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DeKalb County Renews its Commitment to Sustainability

(ATLANTA, January 24, 2014) –This week, DeKalb County was one of seven local governments to be recognized by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) for leadership in implementing policies and practices that contribute to efficient and sustainable use of resources in metro Atlanta. The county was honored as a Bronze Certified Green Community at ARC’s January Board meeting, which was followed by a reception where jurisdiction representatives and ARC Board members discussed the progressive initiatives undertaken to receive certification. ARC recognized DeKalb, along with Cobb and Douglas counties and four cities – the City of Atlanta, Dunwoody, Roswell and Suwanee, which either renewed or upgraded certification in ARC’s four-year-old Green Communities program.

Commenting on Wednesday’s presentation, ARC Chairman Kerry Armstrong said, “The seven local governments the Atlanta Regional Commission recognized today are working hard to use resources wisely and well, and I commend them for their achievements. Their efforts are contributing to cleaner air, reduced water demand, less waste going into landfills and more. As a result, we have a cleaner, greener region.”

An original Green Community, DeKalb County reaffirmed its commitment to sustainability by recertifying at the Bronze level. The LEED-certified Gregory A. Adams Juvenile Courthouse was the first facility in the county with an Energy Star rated cool roof. Since 2009, DeKalb County has installed 15 cool roofs, saving an estimated 921,000 kWh in electricity each year through reduced cooling loads. DeKalb County’s renewable energy facilities at the Seminole Road Landfill is the first local government in the U.S. to capture methane landfill gas to produce electricity, natural gas and compressed natural gas (CNG) at a single landfill. The operation is equivalent to taking 30,000 cars off the road every year and will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 17,000 tons. The county jail uses an ozone system for laundry that has resulted in an annual savings on natural gas usage, water, sewer and chemicals of approximately

\$18,000 per year. Each pound of laundry now uses approximately 84 percent fewer gallons of hot water and 35 percent fewer gallons of total water. In 2008, DeKalb became the first county in the state that requires structures built prior to 1993 to replace inefficient plumbing fixtures with low flow plumbing fixtures prior to obtaining new water service after the sale of a property. Since its inception, nearly 56,000 properties have had low flow plumbing fixtures installed upon resale.

ARC developed the Green Communities Program to foster greater environmental stewardship and to recognize local governments that invest in programs leading to a more sustainable region. The nationally recognized program showcases the ways in which local governments are helping to transform the region by reducing their environmental footprint. Since 2009, 18 jurisdictions in the 10-county region have been certified. Cities and counties earn Green Communities certification by implementing practices and policies in 10 categories, ranging from energy efficiency and green building to transportation and water efficiency. ARC's Green Communities program was the first program in the country seeking to transform a region by promoting sustainability through a "green" certification program for local governments.

Complete information about ARC's Green Communities Certification Program, including the measures each community has implemented, is available on the agency's website at www.atlantaregional.com/greencommunities.

The Atlanta Regional Commission is the official planning agency for the 10-county Atlanta Region, including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties as well as the City of Atlanta and 69 other cities. The Atlanta Regional Commission serves as a catalyst for regional progress by focusing leadership, attention and planning resources on key regional issues.

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