

In the REGION

CDBG-Mitigation Grants Totaling \$7.5 Million Awarded to Four Southern Georgia Communities

On April 30th, Adel-Cook County, the cities of Douglas and Homeland, and Coffee County were awarded a total of \$7.5 million in Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) Infrastructure Program funding from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The CDBG-MIT Infrastructure program was created by DCA following an award of \$26.9 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for activities that mitigate against future disasters in the areas affected by Hurricane Irma as well as the 2017 January tornadoes in Southwest, Georgia. Counties eligible for funding were: Berrien, Camden, Charlton, Chatham, Coffee, Cook, Crisp, Dougherty, Glynn, Liberty, McIntosh, Thomas, Turner, Wilcox, Worth.

Coffee County and the cities of Douglas and Homeland were awarded CDBG-MIT funds to complete street, drainage, and flood mitigation

projects that will relieve dire flooding that threatens the health and safety of thousands of people. Project details are as follows:



Coffee County

\$1,978,164 – CDBG-MIT

\$220,000 – Local Match

\$2,198,164 – Total Project Cost

82 Beneficiaries (86% low-moderate income)

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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

CDBG-Mitigation Grants Totaling \$7.5 Million Awarded to Four Southern Georgia Communities (continued)



City of Douglas

\$1,788,761 – CDBG-MIT

\$111,000 – Local Match

\$1,899,761 – Total Project Cost

106 Beneficiaries

(93% low-moderate income)



City of Homeland

\$1,864,369 – CDBG-MIT

\$42,500 – Local Match

\$1,906,869 – Total Project Cost

243 Beneficiaries

(69% low-moderate income)

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Community and Economic Development

CDBG-Mitigation Grants Totaling \$7.5 Million Awarded to Four Southern Georgia Communities (continued)

Adel-Cook County were awarded CDBG-MIT funds for the construction of a 300-foot antenna tower and supporting equipment to address serious deficiencies in the county-wide emergency services communication system that has hindered first responders' ability to convey vital information during disasters and other emergencies. The site for the tower (pictured below) is a 118.4 acre parcel owned by the City of Adel. Project details are as follows:



Adel-Cook County
\$1,918,507 – CDBG-MIT
\$100,000 – Local Match
(City/County Split)
\$2,018,507 – Total Project Cost
16,220 Beneficiaries
(77% low-moderate income)

The successful CDBG-MIT grant applications were written and submitted by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission. SGRC Community and Economic Development staff will administer the projects.

Local Government Services

SGRC Planning Division Reports Parks Viewed as Essential Community Infrastructure

The Adel-Cook Sports Complex opened in May 2021 to hundreds of Cook County residents who were ready to get out in the fresh air to watch and play baseball! The new complex boasts six regulation-size baseball fields and two smaller T-Ball fields that are anticipated to serve 700 children. The six regulation-size fields are arranged in a circular pattern with a concession and restroom complex in the center. The two smaller T-Ball fields are aligned on a central axis that runs through the center of the complex and connects to the front gate. The fields are equipped with state-of-the-art lighting and individual sound systems to ensure multiple games proceed concurrently. The complex is paved with sidewalks that provide access to all fields, the parking lot, and the concession area, which includes a commercial kitchen.

The \$7,000,000 facility is also equipped with a playground and a 1.3 mile meandering walking track, both open to the public at all times. In addition, the 108-acre site has room for the future construction of a soccer complex and the expansion of parking, if needed.

Researcher and author John Crompton (see book suggestion under resources) has identified a multitude of benefits provided to the community by parks and recreation. Many of these benefits have become even more important in light of the pandemic.



Pictured above the entrance to the Adel-Cook Sports Complex.

According to Crompton, some benefits of parks and recreation to the community are related to economic prosperity and include the attraction of tourists, businesses, and retirees, reduction of taxes, stimulation of equipment sales, and enhancement of real estate values.

Additionally, Crompton said that some benefits of parks and recreation to the community are related to environmental sustainability and include protecting drinking water, controlling flooding, reducing energy costs, cleaning air, preserving biological diversity, and reducing traffic congestion,.

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Local Government Services

SGRC Planning Division Reports Parks Viewed as Essential Community Infrastructure (continued)

Finally, the benefits of parks and recreation to the community, listed by Crompton, are related to alleviating social problems and include reducing environmental stress, community regeneration, facilitating healthy lifestyles, cultural and historic preservation, alleviating deviant youth behavior, raising levels of educational attainment, and alleviating unemployment distress.

Based on Crompton's assertions, including plans to add, update, or renovate parks and recreation facilities in the community seems logical to include in comprehensive plan updates. Parks and Recreation goals and plans can be included in the goals, needs/opportunities, policies, and community work program sections of a local government's comprehensive plan, and several divisions of the SGRC can assist in this process.

For instance, SGRC Planning Services staff are available to assist with parks and recreation planning and research, especially in relation to comprehensive plan updates. Additionally, SGRC-GIS staff can assist with mapping parks and recreation facilities and evaluating metrics, such as the number of parks per resident and/or the average distance to a park per resident. Finally, SGRC Community and Economic Development staff can assist with grant applications for parks and recreation facilities and properties.

For additional details and assistance, SGRC staff are available at (229)333-5277 or via email at ebacke@sgrc.us. More information is also available on the web at <https://www.sgrc.us/local-government-services.html>.

Resources:

Parks and Recreation System Planning: A New Approach for Creating Sustainable, Resilient Communities by David Barth:

<https://www.amazon.com/Parks-Recreation-System-Planning-Sustainable/dp/1610919335>

Community Benefits and Repositioning: The Keys to Park and Recreation's Future Viability by John L. Crompton:

<https://www.amazon.com/Community-Benefits-Repositioning-Recreations-Viability/dp/B001L66HI6>

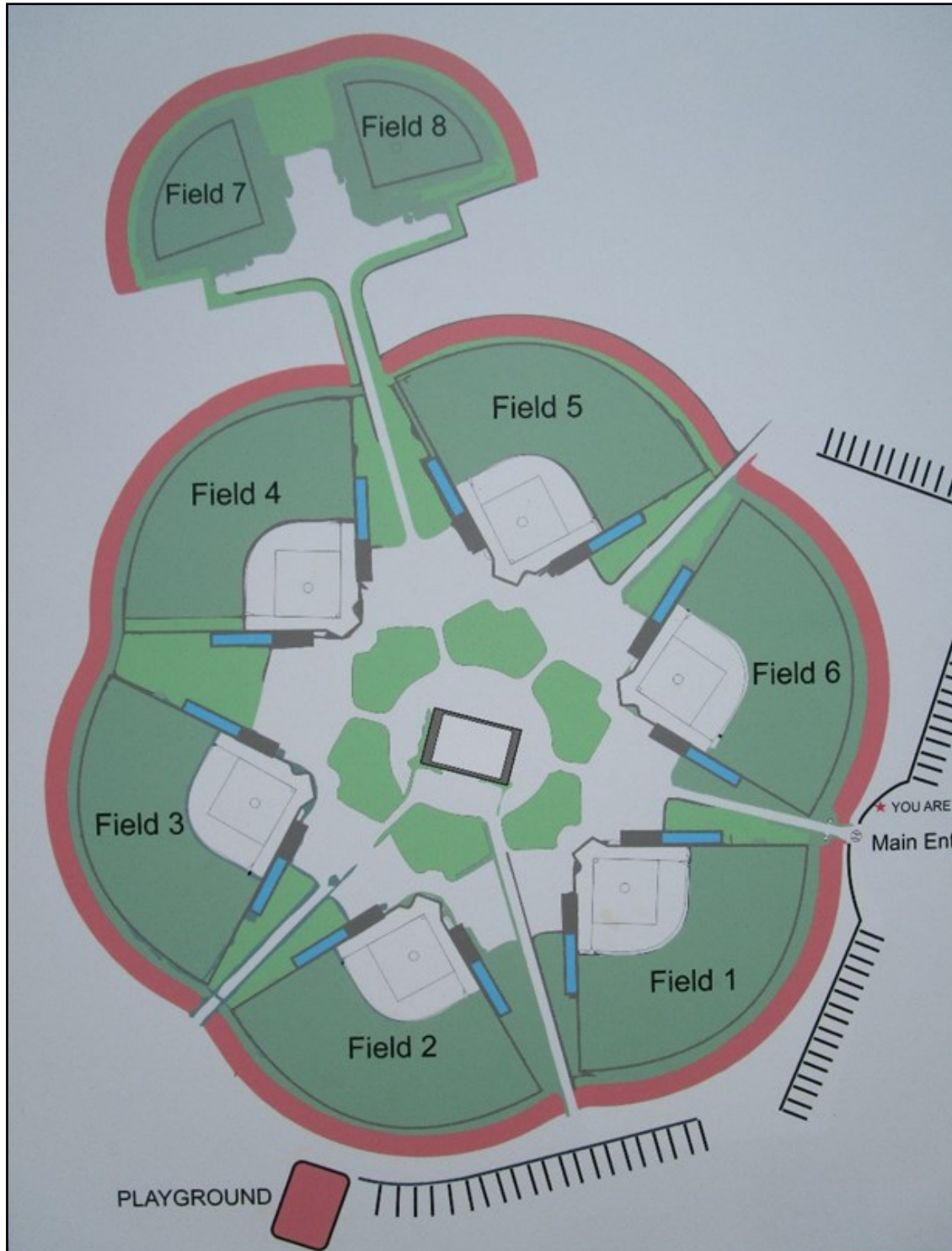
National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics:

<https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/ParkMetrics/>

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Local Government Services

SGRC Planning Division Reports Parks Viewed as Essential Community Infrastructure (continued)



Pictured above is the baseball field component of the site.

Information Technology (IT)

SGRC-IT Shares Information on the Importance of Data Backup

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

Data loss can happen in many ways, the most common causes are: physical failure of a computer, accidental error, theft or disasters such as fire, flood and accidental liquid spills on the computer. It is also common for data to be saved to just one place, like 'My Documents' on a computer's hard drive. 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 and government information, as once a virus has infected a machine, it often deletes or corrupts the data.

This is another example of why backing up data is such an important thing to do.

Choosing the data to back up is of key importance, so make sure to have a copy of all critical business information. Think about what would be needed to continue working if a computer were to be damaged or stolen. Some examples are telephone numbers, account information, internet favorites, email addresses, and other important documents stored on a computer. How long has it taken to collate all of the information and what would happen if it could not be retrieved? Would lack of the information impact the ability to do business? If so, this type of information is probably a good example of what should be backed up.

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

Contact Larry Adams at ladams@sgrc.us or the SGRC-IT department for advice or help to get data backup in place, or for more information on a wide range of backup solutions.



Geographic Information Services (GIS)

“Finding” Solutions with SGRC-GIS

The SGRC-GIS created a custom solution for the Valdosta Public Works department that allows staff to collect the location of issues discovered in the field via a smartphone. This new solution eliminated several steps for staff, streamlined the process, made information available in real-time, and provided a display of the information in an easily understandable format via a dashboard. Before the GIS solution, the information collection & dissemination process took multiple hours, but the new GIS real-time data update only takes minutes!

Prior to the GIS solution, Public Works staff would drive around the City of Valdosta looking for issues such as abandoned cars, potholes, and code violations. When something was discovered, or “found,” Public Works staff would take a picture with a smart phone, email it to themselves back at the office, and make notes on the smart phone. After staff returned to the office, they would then re-type the notes in an Excel spreadsheet, insert the photos into the spreadsheet, and then email the information to the appropriate department for review. This process would be repeated for each “finding.”

With the ArcGIS Collector app, as part of the VALOR GIS program, Public Works staff now identifies an issue, takes a photo of it, enters the relevant information, and assigns the issue to the appropriate department, all at the issue location! The new information is absorbed into an existing GIS database, and displayed for each department immediately after capture, staff no longer return to the office or duplicate work. The creation and addition of an ArcGIS dashboard to display the information has also improved communication between the departments, all with minimal investment besides the VALOR program by the City. For more information on the SGRC-GIS, please contact SGRC-GIS Director Rachel Strom at rstrom@sgrc.us.

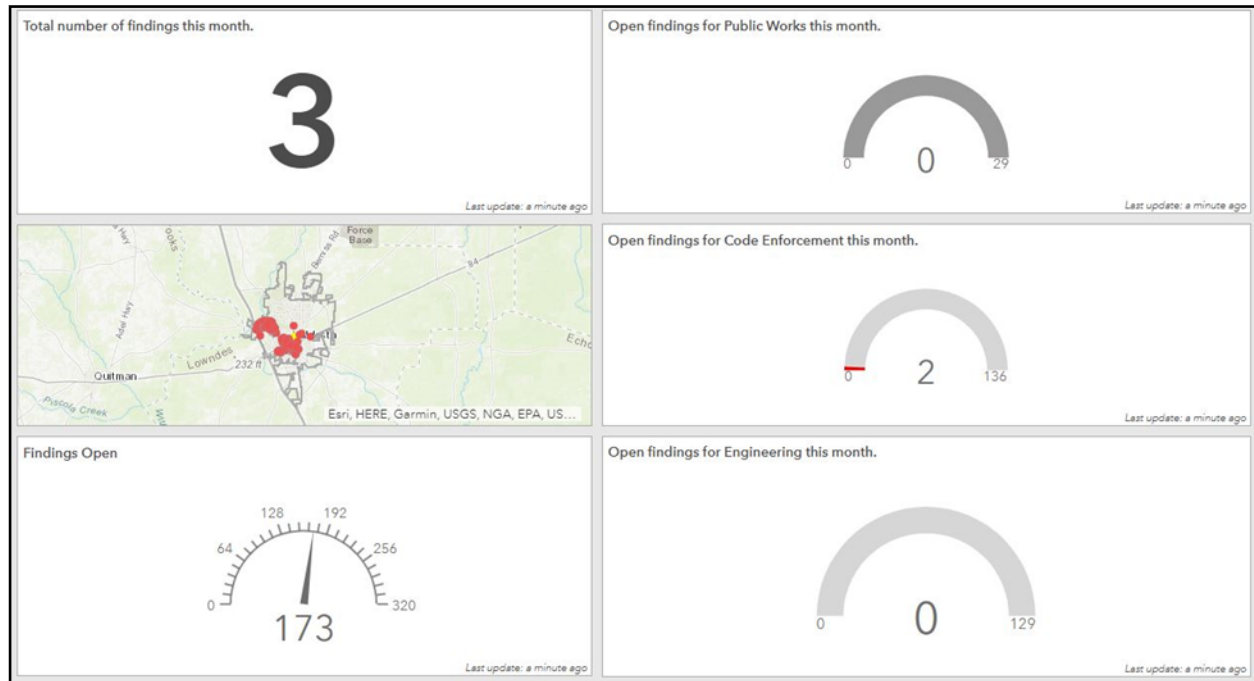


Pictured above is the ArcGIS Collector app database display for each Public Works department.

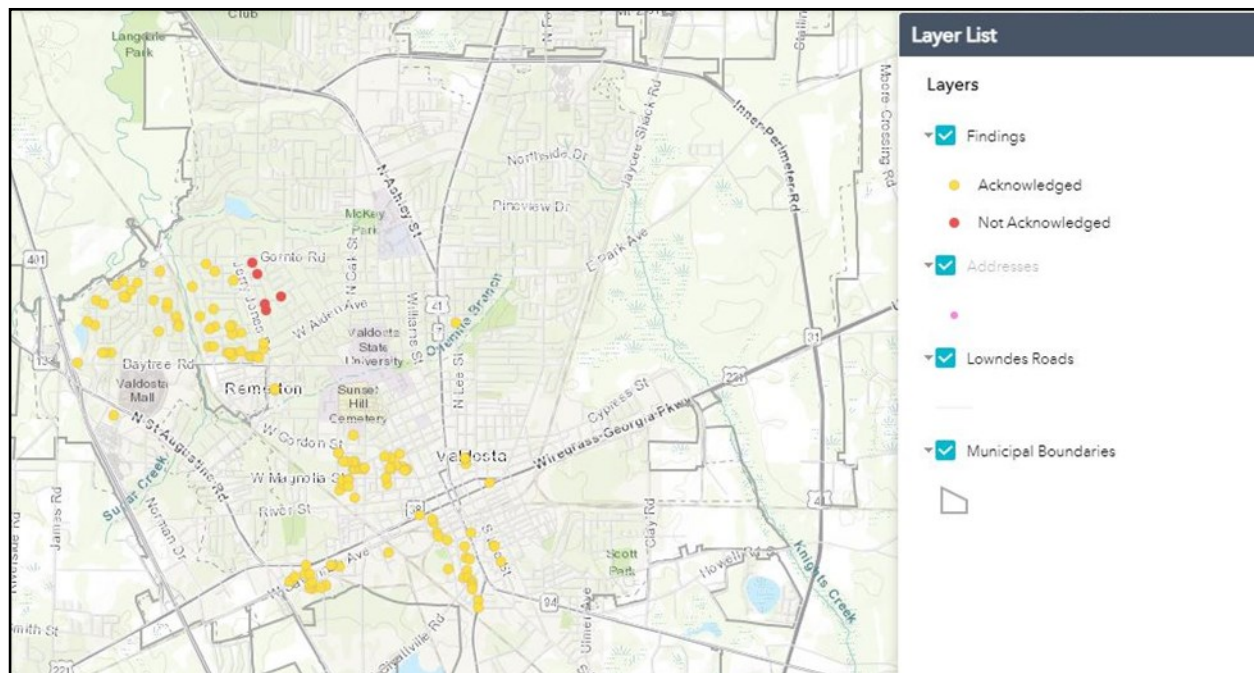
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Geographic Information Services (GIS)

"Finding" Solutions with SGRC-GIS (continued)



Pictured above is the ArcGIS Collector app database display dashboard.



Pictured above is the ArcGIS Collector app map view of findings.

Transportation and Environmental

SGRC Plans for Small and Minority Business Inclusion

The SGRC made available, for public comment, a plan on how to include more Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) in its transportation-related contracting opportunities. DBEs are small, typically minority- or women-owned businesses that may not have a level playing field when it comes to participating in federally-assisted transportation contracts.

The DBE Plan outlines a goal of 40.77% of total transportation-related contracts, that the SGRC will make a good faith effort to award, to DBE firms over the next three fiscal years. The Plan includes ways that the SGRC might work with local organizations to remove barriers to DBE participation and develop firms that are interested in transportation-related contracting opportunities with the SGRC and other similar agencies.

DBE firms are often small businesses that cannot take on a large multi-million dollar project on their own, or they are a specialized firm that cannot do the work often required in transportation-related contracts. However, DBE small businesses can provide services that prime contractors need such as accounting, marketing, landscaping, hauling, repair and maintenance, and materials testing.

Ways that the SGRC might engage DBE firms to work with partner organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce and development authorities,

is to provide information and training to local small businesses on how to become a certified DBE and how to work with prime contractors to provide essential services in support of a larger contract. This collaboration would benefit both the DBE and prime contractor. Firms interested in such an opportunity should contact the SGRC to learn more about becoming a certified DBE firm.

For information, contact Megan Fowler at mfowler@sgrc.us or at (229)333-5277.



Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

SGRC-AAA Celebrates Older American's Month in May

In tough times, communities find strength in people—and people find strength in their communities. In the past year, friends, neighbors, and businesses found new ways to support each other. Appropriately, the theme for Older American's Month (OAM) in 2021 was Communities of Strength.

OAM was celebrated in the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's Area Agency on Aging (SGRC-AAA) area with press releases to all local newspapers, weekly social media posts, and a host of activities through collaborative partners. The focus of OAM was to find joy in the everyday, reach out to neighbors, build new skills, and share stories.



The SGRC-AAA has long recognized older adults as a key source of strength in the community and will continue to provide resources and opportunities for seniors and communities to continue to thrive!

Bacon County Senior Center Celebrates Older American's Month with Proclamation Ceremony

The Bacon County Senior Center started off the month with a celebration and the signing of a proclamation to declare May 2021 to be Older American's Month in Alma. The proclamation was signed by local Mayor Larry Taylor and Chairman of County Commission Andy Hutto. Williams also reported that the seniors enjoyed a delicious pizza party that was provided by Ken at Roadrunners Truckstop.



Pictured above are staff and participants of the Bacon County Senior Center with Chairman of County Commission Andy Hutto and Alma Mayor Larry Taylor (l to r center of table).

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

SGRC-AAA Recognizes Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) Nurses



Laura Smith, RN



Sabrina Scott, LPN



Connie Miss, LPN



Angie Swinford, LPN



Cecelia Nelson, LPN



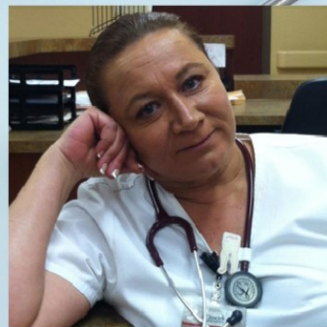
Judi Gary, RN



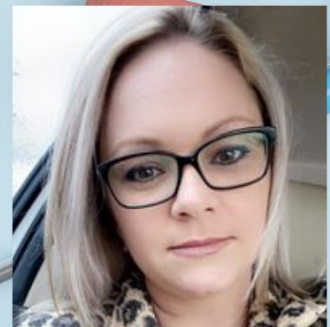
Susan Bowen, LPN



Sabrina Carver, RN



Lynn Lee, RN



Shelly Cason, RN



Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

SGRC-AAA Welcomes New Employees Shelly Cason and Kacey

The SGRC is pleased to welcome Shelly Cason, RN to the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC). Cason was hired as an ADRC Options Counselor for SGRC-AAA. Cason is a Registered Nurse and has worked mostly in the behavioral health field. She previously worked for Unison Behavioral Health, as Registered Nurse, at the St. Illa Crisis Unit. ADRC Supervisor, Laura Smith said she is very pleased to have Cason on the ADRC team and that Cason will be an excellent addition to the ADRC call center.



Shelly Cason, RN

The SGRC-AAA would also like to welcome Kacey Lee who was hired as an Aging and Disability Resource Support Assistant in the ADRC. Lee has been a MFP/NHT Transition Coordinator and has five years of experience in community transitions. She has also recently completed all the coursework and testing requirements to become a Certified Options Counselor with the AAA's ADRC. ADRC Supervisor, Laura Smith said that she is looking forward to working with Lee, who will be a great asset to the ADRC.



Kacey Lee

Brittany Hanchey Recently Certified as Options Counselor

Congratulations to Brittany Hanchey for completing all the coursework and testing requirements to become a Certified Options Counselor. Hanchey, a Community Transitions Coordinator, has worked in the MFP/NHT Transitions Program for approximately two years. Angie Swinford, Community Transitions Program Manager, said, "I really want to congratulate Brittany on this accomplishment. It takes hard work and dedication to achieve this certification and I am confident that she will, in turn, use this knowledge in the Community Transitions Program."



Brittany Hanchey

2021 Summer Fundraiser

The SGRC-AAA is pleased to report that over \$350 was raised for the Senior Emergency Fund in April through a raffle for a Zero Gravity Love Seat!

Workforce Development

Workforce Development Welcomes New Staff Member

The Workforce Division of the SGRC would like to welcome its newest team member, Pamela Popham, who was recently hired as a Program Assistant. Popham earned an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice and an Associate's Degree in Political Science from Waycross College and a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Albany State University.

Popham's previous work history at SGRC includes interning at SGRC while attending Albany State University, working as an Aging and Disability Resource Counselor (ADRC) in the Area Agency on Aging, and working as a Community Transitions Program employee through Manpower at SGRC, where she earned the credential Certified Options Counselor. She also worked for two different local attorneys for a total of four years.



Pamela Popham

The SGRC Workforce Development Division Director, Roberta Lovett said, "We are so pleased to have Pam on our team and we are excited about the energy and experience she brings to this division."

WorkSource Georgia Grant Funds South Georgia Healthcare Group

The South Georgia Healthcare Group (SGHG) is a sector partnership and is made possible through a WorkSource Georgia grant. Sector partnerships are specifically focused workforce development work groups, for more information visit <https://www.sgrc.us/sector-partnerships.html>.

Pictured right is Dorminy Medical Center's Rehab Facility that was recently advertised by SGHG. For more information on rehab therapy, contact Dorminy Medical Center at (229) 424-7100.



Small Business Lending



SGRC Small Business Lending Program Assists BlueWater Valdosta with SBA 504 Loan

BlueWater Valdosta has been a mainstay college bar operating successfully in the City of Remerton, for over twenty years. Remerton, once known as “Mill Town,” is an enclave entirely landlocked by the City of Valdosta and located just a couple of miles from Valdosta State University’s main campus. This area is known as a popular place for VSU students to live and socialize. It is home to an assortment of shops, bars, and restaurants where students go to socialize. BlueWater Valdosta is one of a few spots that offer live music performances, as well as DJ dancing, and an assortment of beer, wine, and liquor.

The current owner, Blain Nobles, took over ownership and management in early 2019. Through his management, BlueWater weathered the 2020 pandemic very well. Nobles decided to purchase the building and make some renovations.

Nobles sought funding, through the SGRC and Commercial Banking Company Loan Officer Skip Long to enable him to purchase the building, put on a new roof, and purchase and install a new HVAC system. The SBA 504 loan was the perfect vehicle for financing the project. The SBA approved the financing on April 23, 2021, and will provide 40% of the funds at a low, fixed rate for 20 years, while CBC provides 50% of the funds in participation. Nobles will provide 10% as a down payment. With this project, BlueWater will create 3 more jobs. Interestingly, both Blain and Skip are former employees of the SGRC. Check out BlueWater at 1905 Baytree Drive in Remerton.

For more information on SBA Lending or any other assistance available to small businesses, contact the SGRC Lending Division at rdorsey@sgrc.us.

Contact the SGRC

SGRC Council 2021 Meeting Schedule

Meeting Locations TBD

June 24, 2021 – 11:00 am

July - No Meeting

August 26, 2021 – 11:00 am

September 23, 2021 – 11:00 am

October - No Meeting

October 28, 2021 -

Area Officials Appreciation Dinner
(subject to change)

November – No meeting
(combined with December meeting)

December 9, 2021 – 11:00 am
(subject to change)



SOUTHERN GEORGIA
REGIONAL COMMISSION

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