

In the REGION

SGRC-AAA Receives AAA Excellence in Sustainability Award

Aging Director Scott Courson and the Southern Georgia Area Agency on Aging (AAA) received the 2021 Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) AAA Excellence in Sustainability Award on June 17, 2021, during the ADRC Healthy Communities Virtual Summit. The award recognizes a Georgia AAA for excellence in one or more of the following areas: fee-for-service models, fund source development, unique partnerships, administration of several core Division of Aging (DAS) programs, and/or private pay services.

Aline Stone, the Georgia Alzheimer's and Related Dementia Coordinator, presented the award. Stone said, "This year's winner goes above and beyond the call of duty for an organization with a large service area. Serving in a very rural area is typically difficult, but it has not stopped this AAA from finding solutions. In the past year, they were flexible, efficient, and creative to make sure clients received services when they needed it most."



Scott Courson, SGRC Director of Aging Services, with the 2021 AAA Excellence in Sustainability Award

The AAA received praise for its business savvy and for relationships forged in the community.”

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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.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

SGRC-AAA Receives AAA Excellence in Sustainability Award (continued)

A person who nominated the Southern Georgia AAA for the award also added that Courson is a great director to work with because he is calm, easy-going, and has a true heart for seniors.

Lisa Cribb, Executive Director of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) said, “We are extremely pleased to have the SGRC Aging Division recognized by the Division of Aging Services with an award for excellence. We appreciate Scott for all he does and we are grateful to have him in the role of Aging Director. He consistently demonstrates a high level of commitment to the organization, staff, and clients.”

SGRC-AAA Receives 2021 Impact Award For Diligent Work

Aging Director Scott Courson and the Southern Georgia Area Agency on Aging (AAA) received an Impact Award during the 2021 Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) Healthy Communities Virtual Summit Awards Ceremony on June 17, 2021. The award was created to recognize organizations that worked diligently and beyond the usual scope of operations during the COVID-19 pandemic and was presented by Robyn A. Crittenden, Georgia Department of Human Services Commissioner and Dr. Kathleen E. Toomey, Georgia Department of Public Health Commissioner.

Commissioner Crittenden recognized AAA directors and staff for working non-stop during the pandemic to make sure that senior adults in local communities received the support and the care they needed.

Dr. Toomey said, “AAAs have really gone above and beyond the call of duty to be there for seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic and thanks to the AAAs, we have been able to vaccinate the vast majority of seniors in this state.”

Congratulations to Scott Courson and the Southern Georgia AAA staff!



Pictured above is the 2021 Impact Award Certificate of Recognition received by Aging Director Scott Courson and AAA staff

Geographic Information Services

SGRC-GIS Receives Special Achievement in GIS Award

In preparation for and during the 2020 Presidential Election, the SGRC-GIS staff assisted multiple election offices throughout the region with a variety of mapping needs. Those mapping needs included interactive web maps that depicted polling locations and electoral boundaries, road and address assistance, maps, and even participation in a statewide initiative that partnered with the Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri), the Georgia Geographic Information Office, and the Georgia Secretary of State. The SGRC-GIS' multi-pronged approach to assist election offices helped prepare for the election and provided support up to and on election day.

Esri is an international supplier of geographic information system software, web GIS, and geodatabase management applications. The company is headquartered in Redlands, California.

Each year, prior to the annual user conference, Esri solicits nominations for outstanding users of the software. Nominations are made by industry managers, Esri regional offices, and international distributors.

In 2021, the SGRC-GIS was one of 197 users chosen for a Special Achievement in GIS (SAG) Award, from over 100,000 clients worldwide. The SGRC-GIS Division was nominated and received the award for its work on the elections assistance initiative.

Winners of this prestigious award are selected and announced at the Esri User Conference by Founder, Jack Dangermond himself. Mr. Dangermond's address to the winners may be viewed at: <https://www.esri.com/en-us/about/events/uc/plenary/awards/sag-awards>.



Pictured above is the SAG Award that the SGRC-GIS Division will receive

Local Government Services

Success Story in Valdosta: The Georgia Beer Company

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has published its Story Map for 2021 Success Stories. Submissions for Success Stories are due each March and include submittals from regional commissions, PlanFirst communities, and local jurisdictions. The 2021 Success Stories Regional Commission DCA Story Map is available here: [Regional Commission Success Stories 2021 \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com).

The SGRC's Success Story about Georgia Beer Company, located at 109 S. Briggs Street in downtown Valdosta, is featured in the DCA Story Map for 2021. The SGRC Lending Division, in participation with Commercial Banking Company, helped secure an SBA 7a loan to finance the brewing equipment. Below follows additional detail regarding this successful project.

Initially, the City of Valdosta was approached by a group of entrepreneurs who wanted to establish a microbrewery in one-of-three potential cities in southern Georgia or northern Florida. The potential small business owners met with City of Valdosta staff to discuss renovating the former Waterworks building (constructed circa 1900).

Later, the business partners worked with the Small Business Development Center to develop a business plan and pro forma and ultimately found private investors to assist with efforts to redevelop the 7,400 square foot building, originally constructed to mimic Italian Renaissance architecture. The property is located just west of the Valdosta Main Street downtown area in the Valdosta Historic District. The location is within the Community Activity Center Character Area in the Comprehensive Plan, as well as a Community Commercial Zoning district, which permits microbreweries bottling up to 15,000 barrels of beer per year.

The Georgia Beer Company opened its taproom and beer garden in 2019 and seeks to utilize as many Georgia Grown ingredients as possible in their many varieties of beer. The presence of a microbrewery in a Main Street/downtown area has been seen as an indicator of a healthy local economy by employing local residents, adding to the local economy, enabling craft beer tourism, and encouraging in-migration of new residents. Georgia Beer has become an important and exciting economic driver for the region. For more information or to suggest a success story, contact SGRC Planning staff at (229)-333-5277.



Packaged Beer at the Georgia Beer Company

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Local Government Services

Success Story in Valdosta: The Georgia Beer Company (continued)



The Georgia Beer Company Brewery, Valdosta

Community and Economic Development

City of Tifton Breaks Ground for New Youth Center

The City of Tifton held a ground breaking ceremony on August 12 at the future site of its new Youth Center in South Tifton. In 2020, SGRC's Community and Economic Development staff assisted the City in applying for \$750,000 in CDBG funds to construct the center, which will host an after-school program and summer-feeding program for children in the Matt Wilson neighborhood, as well as Adult Literacy classes for neighborhood residents. Upon completion, this project will benefit over 250 children, youth, and adults.



City of Tifton officials and Matt Wilson Neighborhood youth break ground for the new facility.

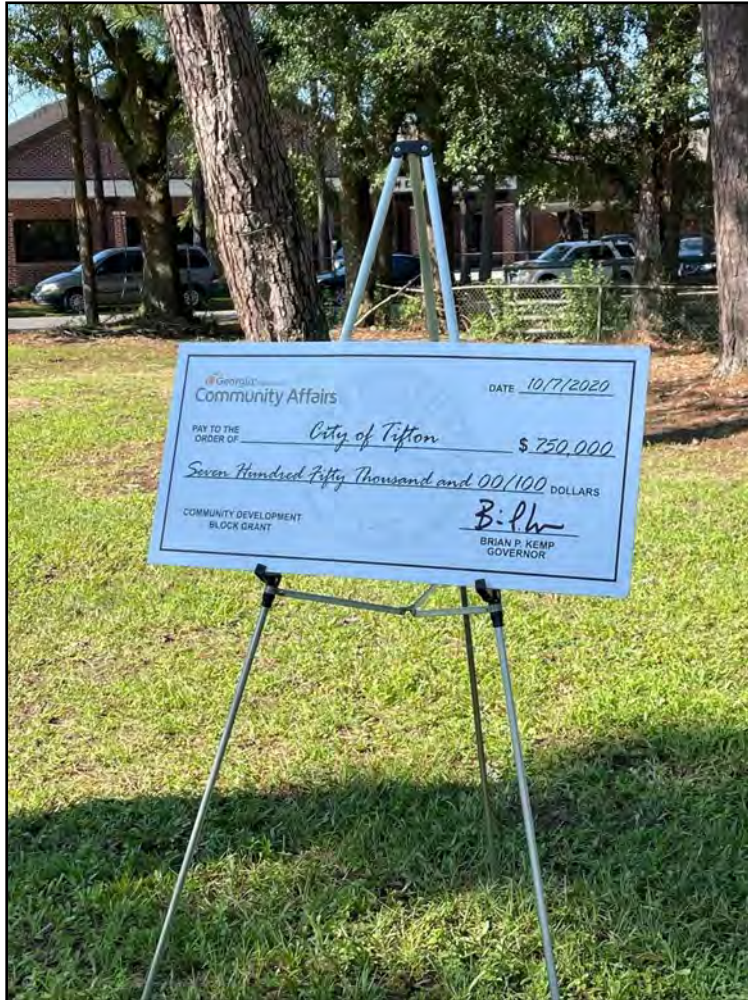
In regards to the event Mayor Julie Smith said, "On behalf of the City of Tifton we are beyond thankful to be breaking ground on the Youth Center project. We've been working on this idea for several years now, and to know that soon the families of the surrounding area will have a functional facility to enjoy is very exciting. I'm grateful to our partners at the Tift County School system for working with us, and especially grateful to our Urban Redevelopment Board for their ongoing work to make a positive impact that will benefit our citizens."

The project was made possible by partnerships with the TiftArea YMCA, Southern Regional Technical College, and Community Development Block Grant funding from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. SGRC will continue to take an active role in the project by assisting the City of Tifton in grant administration.

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Community and Economic Development

City of Tifton Breaks Ground for New Youth Center (continued)



The SGRC's Community and Economic Development division assisted the City of Tifton in securing \$750,000 in CDBG grant funding for the Youth Center project.

Workforce Development

South Georgia Healthcare Group Meets

The South Georgia Healthcare Group met on July 22nd in Waycross at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to discuss ways to fill gaps in healthcare careers and strategize ways to get students interested in the healthcare field within the eighteen county service area.

The group consists of employers, education, and community partners who work to highlight Allied Health careers. Anyone who would like to be part of this group may contact Amy Jones at ajones@sgrc.us.

Representatives from the following organizations attended the meeting: WorkSource Southern Georgia, Wiregrass Georgia Technical College, Southern Regional Technical College, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Memorial Satilla Health, Coffee Regional Medical Center, Dorminy Medical Center, Clinch Memorial Hospital, Waycross/Blackshear Housing Authority, Coffee County Schools, Georgia Department of Economic Development, and WorkSource Southwest Georgia.



Pictured above are attendees of the South Georgia Healthcare Group Meeting

Transportation and Environmental

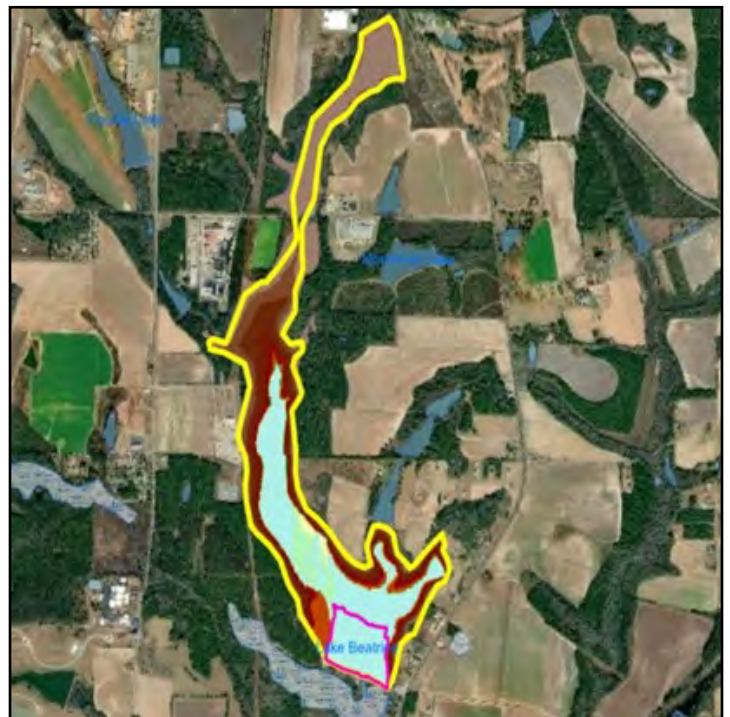
SGRC Environmental Program Announces Lake Beatrice Improvements Feasibility Study in Ben Hill County

Located in Ben Hill County, Lake Beatrice was identified by the Suwannee Satilla Regional Water Planning Council as a potential location to address the reduction of surface water flow gaps in the Alapaha River. This would be accomplished by improving the dam at Lake Beatrice.

Initial estimated calculations indicated improvements to the dam could reduce flow gaps, in both frequency and severity, at the downstream Statenville Node in Echols County. The SGRC's Lake Beatrice Improvements Feasibility Study will gather data to determine improvements needed at the dam and lake to reduce these gaps and will consider what operations and ownership models are possible from the improvements.

To determine if this is, in fact, a viable project for implementation, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), along with the partnership of the Suwannee-Satilla Regional Water Planning Council, the owners of Lake Beatrice, and many other regional partners agreed to participate in a study funded by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) through a State SEED Grant to determine the feasibility of addressing the future water supply needs of the river by implementing dam improvements.

For more information or to address any questions regarding the project, please feel free to contact the SGRC Environmental Project Manager Megan Parker at (229) 333-5277 or via email at mparker@sgrc.us.



Pictured above is Lake Beatrice in Ben Hill County

Small Business Lending

New SBA 504 Debt Refinance Rules Announced

Rex Dorsey, Director of the SGRC Small Business Lending Division, recently announced that there are now new SBA 504 Debt refinance rules in effect. Dorsey said, “For all of the following changes, the term ‘qualified debt’ refers to originally eligible 504 uses of proceeds, meaning fixed assets.”

For debt refinance with an expansion, a business may now refinance 100% of its existing debt. Previously, an expanding business could only refinance 50% of existing qualified debt with an expansion.

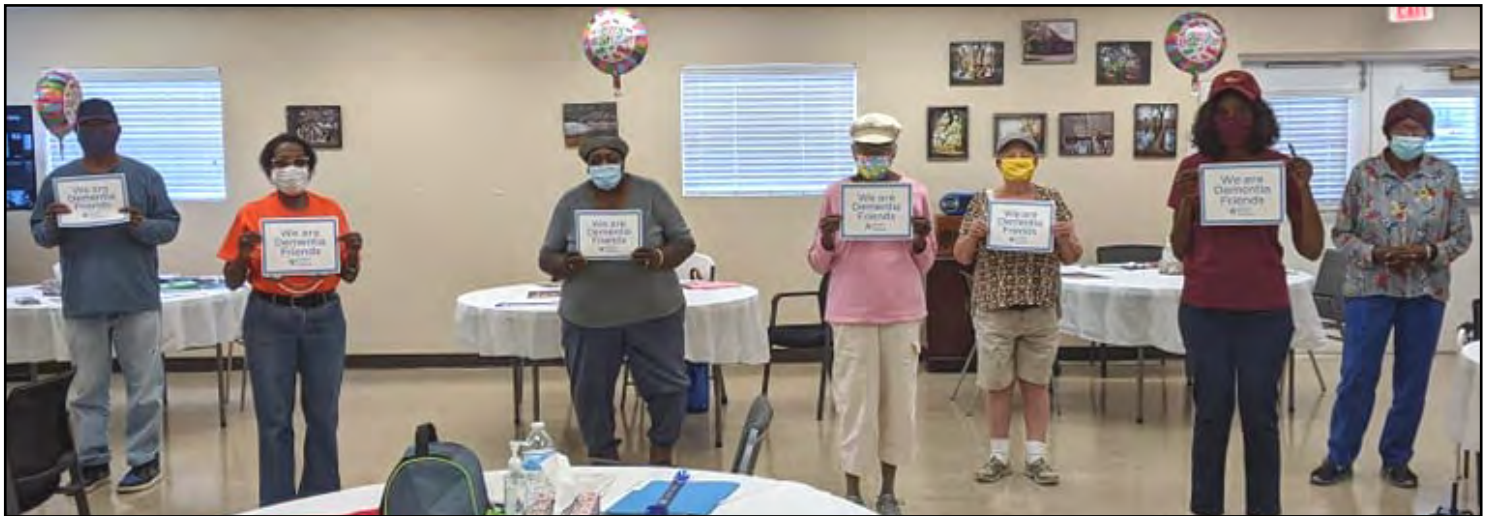
For debt refinance without expansion, the debt being refinanced now must be at least six months old to be eligible for refinance. Previously, the qualified debt being refinanced had to be 2 or more years old to be eligible. Additionally, in the past a 504 debt refinance project did not allow for the refinance of previous federal debt. However, now, any previous federal debt (including SBA 7A loans and existing SBA 504 loans) may be refinanced.

A "substantial benefit test" must be met, reducing the borrower's payment by a minimum of 10%, for both SBA 7A loans and SBA 504 loans. Also, for SBA 7A loans, the existing 7A lender must verify in writing that it is unwilling or unable to modify the current payment schedule and for SBA 504 loans, both the Third Party Loan and the 504 Loan must be refinanced, or the Third Party Loan must have been paid in full. Finally, refinance without expansion 504 loans are capped at \$75,000 per full time employee.

Due to COVID-19, the requirement that the qualified debt not be past due in the past year has been waived. Anyone who feels they may have an eligible project is encouraged to call the SGRC Lending Division at (229) 333-5277.



Area Agency on Aging (AAA)



SGRC-AAA Offers Dementia Friends Information Session at Pierce County Senior Center Operated by ActionPact, Inc.

SGRC-AAA Dementia Friend Champions Connie Miss and Kimberly Rodgers are pleased to announce that there are twelve new Dementia Friends in the Southern Georgia region. Senior Center Director Lynn Platt hosted the Dementia Friends Information Session for the Pierce County Senior Center, operated by ActionPact, Inc., on Wednesday, August 4, 2021. Pictured above are some of the Pierce County Senior Center participants who took part in the session.

Dementia Friends is a global movement that seeks to change the way people think, act, and talk about dementia. Developed by the Alzheimer's Society in the United Kingdom, the Dementia Friends initiative is widely underway in Georgia and across the United States. When participants better understand what dementia is and how it affects families then they become empowered to make a difference for people living with dementia.

The one-hour session is a discussion that is led by a Dementia Friends Champion. It is not a training session. Participants learn what dementia is, what it is like to live with the disease, and some tips for communicating with people who have dementia. Everyone who attends is asked turn their new understanding of dementia into a practical action that could help someone touched by dementia. The action can be big or as small because when it relates to dementia, every action counts.

The SGRC-AAA Dementia Friend Champions are available to deliver the information session in the SGRC region, at no cost, for any group. To schedule an in person or virtual session, please contact Connie Miss or Kimberly Rodgers at (912) 285-6097.

Contact the SGRC

SGRC Council 2021 Meeting Schedule

Meeting Locations TBD

September 23, 2021 – 11:00 am

October - No Meeting

October 26, 2021 -

Area Officials Appreciation Dinner

November – No meeting

(combined with December meeting)

December 9, 2021 – 11:00 am

(subject to change)



**SOUTHERN GEORGIA
REGIONAL COMMISSION**

Valdosta Office

1937 Carlton Adams Drive
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)**

