

# In the REGION

## The SGRC's Geographic Information Services (GIS): Mapping of the COVID-19 Crisis

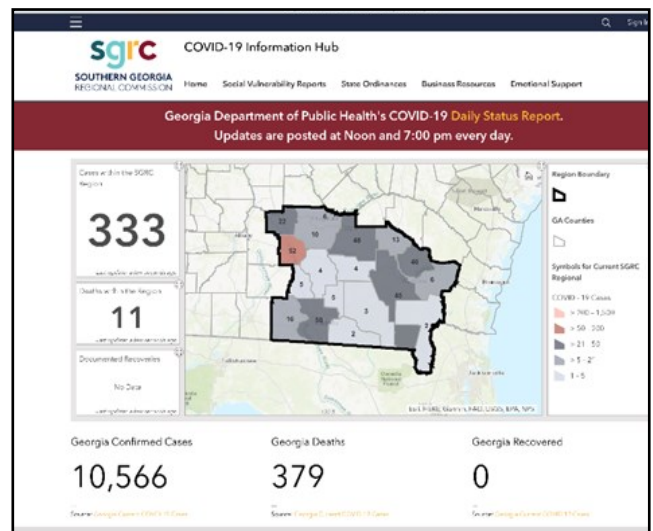
During this time of uncertainty, the SGRC's GIS department is helping to navigate the wealth of information available by doing what it does best, mapping it. More than that, the SGRC-GIS department wanted to create a "one-stop shop" for all COVID-19 information, whether it be for statistics, or finding resources during this challenging time.

ESRI's HUB—a community engagement software, was the perfect platform on which to build the outreach solution. It allowed GIS staff to gather information from a variety of official sources, and present that information in a logical format for the SGRC region.

The SGRC HUB offers local information such as interactive Senior Center and Restaurant location maps. It also offers statewide information such as: COVID-19 case counts by county (officially reported by GEMA and the Department of Public Health), CDC video links,

GA Department of Education information resources, and the USDA Meals for Kids site finder link.

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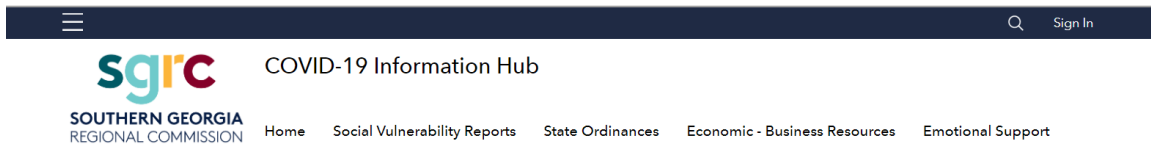
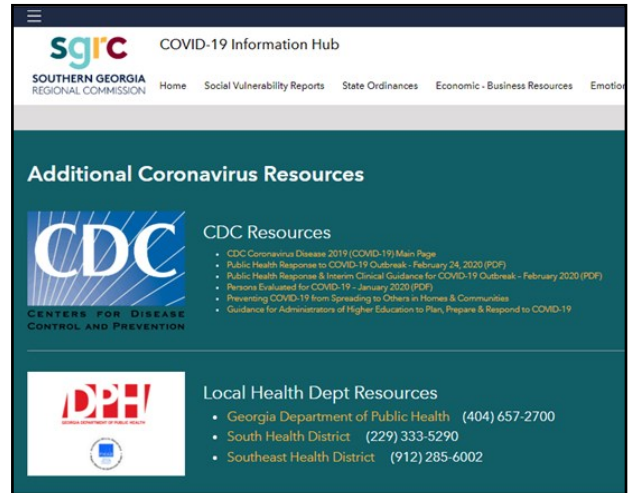
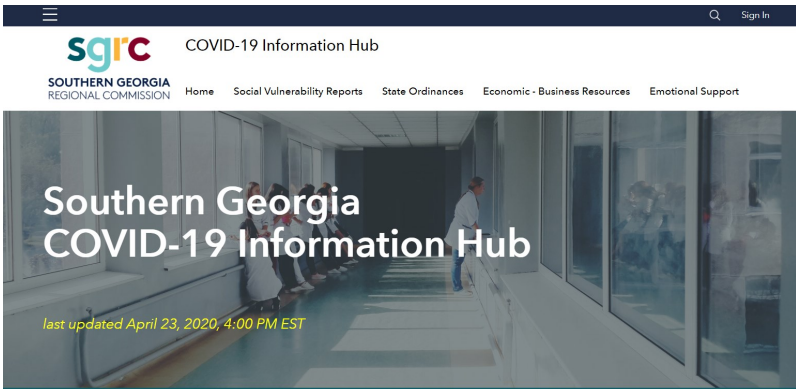
***Pictured above is an image of the SGRC COVID-19 Information Hub. The SGRC Region is outlined with the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases listed per county. To the left of the map are the total number of cases and total number of deaths in the SGRC region, related to COVID-19.***

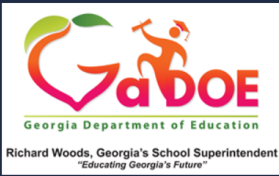
*The Southern Georgia Regional Commission proudly serves Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware Counties.*

# Geographic Information Services (GIS)

## The SGRC's Geographic Information Services (GIS): Mapping of the COVID-19 Crisis (continued)

The SGRC COVID-19 HUB is accessible from a computer or any mobile device that has internet access. Pictured below are images of some of the links found on the HUB. To visit the HUB, follow the link: [www.sgrcmaps.com/sgrc\\_covid19\\_hub](http://www.sgrcmaps.com/sgrc_covid19_hub). For more information, contact Rachel Strom, Director of SGRC-GIS, at [rstrom@sgrc.us](mailto:rstrom@sgrc.us), or 229-333-5277.






**Georgia School Closure Information**  
**Georgia Department of Education School Closure Dashboard** - Search schools by ZIP Code, School Name, Schools City, or District Name to get more information concerning school closures.  
**Georgia Department of Education** - find information regarding online/distance learning resources, school closure information, and other educational resources.

**USDA Meals for Kids Site Finder**

To slow the spread of the new coronavirus (COVID-19), many schools have closed unexpectedly. To ensure that children who rely on free or reduced-price meals at school are able to get the nutrition they need, USDA is working with states to continue providing meals to students. Usually, the rules require that children gather and eat their meals on-site. However, due to the exceptional circumstances of this public health emergency and the need for social distancing, USDA was able to make temporary changes so that meals may be taken home, and parents or guardians may pick meals for their children if the state allows. Families can use this tool to find directions to nearby sites as well as hours of operation and contact information.



Click on image to enter

Type your location or address into the interactive map to find directions to nearby sites as well as hours of operation and contact information.

# Local Government Services

## Model Ordinance Workshop Held in Valdosta

Planning Services staff have drafted several model ordinances for use by members of local governments. The ordinances have been drafted to enable customization for the particular needs of each local government.

A workshop was held at the City of Valdosta City Hall Annex on February 19, 2020 to present the ordinances. The workshop was well attended by approximately 22 participants. American Institute of Certified Planners Certification Maintenance credit hours were offered for certified planners.

Presentations were made by Ariel Godwin, Loretta Hylton, Sherry Davidson, and Elizabeth Backe of the Regional Commission. James Horton, Historic Preservation Planner with the City of Valdosta was a guest presenter. Topics presented included Manufactured Housing, Solar Farms, Telecommunication Towers, Tiny Homes and Tiny Home Developments, and



*James Horton, Historic Preservation Planner with the City of Valdosta, was guest speaker.*



*SGRC staff, Loretta Hylton, presenting at the Model Ordinance Workshop in Valdosta.*

Historic Preservation.

Staff will host an additional workshop in the City of Waycross once the State Executive Order to Shelter In Place is no longer in effect. When a date and time has been set, an invitation to attend will be sent to local government staff involved with planning and zoning.

For additional details regarding the Model Ordinances, the SGRC Planning staff are available to assist at 229-333-5277. The Model Ordinances can be accessed at the following site: <https://www.sgrc.us/model-ordinances.html>.



*SGRC staff, Ariel Godwin, presenting at the Model Ordinance Workshop in Valdosta.*

# Small Business Lending

## SGRC Small Business Lending COVID-19 Response

The SGRC Small Business Lending Department is a Certified Development Company with the Small Business Association (SBA), offering SBA 504 loans serving small businesses and lenders across Southern Georgia. The SBA recently released Economic Injury Disaster Loans, related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Governor Brian Kemp acted swiftly in applying for these funds and was approved by SBA, therefore, all 159 counties in Georgia are now eligible to apply for the loans.

Small businesses in Georgia are encouraged to apply, as soon as possible, for Economic Injury Disaster Loans. Following are some details of the loans and eligibility requirements:

- Loan amounts are up to \$2 million dollars
- Basis for approval will be heavily weighed by credit scores on the business and all 20% or more principals.
- The rate for loans will be 3.75% fixed for 30 years. All loans will have a 30 year repayment term and may be deferred for the first 12 months.
- Loan amounts under \$500,000: the max loan amount will be 50% of the business's gross profit from their last completed year.
- Larger businesses needing more than \$500,000 will require additional documentation.

- Loans under \$25,000 will not require collateral, if greater than \$25,000 any available collateral will be taken, preferably real estate.
- All 20% or more owners will personally guaranty the loan.
- No Debt Consolidation will be allowed.
- Use of proceeds can include working capital for business expenses including payroll, fixed debt payments, utilities, inventory, and any operational expenses included in the past 12 month financials. \*The business will be required to retain receipts for a period of 3 years and may be subject to an audit by SBA.\*

Online applications are available at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>. For assistance, contact the SBA disaster assistance customer service center at 1-800-659-2955 or at [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov).

For more information about SGRC Lending Programs contact: Rex Dorsey, Director at [rdorsey@sgrc.us](mailto:rdorsey@sgrc.us) or Michelle Frey, Sr. Lending Officer at [mfrey@sgrc.us](mailto:mfrey@sgrc.us) or 229-333-5277.



# Transportation & Environmental

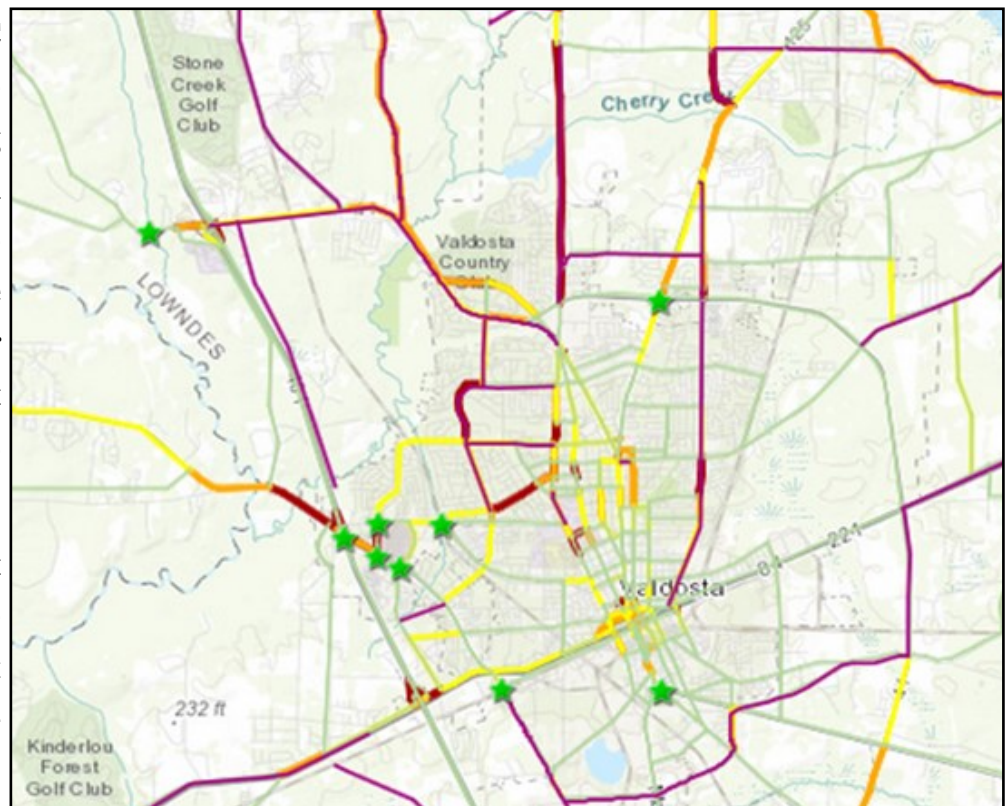
## Staff Use WebEx Software for Virtual Transportation Meeting

The 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Valdosta and Lowndes County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is due for completion later this year. The 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan is a 20 year horizon document that analyzes the current and future conditions of the transportation network; this includes land use, environmental factors, and other areas that affect the transportation network or the flow of traffic on the network.

To continue work on the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation plan, staff at the SGRC held a virtual WebEx meeting with MPO committee members on March 24th to discuss transportation projects that will be most beneficial to the area. Meeting participants were able to connect from their homes or offices. By using WebEx for the meeting, the MPO committee members were given the ability to view, discuss, and edit a shared map of potential projects. Attendees also recommended additional projects that were not listed on the map. Projects that are chosen as part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan will help to reduce congestion, raise time travel reliability, improve safety, and increase the overall traffic flow of the network.

Staff members of the SGRC are doing their best to accommodate their partners during this challenging time and they are utilizing technological platforms to help continue important conversations for programs and projects that will help both communities and the region.

For more information about the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, please contact Transportation and Environmental Director, Corey Hull, at [chull@sgrc.us](mailto:chull@sgrc.us), or 229-333-5277.



*Map of Potential Projects*

# Community and Economic Development

## U.S. Department of Commerce Invests \$2.5 Million to Establish New Business Incubator in Valdosta Opportunity Zone

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross recently announced that the Department's Economic Development Administration (EDA) is awarding a \$2.5 million grant to the Valdosta and Lowndes Chamber of Commerce in Valdosta, Georgia to fund the construction of a new business incubator. The EDA grant, to be located in a Tax Cuts and Jobs Act designated Opportunity Zone, will be matched with \$1.7 million in local funds and is expected to help create 81 jobs and generate \$9.7 million in private investment.

"The Trump Administration is committed to the resilience of local economies by encouraging companies to grow in designated Opportunity Zones," said Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. "I look forward to seeing how the new Valdosta Area Business Incubator will help a wide variety of businesses prosper in the region."



"It is important to provide American entrepreneurs with the workspace and technical assistance they need to achieve optimal success," said Dana Gartzke, Performing the Delegated Duties of the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development. "The incubator's location in a Tax Cuts and Jobs Act Opportunity Zone will revitalize the area and make it even more attractive for new business development."

"President Trump and Secretary Ross continue to deliver on their promise to make Georgia's infrastructure needs a priority," said Senator David Perdue. "This critical project will help create new jobs and encourage start-up businesses to open their doors in Valdosta. By designating this area as an Opportunity Zone, the Trump Administration's investment will incentivize businesses to continue contributing to economic growth in the community."



"As a former businesswoman, I know that when businesses thrive, so do the families they employ and the communities they call home," said Senator Kelly Loeffler. "Opportunity Zones are a key way of helping companies invest and create jobs locally. As our communities face uncertainty, this grant to the Valdosta and Lowndes Chamber of Commerce comes at the perfect time to help grow more jobs in South Georgia."

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# Community and Economic Development

## U.S. Department of Commerce Invests \$2.5 Million to Establish New Business Incubator in Valdosta Opportunity Zone (continued)

For six years in a row, Georgia has been named the best state to do business, and that ranking comes from the hard work of countless Georgians in every corner of our state,” said Congressman Austin Scott (GA-08). “This project will be yet another resource for South Georgians to start and grow businesses that innovate and contribute to our state and national economy, and I look forward to seeing the positive impacts it will have in South Georgia for years to come.”

“This good news could not have come at a better time,” said Myrna Ballard, President of the Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber. “The new incubator in Downtown Valdosta will be a keystone in our community’s coordinated effort to bounce back when COVID-19 is behind us. It is a game-changing initiative for small businesses, and it’s exactly what will be needed to help jumpstart our economy.”

This project was made possible by the regional planning efforts led by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission’s (SGRC) Community and Economic Development Division. EDA funds the SGRC to bring together the public and private sectors to create an economic development roadmap to strengthen the regional economy, support private capital investment, and create jobs.

## City of Offerman is Awarded CDBG-EIP for Rail Spur Improvements to Assist Southern Ionics

Georgia Department of Community Affairs awarded a \$750,000 grant to the City of Offerman to construct much needed rail spur improvements that will allow for the expansion of Southern Ionics Minerals (SIM). SIM is making a \$13 million private investment in building construction and machinery/equipment and has committed to the creation of 80 fulltime jobs.

The successful CDBG-EIP grant application was written and submitted by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission. SGRC Community and Economic Development staff will administer the project.



*Southern Ionics Minerals*

# Community and Economic Development

## Lanier County Senior Center/Head Start Renovation and Expansion Project Complete

In 2018, Lanier County received a \$750,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for renovation and expansion of the Lanier County Senior Center and Head Start Facility. Lanier County contributed \$164,509 in additional funding. Recently completed, this project will benefit 54 senior citizens and 49 Head Start students. Kellerman Construction renovated the 6,551 square foot facility and expanded the facility an additional 1,235 square feet. Altman & Barrett Architects designed the improvements. The CDBG application was written by the SGRC's Community and Economic Development Division, which also oversaw implementation of the project.



*Recently renovated and expanded Lanier County Senior Center & Head Start*



### SGRC 2020 Council Meetings Schedule

**May 28, 2020** – 11:00 am – Location TBD

**June 25, 2020** – 11:00 am – Location TBD

**August 27, 2020** – 11:00 am – Location TBD

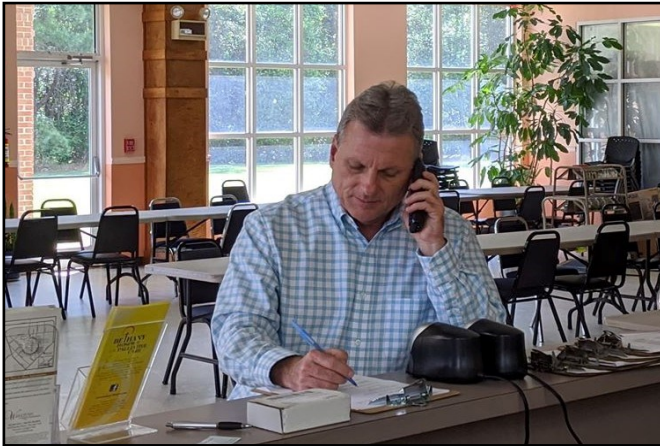
**September 24, 2020** – 11:00 am – Location TBD

***Area Officials Appreciation Dinner*** – October 22, 2020 (date subject to change)

**December 10, 2020** – 11:00 am – Location TBD (date subject to change)



# Area Agency on Aging



**U.S. Congressman Buddy Carter in Ware County**

## U.S. Congressman Buddy Carter Visits Ware Senior Center

On Tuesday, March 24, 2020, United States (U.S.) Representative Buddy Carter visited the Ware County-Nelson Greene Senior Center in Waycross. The facility was closed to clients, and remains closed at this time, due to the threat of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), but the staff were present to serve as a safety-net for some of the county's most vulnerable citizens.

Staff members were cleaning the facility and making telephone reassurance calls to clients who usually attend the senior center and those who have meals delivered to their homes. Representative Carter spoke with several clients by telephone to ask how they were doing and if they had all of the food, medication, and personal items that they needed. He also gave each client, that he spoke to, the opportunity to ask him any questions that they had. Senior center staff will continue to make reassurance calls, on a regular basis, until the center reopens.

## ADRC Staff Earn Certified Options Counselor Credential

Congratulations to Connie Miss and Haylee Metts (pictured below l to r) of the SGRC-AAA for completing all of the coursework and testing requirements to become a Certified Options Counselor with the AAA's Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC).

Their supervisor, Laura Smith, said, "I am so grateful for both Haylee and Connie because they are very devoted employees to aging services and do such a wonderful job. We are pleased to have two more people certified to provide Community Options Counseling to clients and caregivers." For more information on



Community Options Counseling and related-services, call the SGRC-AAA at: 1-888-732-4464; see the webpage: [www.sgrc.us/aaa.html](http://www.sgrc.us/aaa.html); & like the Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/SouthernGeorgiaAreaAgencyonAging/](http://www.facebook.com/SouthernGeorgiaAreaAgencyonAging/).

# Workforce Development

## SGRC Workforce Development Offers Assistance to Businesses During the COVID-19 Pandemic

As businesses and employers struggle with the new demands placed on them in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, please know that the SGRC Workforce Development Division is here to assist. The Business Services team can recommend strategies for employers to implement, in response to the pandemic, as well as a list of resources available during this critical time. Below is one of the many communications distributed to businesses and employers via email and social media. To be added to the email distribution list or for assistance, please contact Amy Jones at [abaldwin@sgrc.us](mailto:abaldwin@sgrc.us).



For access to the SGRC Workforce Development 's resources, please visit;

**FaceBook** <https://www.facebook.com/WorkSourceSouthernGeorgia/>

**Instagram** <https://www.instagram.com/worksourcesouthernnga/>

**Twitter** <https://twitter.com/WorkSourceSGA>

**LinkedIn** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/worksource-southern-georgia>



### Important Update Concerning COVID-19

As we monitor and learn more about the spread of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, please know that WorkSource Southern Georgia believes the health and wellness of those we serve in our communities is a top priority. We realize that we must do our part to minimize the spread of COVID-19 as best we can.

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### SGRC Staff Contact Information

Phone: (912) 285-6097

<b>Roberta Lovett</b> , Workforce Development Director	Email: <a href="mailto:rlovett@sgrc.us">rlovett@sgrc.us</a>
<b>Amy Jones</b> , Business Services Coordinator	Email: <a href="mailto:abaldwin@sgrc.us">abaldwin@sgrc.us</a>

# Information Technology (IT)

## The SGRC-IT Division Stresses Importance of Antivirus Software

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Cybercrime Division reports that billions of dollars are spent every year to repair computer systems that are damaged by cyber-attacks. These cyber-attacks are launched by criminals, overseas adversaries, and terrorists. Some take down vital systems, disrupting and sometimes disabling the work of hospitals, banks, police departments, and 911 services around the country. Cyber-attacks can come in the form of computer viruses. Computer viruses are software programs that are designed to spread from one computer to another and interfere with the computer's operation.

Businesses and individuals can take steps to keep themselves safe from cyber-attacks. Using antivirus software is one of the simplest, yet effective, steps that can be taken to protect computers and computer systems against cyber-attacks. Any computer that is used to access the internet, and most are, needs to have anti-virus software installed and updated regularly. In fact, the most common reasons why computers fail to work correctly, or have problems, is due to a lack of antivirus software, or expired antivirus software. Sadly, this simple, yet often overlooked, issue can cause dire consequences for the unfortunate computer owner and/or user. So, what is antivirus software and what does it do?

Antivirus software refers to one program or a collection of programs meant to protect a computer system from computer viruses. Antivirus software is used to find, remove, or repair files that are infected with computer viruses. The main element of the antivirus software is the scanning engine. Viruses created by hackers and cyber criminals can spread via infected email attachments, shared files, or malicious websites. The antivirus software scans the files or a computer's memory for certain patterns that may indicate a problem. The patterns that the antivirus software searches for are based on the signatures or definitions of known viruses. If it finds a virus, the application informs the user and cleans, deletes, or quarantines any files, directories, or disks affected by the malicious code.

For more information on protecting computers from viruses and on antivirus software, please contact Larry Adams at [ladams@sgrc.us](mailto:ladams@sgrc.us), 229-300-0901 or the SGRC -IT department.





*The SGRC-AAA is pleased to welcome Lynn Lee, who has been hired as an Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) Counselor. Lee is a Registered Nurse and has worked mostly in acute care. Before coming to SGRC-AAA, she worked at Clinch Memorial Hospital, as an Emergency Room nurse for eight years.*



*Congratulations to Charlotte Turner on her retirement from the SGRC, after 26 years of dedicated service. Chris Strom, SGRC Assistant Director, said, "She was a dedicated and loyal employee who always provided first-class professional service and she will be missed. We wish her the best on a well-earned retirement."*



## Valdosta Office

327 W. Savannah Ave.  
Valdosta, GA 31601

You can reach us by phone:  
**229-333-5277**

You can reach us by fax:  
**229-333-5312**



## Waycross Office

1725 South Georgia Parkway West  
Waycross, GA 31503

You can reach us by phone:  
**912-285-6097**

You can reach us by fax:  
**912-285-6126**

Email:  
**[sgrc@sgrc.us](mailto:sgrc@sgrc.us)**

Web Address:  
**[www.sgrc.us](http://www.sgrc.us)**

Facebook:  
**[https://www.facebook.com/  
SouthernGeorgiaRC](https://www.facebook.com/SouthernGeorgiaRC)**