

In the REGION

SGRC Transportation and Environmental Division Announces Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety Training Course

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission, in partnership with Georgia Bikes, is offering a free bicycle/pedestrian training workshop for Law Enforcement Officials, SRO Officers, and others involved in Bicycle Safety Initiatives. The course is designed for participants to gain a better understanding of the new and current Georgia bicycle laws and learn the best practices for educating bicyclists and drivers to use roadways safely.

The course includes a review of O.C.G.A. sections pertinent to bicycles, an examination of bicycle and pedestrian facility types, an update on trends in bicycling in Southern Georgia, guidance on crash reporting, and an analysis of bicycle and pedestrian crash data for Southern Georgia.

Also included in the course is information on crashes involving pedestrians and strategies for improving pedestrian safety. Law enforcement Officers can receive two hours training credits for attending the workshop.

Date: Monday August 24, 2021

Time: 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

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

Registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/traffic-enforcement-for-bicycle-safety-waycross-tickets-157075859123>



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

SGRC Assists Cook County with Street Paving and Drainage Improvements

The SGRC's Community & Economic Development Division assisted Cook County in obtaining and administering \$376,053 in 2019 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to construct much needed street paving and drainage improvements on Roberts Rd, located in the Eastern region of the County. The total project cost was \$453,553. Arrow Engineering & Construction Services of Valdosta provided design, engineering, and construction oversight services for the project. The construction contractor was Scruggs of Valdosta. Completion of this project has provided a safe, paved road with adequate drainage for the 60 residents who live in the neighborhood.



Roberts Road Before

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Community and Economic Development

SGRC Assists Cook County with Street Paving and Drainage Improvements (continued)



Roberts Road After

Community and Economic Development

Georgia Academy for Economic Development Announces Open Registration for “The Essentials” Course

Registration is now open for the Georgia Academy for Economic Development’s newest course “The Essentials.” During this full, one-day interactive course, participants will enhance their collaborative leadership skills while learning what essential elements must be invested in for a community to experience a vibrant economy and manageable growth.

This course is suited to elected officials, local decision-makers, and any individual who wants to see their community thrive. Cost per one-day session is \$195 and includes access to course materials and online resources, in-person networking, Academy branded SWAG, meals and a certificate of completion.



Participants are welcome to attend any session location that is convenient for them. Space is limited. Register online today at <https://georgiaacademy.org/>

Training Dates and Locations:

- 8/24/2021 - Griffin
- 8/26/2021 - Madison
- 9/8/2021 - Moultrie
- 10/13/2021 - Virtual
- 10/14/2021 - Statesboro
- 11/9/2021 - Cartersville
- 11/16/2021 - Atlanta
- 11/17/2021 - Smarr/Forsyth
- 1/26/2022 - Brunswick
- 2/9/2022 - Vidalia
- 2/23/2022 - Sandersville
- 3/2/2022 - Atlanta

2021

**Georgia Association of Regional Commissions
Annual Conference**

SAVE THE DATE

November 3-5, 2021

King and Prince Resort
St. Simons Island, Georgia



Geographic Information Services



Brittany Luke

SGRC-GIS Welcomes New Staff Member

The SGRC Geographic Information Services (GIS) welcomes its newest team member, Brittany Luke. Luke recently earned a certificate in Geographic Information Systems, and she is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Spatial Data Science from Pennsylvania State University. Luke earned a Bachelor's degree in Science Education from the University of Georgia and taught high school science for five years before employment with the SGRC. Luke said, "My passion is using science and technology to help my community. In my spare time, I love to travel. I also hope to one day visit all of the U.S. National Parks." Welcome, Brittany!



Ashley Spradley

SGRC-GIS has New Drone Pilot

Ashley Spradley, SGRC-GIS Analyst, took the drone pilot licensure exam in late May 2021. An unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) license not only ensures that certified pilots learn how to perform a safe, and accurate flight, but also aims to make pilots aware of restricted airspace and current notification procedures. Ashley completed the exam with an almost perfect score, and recently received an official drone pilot license. SGRC-GIS Director Rachel Strom said, "Please join us in congratulating Ashley on this achievement, and do not hesitate to contact us for drone services!"

Workforce Development

WorkSource Southern Georgia Healthcare Sector Partnership New Logo

The South Georgia Healthcare Group is a healthcare sector partnership made possible through a WorkSource Georgia grant. The partnership brings together healthcare employers, secondary education institutions, post-secondary education institutions, and other community partners to facilitate constructive communication and collaboration to bridge the gap for employers.

WorkSource Southern Georgia is proud to announce that the South Georgia Healthcare Group has a new logo (see right) that was designed by Jen Padron, a student at Valdosta State Uni-



versity (VSU). The group obtained assistance from Padron to design a logo through Darrell Moore, the Executive Director of the Center for South Georgia Regional Impact at VSU.

Padron is from Atlanta but currently resides in Valdosta and is a Valdosta State University School of Social Work (MSW Candidate, 2022). She works on the LEGACY ACT TEAM as a First Responder Health Care Worker with Behavioral

Health of South Georgia in Valdosta, continuing fourteen years of work with crisis management in adult mental health and substance misuse. She is a State of Georgia and State of Texas Advanced Certified Peer Specialist, Community Health Worker, and a US Peer Workforce subject matter expert.



Jen Padron

Padron received the 2020 Esperanza Isaac

Hope Award from the National Coalition of Mental Health Recovery (NCMHR) and National Empowerment Center (NEC). At VSU, she recently completed a practicum internship at the local Legacy BHCC Crisis Stabilization Unit. Padron is also a creative artist and loves to make art (painting and film making). Going into Graduation in 2022 at VSU SOWK to procure her MSW and pursue licensure throughout the United States (US) for the US Peer Telehealth CoVid19 and Crisis Network, she is Interning at Living Bridges Ministry in Valdosta. In the Community, she has worked probono with [Surviving Race: Intersection of Injustice, Disability and Human Rights and is Organizer | US Lead for the August 30-September 2 Savannah Dialogues & Retreat.](#)

Local Government Services

Pre-update Meetings: A New Concept for Comprehensive Planning

On June 17, 2021, the Regional Commission Planning Services Division hosted the first meeting utilizing the new Comprehensive Plan Pre-update Meeting format. Brooks County and the cities of Barwick, Morven, Pavo and Quitman were the first to participate in the new process. The Pre-update Meeting was conceptualized by the SGRC Planning Staff to introduce and engage county and city staff early-on in the process of updating local comprehensive plans.

The concept of the meeting was to introduce the Regional Commission's role and services including an explanation of the process and timeline. The goal is for local government staff to be informed of the process and ready to lead discussions and answer questions from the public participants when the formal process begins.



Brooks County, Barwick, Morven, Pavo, and Quitman officials meet in the SGRC Conference Room in the SGRC Valdosta Office

The presentation was given by members of the SGRC Planning Division including: James Horton, Elizabeth Backe, Loretta Hylton and Sherry Davidson. Other participants were Corey Hull speaking on Transportation and Kimberly Hobbs with grant opportunities.

The meeting was held at the SGRC Conference Room in the Valdosta Office beginning at 10:00 am with a lunch break at 11:30 am. Lunch was provided by SGRC Planning Staff "Cottage Style," meaning that staff prepared homemade salads, sandwiches, and desserts which were all enjoyed by the group. After lunch, the meeting resumed with a Plan Implementation Assistance Meeting (a thirty-minute quick update of the Work Program) which lasted until 12:30 pm when the meeting was adjourned.

Scheduled next for Pre-update Meetings are: Atkinson, Bacon and Pierce Counties with their respective cities.

For more information on SGRC Local Government or Planning services go to www.sgrc.us or contact staff at (229) 333-5277.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program In Full Swing for the Summer of 2021

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) season typically lasts from June through September of each year. The SGRC-AAA program managers, along with congregate and home delivered meal site staff, are working diligently to ensure that no SFMNP-eligible senior citizen in the SGRC service area is left out. There are twenty-three SFMNP events scheduled for the 2021 season.

Approximately two years ago, the SGRC-AAA region was allotted less than 1,000 SFMNP vouchers per season; however, that number has progressively increased each year. Aging Director Scott Courson said he is very pleased that the growth trend continues and the SGRC region will have an estimated 2,400 vouchers for the 2021 SFMNP season.



Voucher allocation is based, in part, on utilization rates from the previous year. So, an increase in the number of SFMNP vouchers received for 2021 is particularly commendable given the unprecedented challenges faced in 2020. More specifically, despite the fact that nutrition centers were closed, staff were working from home, and the nation as a whole was struggling through the COVID19 pandemic; the SGRC-AAA team served more seniors than ever before in the 2020 market season. It should be noted that this great success is a direct result of the dedication and ingenuity of AAA staff.

At a time when many community services were being cancelled or postponed, the SGRC-AAA program managers restructured SFMNP events and successfully provided fresh fruit and produce to the homes of senior citizens sheltering-in-place. Furthermore, due to the work and perseverance of Lead Program Manager Shawn Taylor and program managers Linda Gail, Simone Popham, and Tiffany Bush in 2020, there are literally hundreds more SFMNP vouchers in the SGRC region for 2021.

On page 9 of this publication are photos of SFMNP events captured and submitted by Stephanie Bell of the Pierce County Family Connection. Bell is a strong advocate for elderly citizens and a valued community partner with the Pierce County Senior Center, as well as with the SGRC-AAA.

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Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program In Full Swing for the Summer of 2021 (continued)



Shawn Taylor, Simone Popham, and Lynn Platt



The Platt Family generously volunteered



Jackie Berrian and Darlene Myers



Pierce County Seniors



Karen Herndon, Lynn Platt, and Stephanie Bell



155 Seniors Served Bags of Fresh Produce

SFMNP at Pierce County Senior Center ~ July 9, 2021 (Submitted by Stephanie Bell)

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

Southern Georgia CARE-NET Seeking Nominations for Caregiver of the Year Award

The SGRC-AAA offers numerous services and supports for caregivers of people who are living with dementia such as; a caregiver collaborative, education and resources, and direct services for in-home care and respite. To accomplish some of this, the SGRC-AAA partners with the Rosalyn Carter Institute for Caregiving (RCI) to coordinate the Southern Georgia CARE-NET Collaborative and offer RCI's Dealing With Dementia workshop.

The Southern Georgia CARE-NET is a group comprised of community leaders, agency representatives, and professional and family caregivers who seek to improve the quality of caregiving services. Each AAA in Georgia coordinates a regional collaborative which works in partnership with a statewide RCI CARE-NET Collaborative.



The Dealing With Dementia workshop offers a comprehensive manual that serves as a practical resource guide for caregivers to provide information on dementia, related behaviors, managing caregiver stress, and learning caregiver self-care techniques. It is an excellent guide on being a caregiver for someone living with dementia or disabilities.

Caring for caregivers is a very personal issue for Rosalyn Carter, wife of former President Jimmy Carter. Mrs. Carter witnessed caregiving firsthand in her childhood home and in her adult life. As a result of her experiences and passion to help others, she founded the RCI as a way to care for caregivers.

In November, the RCI will recognize caregivers and present the annual Celebrating Georgia Caregivers Award. According to their website, "The Caregiver of the Year Award is designed to recognize selfless acts, compassion, empathy, effort and extraordinary commitment of caregivers toward those who need their care." Each CARE-NET Region may honor Regional Caregivers of the Year in three categories: Volunteer, Para-Professional, and/or Family and then from the regional winners, the RCI will select one Georgia Caregiver of the Year for each of the three categories.

The SGRC-AAA is accepting nominations now for the Regional Caregiver of the Year Award for the three categories previously listed. Anyone interested in making a nomination may contact Southern Georgia CARE-NET Coordinator Connie Miss or Kimberly Rodgers at (912)285-6097 to receive instructions and a nomination packet. The deadline for nominations to the SGRC-AAA is August 20, 2021.

Small Business Lending

SGRC Small Business Lending Program Assists South Georgia Furniture, Mattress, & Appliance with SBA 504 Loan

South Georgia Furniture, Mattress, & Appliance has operated successfully in Albany since 2014, and specializes in budget-friendly new and used furniture and appliances in the Albany area. Located at 910 W. Broad Avenue, the company has quickly outgrown its space.

Some related history regarding this business is that Nate Borer bought an existing mattress store at this location in 2014 with plans to obtain furniture suppliers to expand operations. He quickly contracted with Ashley furniture as a supplier and added several other suppliers over time. Borer operates the business using a team-oriented approach with the staff and also implemented several programs and initiatives to better serve customers. When the opportunity came this year to purchase a building in Leesburg and allow him to expand and better utilize the space, Borer was enthusiastic to pursue it.

Borer sought funding to purchase the building. He was interested in the low fixed rate offered by a SBA 504 loan and sought out Renasant bank to be the participating bank and to facilitate the loan. The SBA approved the financing in May 2021 and will provide 40% of the funds at a low, fixed rate for 20 years, while Renasant Bank will provide 50% of the funds in participation. Borer is required to make a 10% down payment. The loan will be funded in September of this year. With this project, South Georgia Furniture, Mattress, & Appliance will create 2 more jobs. Anyone interested may visit the store at its new location at 1461 US Highway 19 South in Leesburg, GA.



South Georgia Furniture, Mattress, & Appliance in Leesburg, GA

Contact the SGRC

SGRC Council 2021 Meeting Schedule

Meeting Locations TBD

August 26, 2021 – 11:00 am

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**

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Welcome Donna McIntosh!



The SGRC-AAA would like to welcome its newest employee. Donna McIntosh has been hired as a Fiscal Specialist for Aging Services. She comes to SGRC with a background in Administrative Healthcare and Government. She enjoys spending time with her family and caring for her pets. Donna said that she is excited to be here.