordinating 337 volunteers.**

Dalton VISTA Hartwell Brooks met with faith-based organizations throughout Catoosa County. Hartwell advised local churches on volunteer intake procedures and recommendations. He also surveyed long-term volunteer opportunities for the northwest Georgia area. Hartwell noticed that, “midst the chaos and destruction local faith-based organizations pulled together immediately to seamlessly serve their neighbors. Quickly, they created a disaster response hierarchy with each ministry addressing a specific recovery need.”

VISTA Team Leader Bonnie Roberts drove from Atlanta to serve over the weekend in Trenton, Georgia. Bonnie prioritized where to send volunteers and provided volunteer management skills in addressing intake and coordination. Over 164 volunteers were dispatched on Saturday. A security system had been implemented to protect property and volunteers reported back to the Volunteer Resource Center at the end of each day. On Mother's Day, Bonnie relieved the Volunteer Resource Center Manager. It was the first time the VRC Manager had been able to survey damage and destruction herself. More than 100 volunteers responded on Sunday.

# GCSV and DCA Staff Work at Disaster Recovery Centers Across the State

## 26 Georgia Counties Eligible for Federal Disaster Assistance

By Tuesday, May 10, all American Red Cross and Good Samaritan shelters housing storm victims had closed, all interstates and major roads had been cleared and most utilities were restored. But the impacted communities were by no means back to normal.

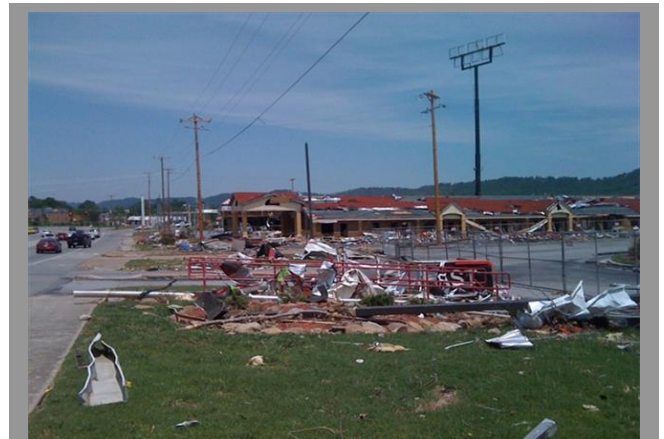
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) estimated more than 1,500 Georgians had registered for assistance at one of the 13 Disaster Recovery Centers opened in the impacted counties. Some storm victims remained hospitalized and many were trying to pick up the pieces of their lives that had been shattered by the tornadoes.

## GCSV Staff Use DCA Housing Database to Help Storm Victims

By Wednesday, May 11, GCSV staff had logged 92 hours working at many of the Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) helping storm victims find new housing and also assisting local officials with volunteer needs. Last Friday, GCSV Executive Director John Turner worked at the Rome DRC and held discussions with local Red Cross officials and Jim Bradshaw, the Floyd County 211 Director, planning future volunteer recovery efforts.

That same day, GCSV Grants Administrator for Finance, Dwayne Hartman, worked at the DRC in Griffin and met GCSV Board Member Mike Satham and other local officials. Mike and Dwayne toured some of the damaged communities in Spalding County to get a first hand look at the needs and the destruction.

Earlier in the week, GCSV Learn and Serve Coordinator Lori Bodine worked at the Ringgold DRC and was amazed by the extent of the



Damage in Ringgold

damage, but hopeful because of the resilient work of the community and the volunteers. Disability Coordinator Ryan Coskrey visited Dade County and rode with the local sheriff's department to view the damage and deliver lunches to victims and volunteers. Ryan worked with the local organizations to initiate the process of bringing an AmeriCorps NCCC team in to help clear debris. The devastation in Dade County was sobering; in a neighborhood where 128 homes stood, now only 25 remain. GCSV board member Mike Satham helped make arrangements in Spalding County for an NCCC team that will be requested to help clear debris. Training and Communications Specialist Kiana Sullivan supported rental housing efforts in Spalding County. AmeriCorps Program Specialists, Zaneta Ivery and Ruben Burney supported Meriwether and Spalding County respectively.

The National Weather Service confirmed a total of 15 tornadoes, including:

- One EF4
- Five EF3
- Three EF2
- Six EF1



**FEMA**

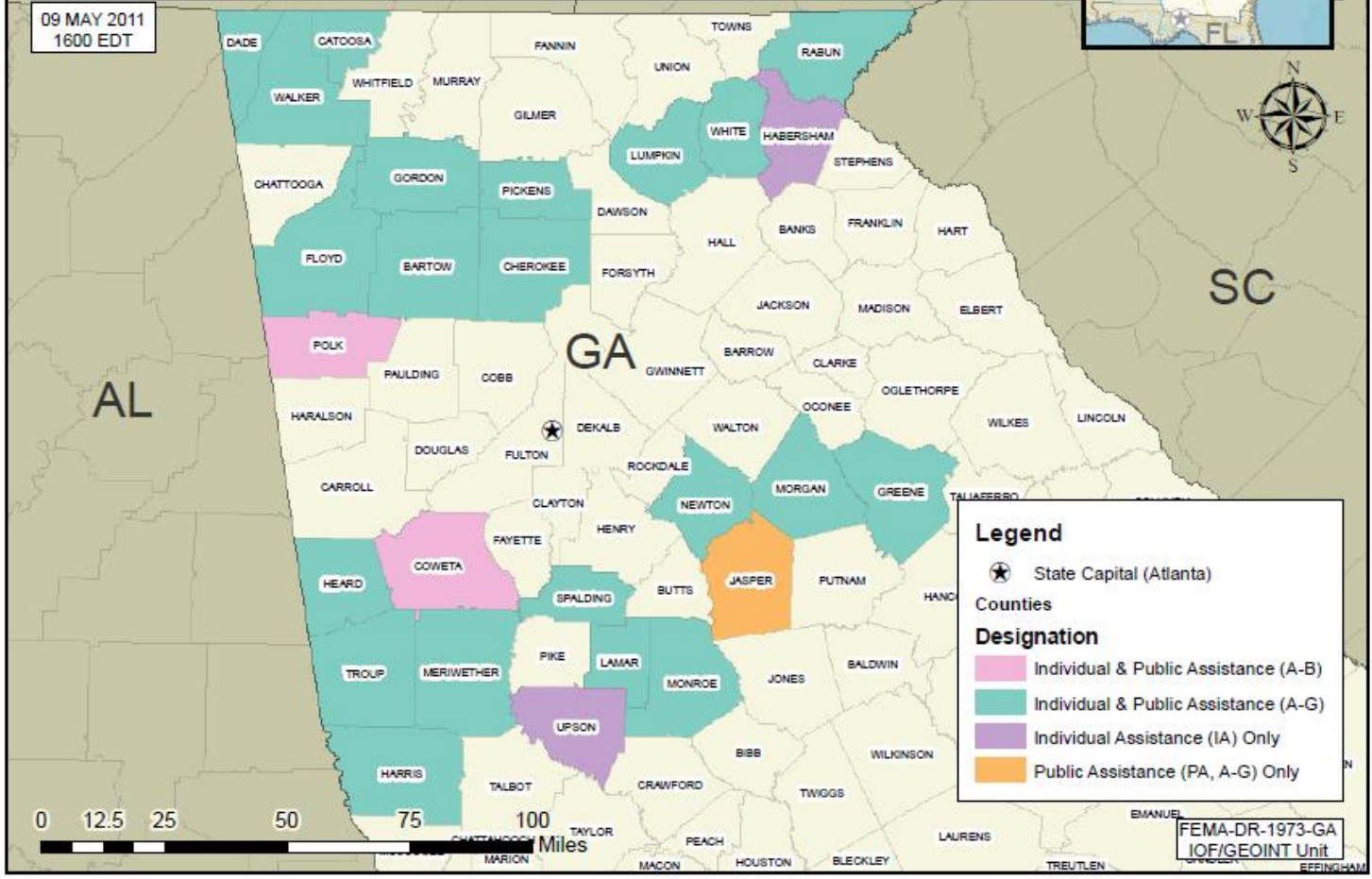
**Declared Counties**

State of Georgia

Source: DR-1973-GA IOF/OPS



09 MAY 2011  
1600 EDT



**Georgia Disaster Recovery Centers**

<p><b>Catoosa County DRC</b> Catoosa County Learning Center 36 Muscogee Trail Ringgold, GA 30736</p>	<p><b>Meriwether County DRC</b> Callaway Community Center at Kersey Park Manchester, GA 31816</p>	<p><b>Pickens County DRC</b> Pickens County Administration/EOC 1266 East Church Street Jasper, GA 30143</p>
<p><b>Dade County DRC</b> Administration Building/Board of Commissioner's Room 71 Case Avenue Trenton, GA 30752</p>	<p><b>Bartow County DRC</b> Clarence Brown Conference Ctr 5450 Highway 20 Cartersville, GA 30120</p>	<p><b>Morgan County DRC</b> Morgan County Recreation Gym 1253 College Drive Madison, GA 30650</p>
<p><b>Floyd County DRC</b> Hamler Gym 300 West 3rd Street Rome, GA 30161</p>	<p><b>Walker County DRC</b> Walker County Agricultural Center 10058 North Highway 27 Rock Spring, GA 30739</p>	<p><b>Rabun County DRC</b> Clayton City Hall 837 Highway 76 West Clayton, GA 30525</p>
<p><b>Spalding County DRC</b> Voter Registrar's Office 819 Memorial Drive Griffin, GA 30223</p>	<p><b>Lamar County DRC</b> Lamar County Service Center 118 Academy Drive Barnesville, GA 30204</p>	<p><b>GEORGIA COMMISSION FOR SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM</b></p>
<p><b>Troup County DRC</b> Mike Daniel Recreation Center 1220 LaFayette Parkway LaGrange, GA 30241</p>	<p><b>Polk County DRC</b> Polk County EMA/Fire Dept 55 Cline Ingram Jackson Road Cedartown, GA 30215</p>	<p><a href="http://www.SERVEGA.org">www.SERVEGA.org</a></p>