

In the REGION

SGRC Assists the City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County to Expand Monitor Enrichment Center

The City of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County Monitor Enrichment Center is currently under construction to add a 3,740 square foot expansion to continue housing the Monitor Enrichment Program (MEP). This program is a grass-roots, community-developed, quality after-school and summer program that provides youth development and services to the youth in Ben Hill County. The expansion will include two additional classrooms, an assembly/dining area, and kitchen. Once complete, the expansion will allow an additional 51 children in Grades K-8 to receive after-school and summer care. Construction is expected to be complete by April 2023.



Construction work to expand the Monitor Enrichment Center in Ben Hill County

The architect on this project is Rankin and Associates, located in Tifton and the contractor is Artesian Contracting Company, located in Albany. The project is being administered by the SGRC. The total project cost for the improvements

is \$990,032. For more information about Community & Economic Development services, contact Tonia Hendricks at 912-285-6097, or by email at trhendricks@sgrc.us.

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.

Community and Economic Development

Tonia Hendricks Named Assistant Director of Community and Economic Development

Congratulations to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's Community and Economic Development employee Tonia Hendricks! Tonia was promoted from Grants Specialist to Assistant Director of Community and Economic Development. As Assistant Director of Community and Economic Development, Tonia will supervise, manage, and coordinate the tasks necessary to further the success of the Community and Economic Development Department.

In addition to direct supervision of staff, Tonia will continue to work alongside department staff and local governments to promote regional community and economic development to enhance the standard of living for area residents. She will assist local communities improve aging infrastructure, increase their development capacity, identify funding to assist with the location and expansion of new and existing industry, and facilitate activities that encourage business development and job creation.

The SGRC's Community & Economic Development Division provides technical assistance to local governments in identifying projects to improve community programs and facilities in the areas of street paving and drainage, water and sewer, public buildings, neighborhood revitalization, streetscape and pedestrian facilities, as well as police and fire department facilities, equipment, and vehicles. This division develops project-related grant and loan applications, and administers funded projects.

Tonia has been a valuable asset to SGRC since 2002, and she has been an integral part of the Community and Economic Development Department since transferring to the division in 2007. She has fifteen years of experience in state and federal government grant administration and thirteen years in grant writing. Tonia contributes to the CED Department and to the communities she serves daily by bringing positive energy, a passion for her work, and tenacity to any project she's assigned. Her proven leadership skills will serve the Department and the Region very well!

Congratulations, Tonia!



Tonia Hendricks

Planning & Transportation

SGRC Closes Out Regional Water Quality Assessment Grant Project

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) is thrilled to announce the closeout of the Regional Water Quality Assessment Grant Project awarded in April 2020 by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) through State SEED Grant Funding. The purpose of the project was to conduct an in-depth analysis on water quality throughout the entire SGRC region. Since then, SGRC has:



Pictured above is a scene from the Withlacoochee River.

- Completed an analysis of the 2018 303(d) list of FC-impaired water bodies, Georgia Environmental Monitoring and Assessment System (GOMAS) data points, and identified areas warranting additional research.
- Developed a weighting matrix and conducted further research for added background information. Application of the matrix determined sites that should be considered for prioritization and sites that may require contemporary water quality sampling.
- Provided training for water quality testing volunteers, and supplies to facilitate testing.
- Generated a list of potential Best Management Practices (BMP) supported by the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Plan (SSRWP).
- Finalized review of waterbody/sampling analysis. Applied sampling analysis to scoring matrix and worked with steering committee for developmental support and final approval of the scoring matrix.
- Conducted outreach to BMP stakeholders to develop partnerships for future implementations.
- Finalized project results. Developed and delivered a report of the final project results that will be available to the public until 2027.
- Provided education on the importance of water health to stakeholders and area residents.

For additional information, please contact SGRC Planning and Transportation staff at (229) 333-5277.

Planning & Transportation

SGRC and VSU Partner for Pedestrian Crash Study

Dr. Anne Price, Valdosta State University (VSU) Professor of Sociology, and Brandon Atkins, VSU Criminal Justice Department, partnered with Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) Planning and Transportation Division on a joint project to study bicycle and pedestrian crashes in the SGRC Region between 2017 and 2022.

The study was a result of a spike in bicycle and pedestrian fatalities in Southern Georgia which arose during the COVID Pandemic. The study, entitled *Trends in South Georgia Bicycle and Pedestrian-Involved Crashes: An Experiential Learning Partnership with Southern Georgia Regional Commission*, was conducted by students over a year-long period. Students in Dr. Price's Sociology Class created the study model and conducted the research, then passing the information to Mr. Atkin's class for statistical analysis. The study was concluded with a written report summarizing findings and containing maps and graphs to illustrate the results.

On January 19, 2023, Dr. Price and Mr. Atkins held a campus-wide presentation in the VSU Student Center Auditorium to deliver the results of the study. The students used a PowerPoint presentation with graphs and charts to depict the results. The three main factors identified in the study are: Poor Visibility; Distracted Driving; and Low Mode Share (smaller numbers of bicyclists and pedestrians in rural areas results in drivers being unaccustomed to their presence).

Upon completion of the presentation, James Horton, SGRC Senior Planner/Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator, gave an overview of how the results will be beneficial to the work of SGRC in the 18-county region. Mr. Horton, Dr. Price, and Mr. Atkins then fielded questions from the group. Approximately 80 people attended the presentation comprised of a mixture of VSU students, faculty, and the general public.



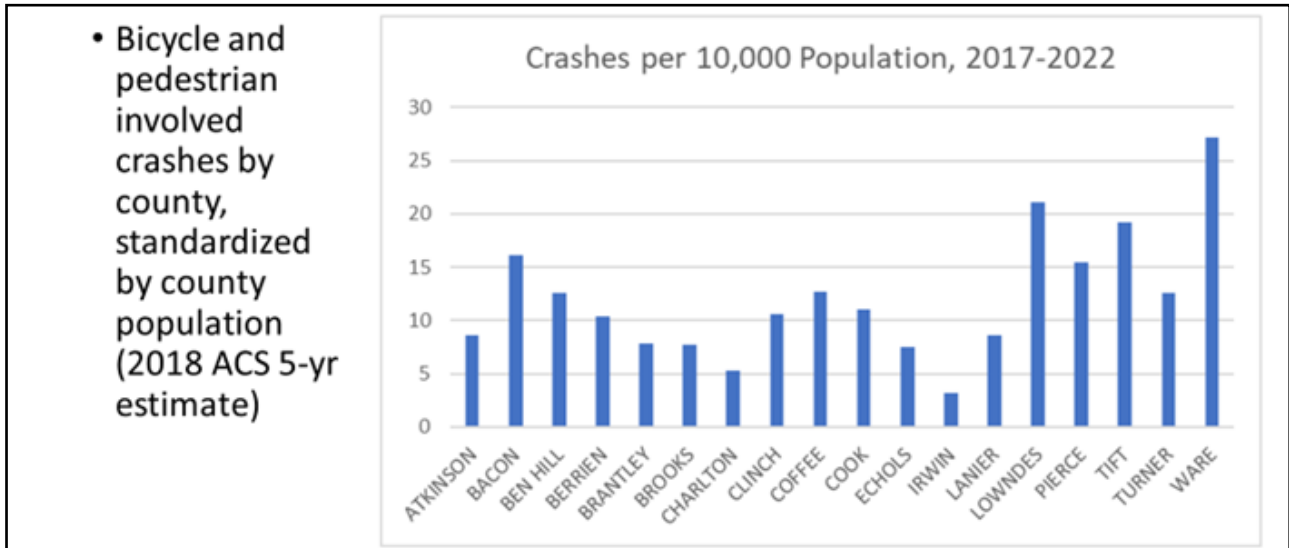
SGRC and VSU Bike-Pedestrian Presentation on January 19th

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Planning & Transportation

SGRC and VSU Partner for Pedestrian Crash Study (continued)

SGRC 18-county region crash data is listed below for the years 2017-2022:



DEALING WITH
DEMENTIA
FAMILY CAREGIVER
IN-PERSON WORKSHOP

sgrc

SOUTHERN GEORGIA
REGIONAL COMMISSION

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

A PROGRAM OF THE



ARE YOU A FAMILY CAREGIVER & NEED HELP IN THESE AREAS?

- *Understanding Dementia
- *Managing Problem Behaviors
- *Handling Stress
- *Finding Time for Yourself

The Southern Georgia Area Agency on Aging (SGRC-AAA) is pleased to offer a free workshop.

Register now as space is limited.

Date/Time: Thursday, March 9, 2023 from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm
Lunch break will be from 11:30 to 12:30 on your own

Location: Southern Georgia Regional Commission
1725 South Georgia Parkway, West, Waycross GA 31503

Register in advance for this meeting on Eventbrite:

https://SouthernGA_AAA_DealingWithDementia.eventbrite.com

To register by phone, or for more information, please call Kimberly Rodgers at the Southern Georgia Area Agency on Aging at 912-285-6097.

www.sgrc.us/aaa.html

Area Agency on Aging

Bacon and Ware County Senior Centers Celebrate Valentines Day

Seniors from Bacon and Ware Counties gathered together on February 14 to celebrate Valentine's Day, and were treated to a catered meal provided by GHC Hospice. Staff were the waiters for the day and enjoyed spoiling seniors with extra attention. The Kings and Queens of Hearts were named, they are as follows: Ray O'Berry and Katie Mack (Ware County), and Calvin Smith and Elaine Cain (Bacon County). Chris Williams, Bacon County Senior Center Director, said, "Everyone enjoyed playing Heart Bingo and the candy contest. We would like to extend a special thank you to GHC Hospice and Old Pine Grove Methodist Church for helping with this event."



Small Business Lending

Small Business Administration (SBA) Adjusts 504 Loan Program Fees in Fiscal Year 2023

Each year the Small Business Administration (SBA) reviews certain fees payable by 504 borrowers to determine if any of those fees need to be adjusted to cover the estimated subsidy costs of the 504-loan program. Below is a list of the changes to the FY2023 annual service fee (also known as the “on-going guaranty fee”) and upfront guaranty fee for 504 loans.

- For all 504 loans, the following fees are effective for loans approved October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023 (other than loans made under the 504 Debt Refinance without Expansion Program) .
 - 1) The upfront guaranty fee will be 0% (0 basis points).
 - 2) The annual service fee will be 0.4405% (44.05 basis points) of outstanding balance of the loan.
- For 504 loans approved in FY2023 under the 504 Debt Refinance without Expansion Program:
 - 1) The upfront guaranty fee will be 0% (0 basis points).
 - 2) The annual service fee will be 0.4405% plus 0.0154%, for a total of 0.4559% (44.05 basis points plus 1.54 basis points for a total of 45.59 basis points) of the outstanding balance of the loan.



The SBA 504 Loan Program provides long-term, fixed rate financing for major fixed assets that promote business growth and job creation. 504 loans are available through Certified Development Companies (CDCs), SBA's community-based partners, who regulate nonprofits and promote economic development within their communities. CDCs are certified and regulated by the SBA. The maximum loan amount for a 504 loan is \$5 million. For certain energy projects, the borrower can receive a 504 loan for up to \$5.5 million per project, for up to three projects not to exceed \$16.5 million total.

For further information on Southern Georgia Regional Commission’s Lending programs, please contact Lance Wilcher at (229) 333-5277 or via email at lwilcher@sgrc.us.

Geographic Information Services (GIS)

Update on the Road Element Validation and Mapping Program (REVAMP)

The REVAMP program is a state initiative to collect road data within the local right-of-way for all Georgia counties. This program consists of a three-way partnership between the Georgia Department of Transportation, UGA’s Information Technology Outreach Services (ITOS), and the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC). Through REVAMP, a system has been created to make certain that communities’ road data are properly validated and quality checked. The SGRC has also worked one-on-one with communities to share accurate and up-to-date information.

The goals of this program are to collect the most accurate information to ensure compliance and data integrity, to create strong working relationships to support reporting requirements as well as data need, and to express GDOT’s intentions as related to REVAMP, Local Maintenance Improvement Grant Program, Reconciliation and State Code compliance (32-4-41, 32-4-91)

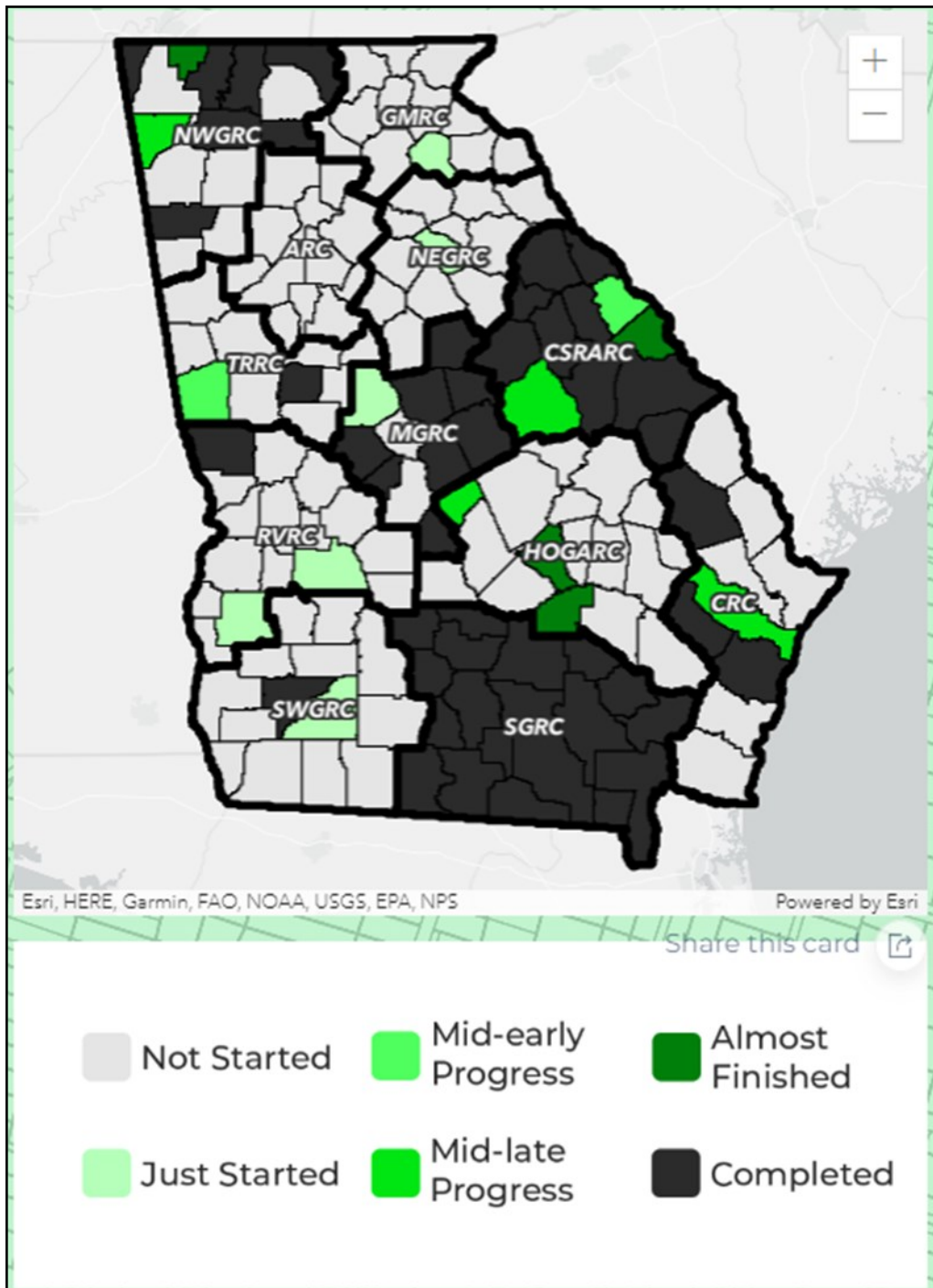
Currently, REVAMP is being completed in phases with pre-defined goals for each phase. Phases 1 & 2 were completed in 2019 and 2022, respectively, and phase 3 is currently underway. For each phase, SGRC has provided GAP services for Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) and Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) while still covering the SGRC counties.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Median Type	School Zone Locations	Sidewalk Presence
Operation	Sidewalk Presence*	Pedestrian Signal Presence
Ownership	Pedestrian Signal Presence*	Crosswalk Presence
Surface Type	Crosswalk Presence*	Curb Ramps
Thru Lanes	On-Street Parking Type	Curb Presence
Road Names	Number of Turn Lanes	Bike Lanes (marked)
Traffic Control Devices	Speed Limit Zones (Federal Aid Sys)	Median Barrier Type

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Geographic Information Services (GIS)

Update on the Road Element Validation and Mapping Program (REVAMP) (continued)



Map of Georgia counties to show progress of completion for REVAMP

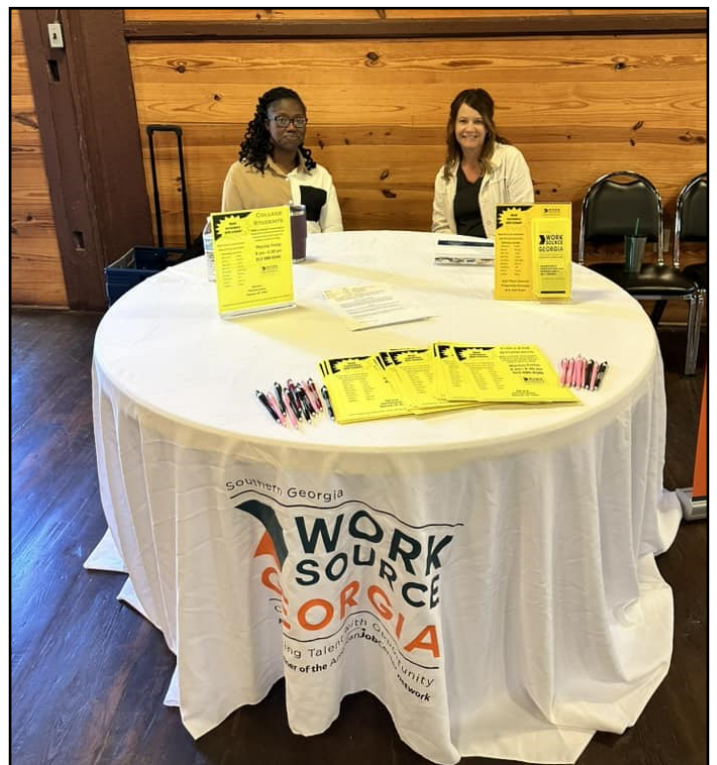
Workforce Development

WorkSource Southern Georgia Partners with Clinch Memorial Hospital for 2GEN CAREER FAIR

On Tuesday, January 24, WorkSource Southern Georgia partnered with Clinch Memorial Hospital to participate in a pilot program through the WorkSource Georgia's Sector Partnership Grant. The goal of this pilot program is to engage high school seniors at Clinch County High School who do not have plans after graduation. Local employers came out to share information about their company to show seniors and their parents/guardians what jobs are available in their own community. Local employers and community partners who participated were Clinch Memorial Hospital, Mauser Packaging Solutions, Greif (formerly Lee Container), Great American Cobbler, Okefenokee Library, Coastal Pines Adult Education, Coastal Pines Technical College, and ETC Schools. For more about this program, call Amy Jones, Business Services/Sector Partnership Coordinator at 912-285-6097 or email at ajones@sgrc.us.



Clinch Memorial Hospital



WorkSource Southern Georgia

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Workforce Development

WorkSource Southern Georgia Partners with Clinch Memorial Hospital for 2GEN CAREER FAIR (continued)



MAUSER



Okefenokee Regional Library System



GREIF



Great American Cobbler Company



Coastal Pines Technical College Adult Ed



Coastal Pines Technical College

Contact the SGRC

SGRC Council 2023 Meeting Schedule

March 23, 2023 – 11:00 am

SGRC Waycross Office

Tuesday, April 25, 2023 – 11:00 am

The Venue in Pearson

May 25, 2023 – 11:00 am

SGRC Waycross Office

June 22, 2023 – 11:00 am

The Venue in Pearson

~ July- No Meeting ~

August 24, 2023 – 11:00 am

SGRC Waycross Office

September 28, 2023 – 11:00 am

The Venue in Pearson

~ October- No Meeting ~

*Area Officials Appreciation Dinner

October 26, 2023 (subject to change)

~ November- No meeting ~

(combined with December meeting)

December 7, 2023 – 11:00 am

SGRC Valdosta Office

(subject to change)



**SOUTHERN GEORGIA
REGIONAL COMMISSION**

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