The Clarke County Democratic Committee held a Legislative Wrap-up Breakfast at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education on April 28. CCDC Chair Mac Rawson introduced the featured speakers, Representatives Keith Heard and Doug McKillip.

Representative Heard began his report on the 2007 session by saying, "In my 15 years of experience as a state legislator, I have never experienced one like the Republican-dominated 149th session." He said that he had been shocked by an apparent lack of concern for the citizens displayed during the session. Nevertheless he and the other Democratic members had done all they could do to further the values of their Party. He was particularly worried about what was happening to Peach Care. He was concerned that, because the governor had not gotten his tax cut for high income seniors, he had vetoed the budget, which had included $1 million for Peach Care kids. In addition, the Speaker had pushed though a bill that cut the number of low income working people eligible for Peach Care.

Freshman Representative Doug McKillip also talked about the frustrations of being in the minority party. He said, "We killed some bad bills", but overall the session was "incredibly inefficient." He described a problem between the Governor and the Speaker as a disagreement over a tax cut for the "super rich and the moderately rich." Rather than getting $75 in taxes returned, he said he personally would prefer to see more children being insured. McKillip went on to say that because of the rapid growth in population the state is experiencing real "growing pains" with problems in such areas as emergency room care and school expenses. He ended with more hopeful comments on what he and Heard are trying to accomplish. "We want to create a biomedical corridor. We want to prove to the world that we are prepared to make a commitment to education to prepare a work force to invite that kind of industry."

Representatives Heard and McKillip concluded their remarks by answering a wide variety of questions from the audience on topics such as the status of literacy programs, salary increases for educators, health benefits for State retirees, Jekyll Island, redistricting, conservation of state forest land, vouchers for students with special needs, and affordable housing.

**CHAIR'S CORNER**
**by Mac Rawson**

The results are in on the 10th District Congressional election. Unfortunately, it appears at this writing that there will not be a Democrat in the runoff. James Marlow made a great run but fell short by fewer than 200 votes. The other two Democrats – Denise Freeman and Evita Paschall- did not fare as well.

I congratulate everyone who contributed time, diligence and hard work to this campaign for a job well done. Energizing voters is difficult, and the June date of the special election made the situation more challenging. The Democratic Party of Georgia (DPG), under the leadership of Jane Kidd, made a valiant effort, as did the Clarke County Democratic Committee (CCDC). DPG Field Director Mike Cantone is a particular hero as well as Linda Lloyd of the Economic...
Justice Coalition who led the non-partisan voter registration and the get-out-the-vote efforts.

We learned lessons that will prepare the CCDC and the DPG for the upcoming Democratic Presidential Primary on February 5, 2007, the Democratic Primary next summer, and the general election in November 2008. First, everyone in the CCDC must be actively involved. A few people cannot do it all. Second, we must work as a team within Clarke and our surrounding counties. The success of our Party in electing our candidate depends on our working together. Third, a strong Democratic Party of Georgia with its technical support (like voter files availability) and leadership is an essential ingredient for success for all candidates. And finally, we must increase our visibility in our communities. We must help our communities recognize that the Democratic party offers realistic solutions to issues that affect everyone’s quality of life, in contrast to the failed policies offered by right wing Republican extremists.

Be a proud Democrat. With the emergence of talented candidates, like James Marlow, Democrats can appeal to a broad range of voters. The future of the Democratic Party is bright, but we must redouble our efforts to be successful.

What does this 50-state strategy mean for Georgia Democrats? The DNC currently funds three positions at DPG headquarters complete with DNC benefits, and these represent virtually a doubling of staff. Having these positions is crucial for the current and future push, says DPG Chair Jane Kidd. Mike Cantone, DPG Field Director, adds that the 50-state strategy has put a focus on Georgia as a leader in the South. The strategy has opened up national resources to the state party that were not available before. Through DNC programs, the DPG has been able to increase voter contact, communications around the state, and strategy planning for the 2008 elections. “We have a lot of work to do, but in Georgia, we are very close to being competitive again and taking back the state [for Democrats]” Cantone says. The DPG made almost 15,000 phone calls to voters in the 10th District on behalf of Democratic candidates prior to the recent special election as well as organized a mass canvass in Clarke County. Activities like these are watched by the DNC, and they impressed Governor Dean when he was in Georgia recently.

The 50-state strategy was a success in 2006, but 2008 is the real test. Cantone stresses that it is essential to continue the effort begun in the recent special election straight through to the 2008 elections. Beyond that, if members of the Party throughout the state can work hard and use the resources provided by the DNC to implement Jane Kidd's vision of a "159 County Strategy", then Georgia will make a national impact as a successful example of the strategy and as a worthy candidate for support in the future.

The Fifty-State Strategy at Work in Georgia

Howard Dean came to the chairmanship of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) largely through the efforts of Democrats in states that, like Georgia, had been neglected in the 2004 presidential election. Among all leading Democrats of the time, Dean alone recognized that the model of the DNC as just a president-electing machine that focused only on major contributors and selected winnable states, was not working and was a formula for future decline. Accordingly, shortly after his election, he initiated the 50-state strategy for rebuilding the party – an initiative he has had to sustain in the face of strong disapproval from important party leaders in Washington, especially those involved in raising funds for the 2006 congressional races.
Rebuilding the Democratic Party of Georgia: Jane Kidd at the May Meeting of CCDC

Jane Kidd, the featured speaker at the May meeting of the Clarke County Democratic Committee (CCDC), says that life has been exciting since her election to the position as State Chair on January 7. While there are problems to deal with, such as factionalism made worse by not having a Democratic governor in office, she has a strong staff in Atlanta, led by Mike Cantone and Ted Terry from her last campaign, and they are working hard to rebuild. The State Chair reported that the Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner was a success and yielded $600 thousand dollars for the state Party's coffers.

Jane Kidd herself, prior to becoming Chair, had not known much about the Democratic Party of Georgia (DPG). It had provided her with some help as a candidate but had also demanded a lot from her. She is determined as Chair not to make promises she can't keep. Her long-term goal is to help each county party become an efficient "election machine." An agreement between the DPG and the DNC is that in exchange each county party become an efficient "election machine." An agreement between the DPG and the DNC is that in exchange for every candidate receiving a voter file (enhanced by a demographic research group), the DPG will provide back to the DNC corrected information after the files have been used and updated. These files will allow candidates to target and even "microtarget" their messages to voters.

Polling data shows that people care about values. Recently, Democrats have not been effective at incorporating their values into their image and their message. Three central values that Jane Kidd believes are ours that we need to "sell" as ours are: (1) Fairness (everyone will gravitate to this concept); (2) Toughness (security, law enforcement) and (3) Fiscal Responsibility (balancing budgets.)

The Chair's goals for the near future are to identify vulnerable Georgia House and state Senate seats and find the right candidates to fill those seats. At the national level, she believes that the US Senate seat held by Saxby Chambliss is vulnerable if the right candidate can be identified, who will probably be a "new face", as veteran possibilities are not coming forward. Kidd proclaims that it is already obvious that the Republicans, while good at getting elected, are incapable of governing and that it is imperative that we elect a Democratic governor in 2010!

Finally, she told the Clarke County Democrats that she "brags on us [CCDC]" all the time and we need not to make a liar of her.

Policy Before Politics: The Water Council Hearing in Athens

Access to water is not a conventionally partisan issue, at least not yet, but is does have the potential to divide the citizenry. A proposed dam - or sewage treatment system - creates an agreement between the DPG and the DNC is that in exchange for every candidate receiving a voter file (enhanced by a demographic research group), the DPG will provide back to the DNC corrected information after the files have been used and updated. These files will allow candidates to target and even "microtarget" their messages to voters.

Carol Couch, Director of the EPD and Chair of the Water Council, opened the meeting with an introduction, some of whose main points are embodied in the paragraph above. She described the history of the effort, the composition of the Council the elements of the draft Plan (see www.georgiawatercouncil.org), and the current and future process of review, comment and submission to the legislature by 2008. As part of this process the Water Council is currently holding "Town Meetings" throughout the state, one of which occurred on Saturday, May 19 at the UGA Georgia Center.

The purpose of the meeting was to receive input from the public and there was plenty. The agricultural community was represented by two gentlemen from Farm Bureaus, Larry Ely from Greene County and Donald Childs Vice-President of the state organization and by a farmer from Madison County, Terry Chandler. Among them several points were made: Water rights accrue with property, it is not just a public commodity; agriculture is the largest employer in Georgia; as development has occurred there has been more runoff and less captured as ground water; there need to be more ponds and reservoirs to capture rain water. Roger Coffin, a landscape administrator, spoke in defense of "urban agriculture." Landscaping has other values than just aesthetic; it is especially important in controlling silting resulting from new building.

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Two plumbing contractors, Danny Richardson and Chuck Carson, spoke about the benefits and pitfalls of instituting home conservation. Between them they pointed out that 9 per cent of usage is leakage, that houses built after 1993 use much less water and that retrofitting older homes would accomplish greater savings, but that this needs to be done with bureaucratic restraint and a minimum of certification, and that "savings" technologies need to be tested for efficacy first.

Beth Gavrilles, representing Athens's GrowGreen Coalition, said that reducing water demand needed to involve all sectors. Interbasin transfers, should not be an automatic fall back; "pollution credits" need more data and better monitoring to be practical. Dr. Sydney Backus, whose Ph.D. thesis was on ground water/surface water relationships in south Georgia, stated that while we typically pay about a penny per gallon for water delivery, no one pays anything for the water itself, a fact that does not foster conservation of water! Like two previous speakers, she supported consumptive-use budgets.

The exchange between the Council and the audience was vigorous and healthy, and it underlined the severity of current drought conditions in north Georgia and the imperative need to observe water restrictions in Clarke County as they are announced. [Ed. note: The Water Council will release its policy recommendations on June 28, after we have gone to press.]