

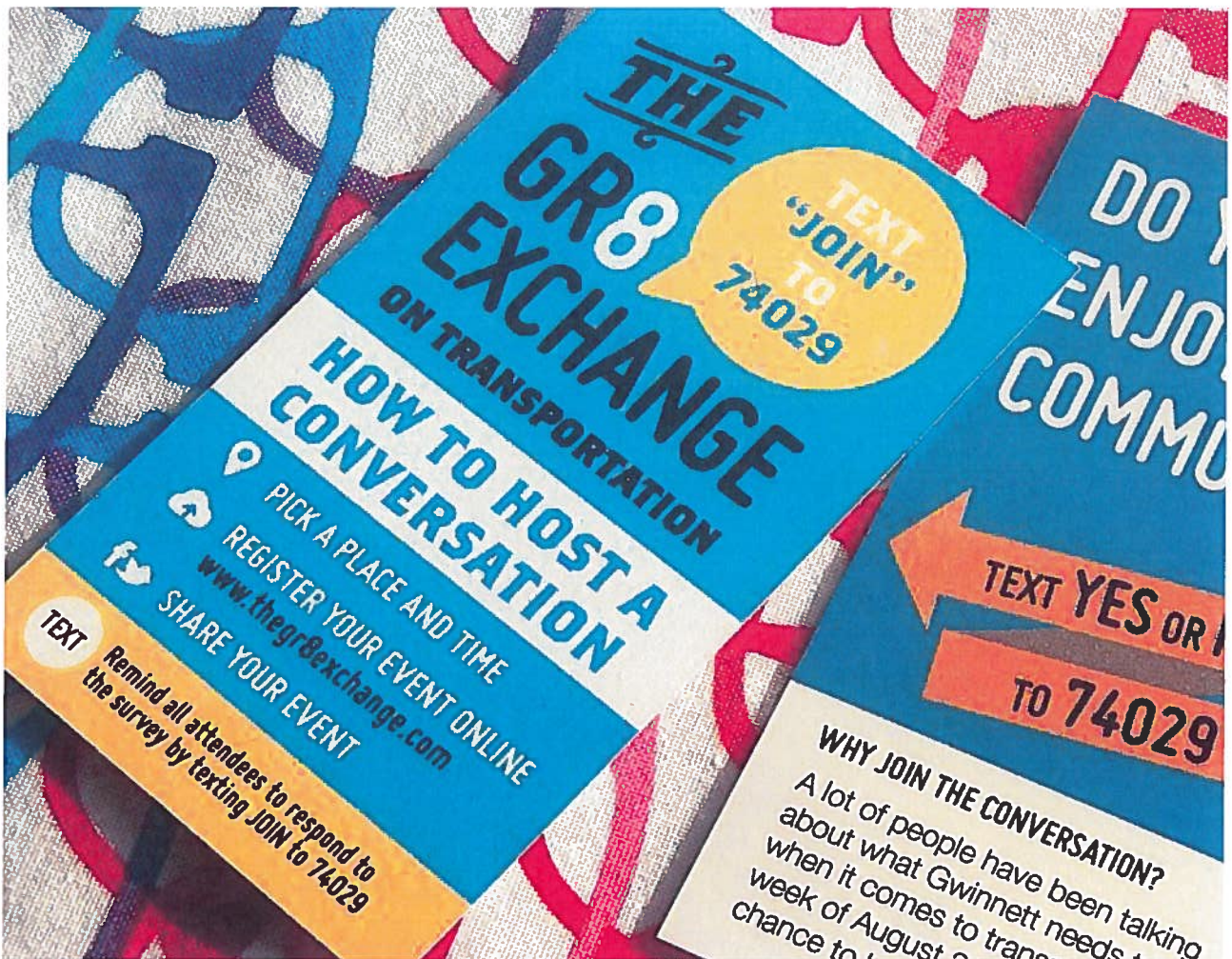
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FEATURED

Gwinnett cities, CIDs receive community award from ARC

By Curt Yeomans

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The Gr8 Exchange on Transportation was one of three Gwinnett-based programs from last year that received CREATE C Atlanta Regional Commission on Wednesday. (File Photo)

A trio of programs that took place in Gwinnett County last year received praise from the Atlanta Regional Commission on Wednesday for their work to advance arts programming, community involvement and civic education.

The programs, which were centered in Lawrenceville, Norcross and Suwanee, made up half of the field of winners in this year's ARC CREATE Community Awards.

"These jurisdictions are to be commended for developing creative solutions that help make the Atlanta region an even better place to live," ARC executive director Doug Hooker said in a statement. "By honoring these programs, we hope to spark an exchange of ideas across the metro Atlanta area."

Lawrenceville's Prelude to the Fourth celebration, a partnership between the city and the Aurora Theatre, was recognized in the Arts and Culture category. The event drew a crowd of about 6,000 to the Lawrenceville Lawn and featured a performance of "Camelot" by the theater, followed by fireworks.

Meanwhile, Norcross and the Gwinnett Village and Gwinnett Place Community Improvement Districts' work on the Gr8 Exchange on Transportation won the Community Involvement and Collaboration award. Thousands of Gwinnett residents, as well as people who work in the county, participated in the electronic and in-person discussion on transportation in the county.

Suwanee was recognized in the Educational Excellence category for its Suwanee Youth Leaders program. The educational programs has high school sophomores and juniors spend eight months learning about civic involvement, leadership, community service, ethics and law and justice.

"We now have a group of young people who have more knowledge of their community and how local government works and the work that goes into building community," Assistant City Manager Denise Brinson said in a statement. "The city wanted to develop a real connection with our schools and find a way to meaningfully encourage youth involvement as prescribed in our strategic plan — not just checking a box, but building sincere, authentic relationships."

The cities of Atlanta and Lake City, and the Town Center CID, won the other three awards in the categories of environmental sustainability, regional prosperity and economic development, and technology, according to ARC officials.