

American Association of Retirement Communities Welcomes its First Community in Georgia

By Phyllis W. Isley

Biography: Dr. Phyllis Isley is the Executive Director of the American Association of Retirement Communities, drpisley@gmail.com, 912-225-0718, www.the-aarc.org.

The American Association of Retirement Communities (AARC) welcomes Dublin/Laurens County Georgia as a Seal of Approval Community. The AARC is an association dedicated to promoting a greater understanding for the benefits of retiree attraction as an important economic development strategy. Dublin/Laurens County is the first community in Georgia to seek and be approved as a Seal of Approval Community.

Dublin/Laurens County began the process of attaining the Seal of Approval in January 2009 after several Dublin community members attended the AARC annual conference held last year in Savannah, GA. The Seal of Approval process includes: an evaluation of the community's strengths and weaknesses as a retiree attraction destination; its commitment to sustained quality of support for retirees through the establishment of a Retiree Attraction Committee and the appointment of a Retiree Attraction Program Director; and, a commitment to continuing education as to the needs and expectations of retirees.

"There were no areas of concern or weakness in the Dublin/Laurens County application," said Mr. Wade Adler, President of the AARC. "We are excited to welcome our first community from the State of Georgia and very pleased to have such a quality community join our other Seal of Approval Communities."

The AARC Seal of Approval program was established in 2007. There are currently thirty communities in five states that have met all of the criteria to merit the Seal of Approval. Communities in West Virginia are accredited by the state of West Virginia and join as affiliated members. Georgia remains one of the few states in the southeast that does not have a formal evaluation process as part of an economic development strategy for attracting retirees.

"The AARC does not expect Dublin/Laurens County to be the last community to seek the Seal of Approval. At least three other communities are in the process of preparing the background reports that are required by the Seal of Approval application," according to Dr. Phyllis Isley, the Executive Director for the AARC. "We expect that communities will increasingly see retiree attraction as an integral part of any economic development strategy. With approximately 76 million baby boomers poised to retire in the next two decades the demand for retiree services will double. It is also expected that about 18.0 million of those boomers will move post-retirement, so we expect the recruitment of retirees will come to look like current industrial recruitment strategies. Getting the AARC Seal of Approval is an important step in preparing to compete."

For more information on the AARC go to www.the-aarc.org or call 912-225-0718. The AARC annual conference this year will be in Chattanooga, TN from November 4th to 6th.