

In the REGION

SGRC Develops Model Ordinance for Outdoor Restaurant Seating

The food service economy has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially with restaurant closures in most communities. As society cautiously begins to reopen, outdoor restaurant seating can be a component of rekindling the economy, while also continuing a degree of social distancing. Some communities have few or no regulations for outdoor restaurant seating; others do not allow it; still others allow it, but wish to revisit their regulations. To address this need, the SGRC has developed a model ordinance for outdoor restaurant seating to add to its growing collection of model ordinances for Southern Georgia. The model ordinance is primarily intended to help communities to regulate outdoor seating on sidewalks or other public areas. It may also be adapted to regulate areas of operation for food trucks.

Outdoor restaurant seating is not just for pandemic times. Outdoor seating can make the presence of restaurants more visible, thus at-

tracting and seating more customers. Outdoor seating can contribute to the lively “vibe” of a downtown or other area. Here in Southern Georgia, there is warm weather for most of the year, so if local citizens are not getting outside, they could be missing out on a great experience to enjoy the area’s climate.

The model ordinance referenced can be found on the SGRC’s website at www.sgrc.us/model-ordinances.html. For more information, please contact the SGRC’s Planning Division at (229) 333-5277.



Photo credit: ExploreGeorgia.org

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

City of Ocilla Awarded \$300,000 Community Home Investment Program (CHIP) to Rehabilitate Six (6) Houses

On April 3rd, Mayor Matt Seale was notified that the City of Ocilla had been awarded \$300,000 to rehabilitate six (6) houses in a low-moderate income area of the city. This was one of only thirteen CHIP grants awarded in the state by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Ocilla will receive a “big check” during the FY2020 CDBG Recipient’s Workshop to be held in October 2020.

The purpose of the Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) is to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing in Georgia by granting funds to city and county governments, public housing authorities, and nonprofits to rehabilitate owner-occupied homes and build and renovate affordable single family homes for sale to eligible homebuyers. The CHIP funds are part of an annual allocation of HOME Investment Program (HOME) funds received from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Georgia DCA awarded \$5.1 million in CHIP funds to communities around the state in April 2020.

DCA Commissioner Christopher Nunn said, “This funding will play a role in enhancing these areas and improving the quality of life for Georgians.”

The SGRC CED Division wrote the grant for the city which allows up to \$50,000 per house in rehabilitation funds. Ocilla will participate by providing oversight services, while the Irwin County Commission has waived all permitting and inspection fees, in an effort to improve conditions in the city.

Residents must meet DCA’s low-moderate income requirements and live in the target area of the city to receive assistance. It is anticipated that applications will begin to be accepted in July, 2020.

For more information about this or other available grants, please contact SGRC Community & Economic Development Director Kimberly Hobbs at (229) 333-5277.



Examples of substandard housing that could be eligible for CHIP funded rehabilitation.

Local Government Services

Brooks County Commissioner's Meeting May 2020



The May 2020 Brooks County Commission meeting was held, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Pictured above are the Brooks County Commissioners practicing social distancing during the meeting. SGRC Local Government Services staff attended the meeting to present three zoning cases, which had received staff and planning commission recommendations, for the Commissioners consideration.

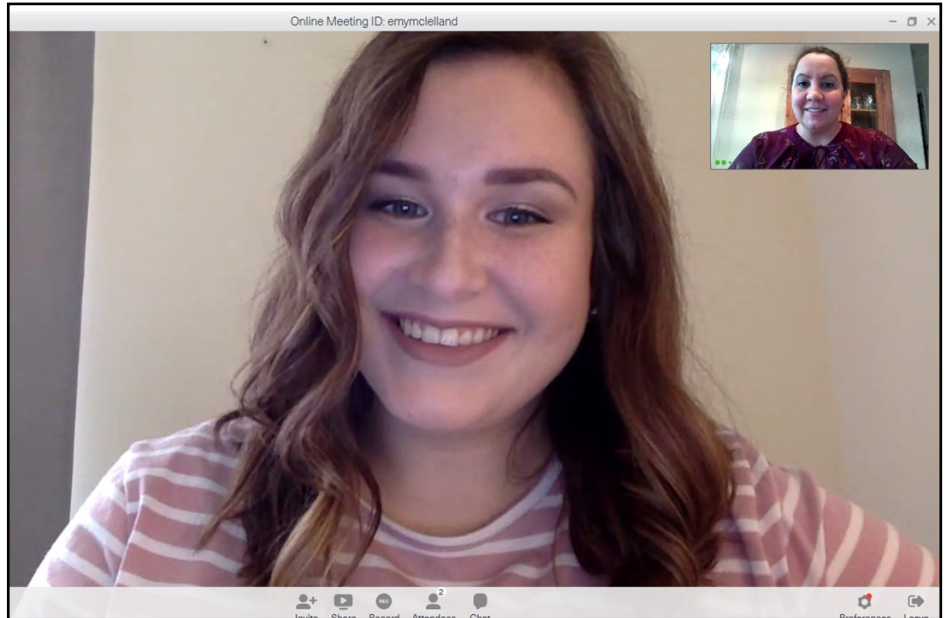
Also in attendance was James Burchett, State Representative for District 176 and attorney for Brooks County, seen right practicing social distancing and using personal protective equipment at the May Brooks County Board of Commissioner's meeting during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020.



Transportation & Environmental

Adopt-A-Stream Pilots Virtual Training with SGRC

Difficult times call for innovative measures and can challenge us to find new ways to regain a semblance of “life as usual.” Following the lead of schools nationwide, some Adopt-A-Stream trainers have adapted to virtual classroom environments. The SGRC recently hosted a pilot Online Bacterial and Chemical Training Course for their incoming Environmental Project Manager, Megan Parker. The event was administered by the outgoing Environmental Project Manager, Erica McLelland, using a virtual classroom and modified electronic exam forms.



Once Parker passed the Bacterial and Chemical written tests, training moved to the hands-on portion with step by step training and demonstration. Parker previously obtained a LaMotte test kit so she could have contact with testing kit hardware and reagents. The virtual classroom allowed for Parker to definitively show her ability to read test results and understand duplicate precision rules. There were challenges involved, like intermittent internet connectivity, issues with the new electronic forms, and the general hazard of playing with water near electronic equipment. Overall, this may not be better than in-person instruction, however it serves as an adaptive way to facilitate training, and may be a blueprint for similar events until people can safely be within each other’s company again.

This training event was held on May 21, 2020, so Parker could attain the needed credentials to fulfill the closing requirements of the currently active 319(h) Grant to assess water quality in the New River Watershed, along with the new Seed Grant Project awarded to the SGRC for water quality assessment of impaired water bodies throughout the entire 18-county region they serve. Both grants were awarded by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). Follow SGRC on social media for updates on these grant projects.

Transportation & Environmental

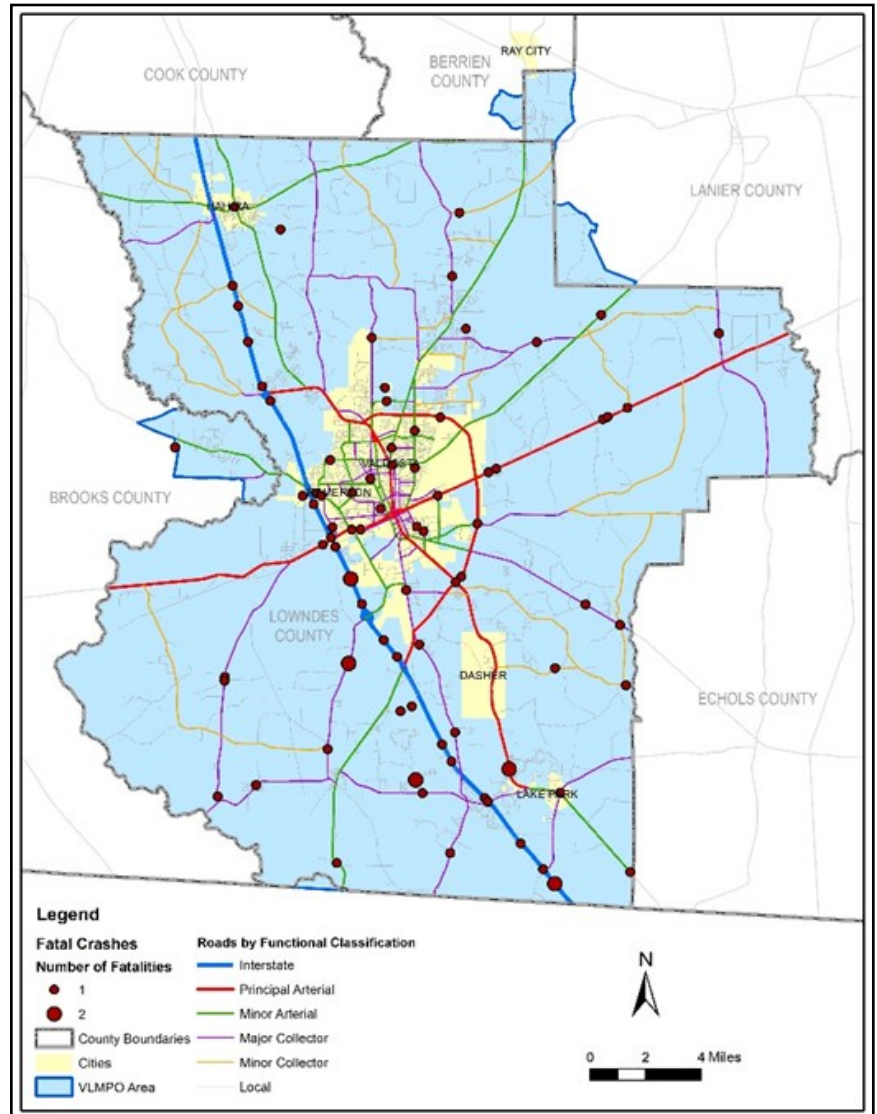
Valdosta-Lowndes MPO Crash Report

The annual Crash Report for the Valdosta-Lowndes MPO is currently being produced and will be available on the SGRC website in July 2020. The report examines several trends regarding motor vehicle crashes: fatalities, serious injuries, crashes involving pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, log trucks, and more.

This latest report ties in with other crash analysis the SGRC has been performing for communities in the region. In spring 2020, the SGRC produced reports analyzing crash trends in the areas around schools in Cook, Charlton, Echols, and Lowndes Counties. This is part of a series of reports that will eventually examine school-related crash trends in all 18 counties.

This information can be used for many purposes. Intersections and other locations with problematic geometry (such as blocked views, blind curves, or insufficient signage) can be identified and corrected. Overall crash trends can be used to identify certain types of drivers who need improved training and education, such as teen drivers. Crashes involving pedestrians can be analyzed to help determine where sidewalks or crosswalks are needed. These are just a few of the ways in which crash data can be useful to local communities.

The SGRC has access to a comprehensive database of crashes, and staff can also perform custom analysis related to crashes and motor vehicle safety. For more information, please contact Corey Hull at 229-333-5277 or chull@sgrc.us.



Map of fatal crashes in the MPO area, 2015-2019.

Small Business Lending

SGRC Small Business Lending Invited to Apply for CARES Act Supplemental EDA Award

As part of the CARES Act Recovery Assistance, the Economic Development Administration has invited the SGRC, as a current recipient of an existing EDA-funded Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), to apply for additional funds to help respond to the “unusual and compelling urgency of the Coronavirus pandemic.” The SGRC has operated a highly successful EDA RLF since 1980. Including the first RLF grant that was awarded, over \$21,789,768 million EDA RLF dollars have been lent leveraged by \$44,729,799 million in bank loans. There have been over 4,446 jobs created. EDA considers the SGRC a valuable partner in making credit available to small businesses and as such, believes it is in the public interest to make this supplemental grant award available to the SGRC on a non-competitive basis.

The SGRC Small Business Lending Division submitted a funding request on June 8, 2020, to EDA for \$750,000 to capitalize a new RLF specifically for recovery assistance. The new RLF has far more flexible terms and will help the lending area to respond to the negative economic impact as a result of the Coronavirus in a very concrete and measureable way. EDA allows loans made from these new funds the following flexibilities:

- ◇ Waiving the minimum interest rate requirement for one year.
- ◇ Waiving the leveraged capital requirement for one year (leveraged capital refers to the normal requirement for two private dollars lent for every one dollar of RLF funds.)
- ◇ Waiving the requirement to demonstrate that credit is not otherwise available.

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



Information Technology (IT)

The SGRC-IT Division Offers Solutions to Prevent Data Loss



Data is the most important aspect of a computer. An operating system and applications can be reinstalled, but it may be difficult or impossible to recreate original data.

Data loss occurs in many ways, the most common causes are physical failure of a computer, accidental error, theft or disasters like fire, flood, and even dropped coffee mugs! It is also common for data to be saved to just one place, such as 'My Documents' on a computer's hard drive. Which means that if this data were to be accidentally changed or deleted it would take considerable time and expense to restore it. Growing numbers of computer viruses are also a risk to business information, because once they have infected a computer, they can delete or corrupt data. This is another reason why backing up data is such an important process.

Choosing the data to be backed up is a key starting point to ensure that one has a copy of all information that is critical to business. One should begin by thinking of the specific data needed to continue working if their computer were to be damaged or stolen.

One should consider their need for the following items:

- ◇ Telephone numbers
- ◇ Account information
- ◇ Internet sites used frequently
- ◇ Email addresses
- ◇ Other important documents

It has taken a long time to collect all this information and one would not want to lose it. Therefore, the list above includes the key items that one should back up, or save in more than one place.

Best practice for storing backups is to keep a copy of the backup files on-site (in the home or office) for easy access and a copy off-site in case of fire, flood, or other damage to one's location which could damage or destroy the on-site backup copy.

For more information on getting data backup established, or for more information on a wide range of backup solutions, please contact Larry Adams at ladams@sgrc.us, (229)-300-0901 or the SGRC-IT Division.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)



SGRC staff hold signs to bring awareness to Elder Abuse Prevention Day and share ideas on how to treat older adults with respect.

SGRC-AAA Recognizes World Elder Abuse Prevention Day

June 15, 2020, was World Elder Abuse Prevention Day. Elder abuse is a silent problem that robs seniors of their dignity, security, and, in some cases, their lives. The National Council on Aging estimates that up to 5 million older Americans are abused every year. To report abuse of elder persons or adults with disabilities in the community, call Georgia Adult Protective Services (APS) toll-free: 866-552-4464, Press option "3". To report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an older adult or adult with a disability residing in a long-term care facility contact the Georgia Department of Community Health, Healthcare Facility Regulation, 1-800-878-6442 or <http://dch.georgia.gov>. For immediate assistance, call 911 for a first responder.

SGRC-AAA Awarded Third COVID-19 Grant from the Community Foundation of South Georgia

The SGRC-AAA is pleased to announce that it was the recipient of a third grant awarded by the Community Foundation of South Georgia to help local senior citizens during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. According to a foundation spokesperson, "This is the third time since the COVID-19 pandemic began that SGRC-AAA has been awarded grant dollars for senior citizens who are in need of food and who are enrolled in a congregate or home-delivered meals program administered through SGRC-AAA." To learn more about the Community Foundation of South Georgia, go to www.cfsga.net.



SGRC-AAA Launches Community Resources Flyer to Inform Community Partners

Program outreach and collaboration efforts with local service partners and stakeholders are vital for the SGRC-AAA program to continue to provide information and assistance to access aging services. With most live events canceled due to COVID-19, the SGRC-AAA developed the flyer found on page 9 of this newsletter that is sent via email to community partners and groups.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

sgrc

SOUTHERN GEORGIA
REGIONAL COMMISSION

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FLYER

A Resource from the Georgia Dept. of Human Services

The Friendship Line: 800-971-0016



Do you or someone you know, age sixty and older, need support due to the effects of social isolation, grief, depression, or anxiety during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Help is just a phone call away. We urge you to reach out, whether you are in crisis or just in need of a friendly voice on the other end of the phone.

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June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month and the GA Department

of Human Services is offering several online Dementia Friends sessions throughout the month, free of charge.

A Dementia Friend learns about dementia and then turns that understanding into action.

Please see the Eventbrite link below to sign up for June 2020, [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dementia-friends-georgia-tickets-106828589186?](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dementia-friends-georgia-tickets-106828589186?aff=erelpanelorg)

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GeorgiaCares

Local help for people with Medicare

GeorgiaCares is the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and a trusted source of information about Medicare and other related insurance. GeorgiaCares SHIP provides free and unbiased Medicare counseling to beneficiaries, families and caregivers. Certified counselors are available to help with Medicare Monday through Friday at 866-552-4464; Option 4.

GeorgiaCares SHIP is now offering a free Medicare 101 webinar to learn about Medicare Parts A, B, C and D. The GeorgiaCares SHIP will also answer your questions and more!

Register for a webinar at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/georgiacares-state-health-insurance-assistance-program-ship->

RESOURCES FOR RURAL CAREGIVING:

FINDING THE HIDDEN TREASURES

July 9-10, 2020
Virtual Conference



Presented By:



The SGRC-AAA is partnering with Second Wind Dreams®, and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission to host a 2020 Virtual Conference: *Resources for Rural Caregivers: Finding the Hidden Treasures*.

Below is the link to register for this free virtual event

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/conference-on-resources-for-rural-caregiving-finding-the-hidden-treasures-tickets-92790947221>

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's Area Agency on Aging (SGRC-AAA) develops, provides, coordinates, and advocates for services that assist older individuals, at-risk adults, persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers in the eighteen counties of Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware. Contact the AAA's Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) at 912-287-5888 or 1-888-732-4464. Visit website: www.sgrc.us/aaa.html and view our page on Facebook: www.facebook.com/SouthernGeorgiaAreaAgencyonAging/

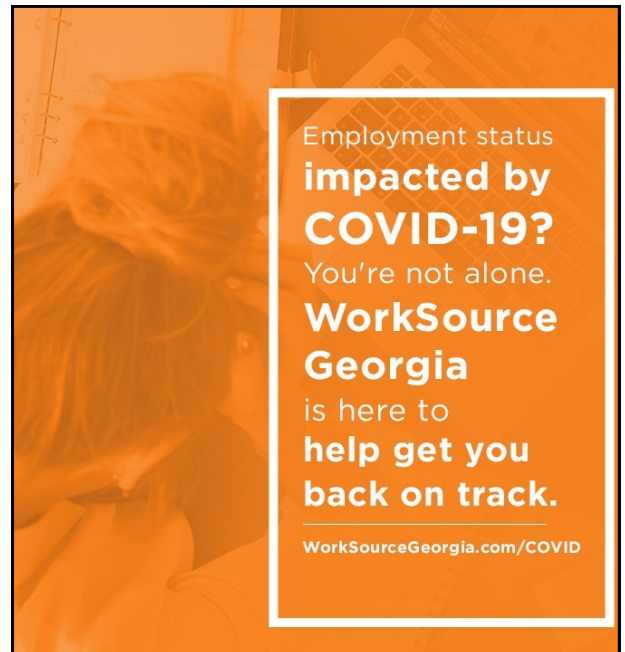
Workforce Development

SGRC-Workforce Development Division Offers Assistance with Employment and Training to Georgia Job Seekers

During this global crisis, many Georgia job seekers have experienced hardship due to a change in their employment status and availability in training resources. If any of the following scenarios apply, WorkSource Georgia may be able to help:

- ◇ Someone who has been laid off as a result of the COVID-19 crisis
- ◇ Someone who was self-employed and lost their income (or a large portion of it) as a result of the COVID-19 crisis
- ◇ Someone who meets criteria as a “dislocated worker” as defined in [WIOA Section 133 \(b\)\(2\)\(B\)](#)
- ◇ Someone who has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks

Visit WorkSourceGeorgia.com/COVID to learn more and get started.



SGRC Welcomes New Staff

Geographic Information Services Division Welcomes New Staff

Rachel Strom, Director of SGRC-GIS is pleased to announce that Spencer Ely has been hired as a GIS Analyst with the SGRC-GIS Division. Spencer graduated from Valdosta State University in May 2020, with a Bachelor's Degree in



Environmental Science, with a focus in Geography. He has over a year of experience as a GIS intern with the SGRC, and as a GIS Technician for the Georgia Department of Transportation. During his internship with the SGRC, he gained experience collecting and maintaining GIS data for Sunset Hill Cemetery and mapping plat records for Lowndes County. As a GIS Technician with GDOT, Spencer worked on the statewide Map21 project for many communities across the state.

Spencer believes that a successful employee must acquire 3 critical skills; "To be a team player, a problem solver, and a willing learner." We couldn't agree more! Welcome Spencer!

Transportation & Environmental Division Welcomes New Staff

The Transportation & Environmental (T&E) Division is pleased to welcome Megan Parker as its

new Environmental Project Manager. Megan is a native of Dalton, Georgia. She has a B.S. degree in Agriculture with a concentration in Agricultural Technology and Systems Management along with a Minor in Agribusiness Management from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.



"I have a passion for environmental improvement, community outreach and education, along with working in tandem with partners to make an event or project be the best it can possibly be. I look forward to giving back to the region that has given me so much over the past few years," Megan stated.

Megan will be heading the Regional Water Quality Assessment Project announced earlier this month, and will be looking to head future environmental projects and education events.

In her spare time, Megan enjoys kayaking, hiking and traveling with friends and family.

Contact the SGRC

SGRC 2020 Council Meetings Schedule

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)



**SOUTHERN GEORGIA
REGIONAL COMMISSION**

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

Web Address:
www.sgrc.us

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

Your Response Can Make a Difference!
Counting everyone in the 2020 Census can help communities receive funding for health care, education, emergency services, infrastructure improvements, and more. Over the next decade, lawmakers, business owners, and many others will use 2020 Census data to make critical decisions for communities nationwide.

There is still time to respond to the 2020 census! For more information or to respond, visit: <https://2020census.gov/>

The logo for the United States Census 2020 features the words 'United States' in a small font above the word 'Census' in a large, bold, black font, with '2020' in a large, bold, black font below it.