



Executive Director's Report



Happy New Year! As we start a new year, I just want to take this opportunity to wish the Council Members and all of the communities of the Georgia Mountains Region a very happy and prosperous 2017! We are blessed to live in one of the fastest growing regions in Georgia and the nation. We are off to a great start, and hitting the ground running on many projects. We look forward to working with all of our communities this year.

It is my pleasure to introduce our newest employee, Mr. Daniel Martin who began his employment with GMRC in early January as the new Economic Development Director. Daniel comes to us via Orlando, where he worked in the private sector for a few years. Prior to that, Daniel worked in Alabama doing economic development work for several communities. He is a graduate of Auburn University and resides in **Towns County**.

2016 saw the largest amount of people to utilize/visit the Career Coaches. 2,017 people came through the units (124 more than 2015) which is an increase of 6.5%. 4,024 responses (572 more than 2015) were performed which is an increase of 16.5%. Congrats to Micah and Keith on their hard work assisting residents with job searches and applications, resumes, interview assistance, etc.

We recently received notification from the Appalachian Regional Commission that eight out of nine pre-applications were approved. Congratulations to the Economic Development staff in preparing these pre-applications and on achieving this outstanding feat. They now begin the next step in preparing full applications.

Council Training is scheduled for **Thursday, February 23rd beginning at 10AM** and will be held at **Helen City Hall**. Council Training is a **requirement** of our council bylaws, so please make every effort to attend. **Please note:** *the regular monthly scheduled Council Meeting will be immediately after the training session, so there will not be an evening meeting.*

It's often been said that "you can't know where you're going until you know where you've been". There is no good time like today to evaluate ourselves to see where we are going. I will be sending out a survey to all 51 local governments that make up the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission to identify how the GMRC is performing, as well as to identify future opportunities. Please encourage your city or county to complete this survey, so that we can better serve the communities in the Georgia Mountains Region.

The next City and County Managers meeting is scheduled for February 22, 2017 at 10am at the Lavonia Depot in downtown Lavonia. Hope everyone can attend.

Sincerely,

Heather Feldman

Heather J. Feldman
Executive Director

Economic Development



Please welcome Mr. Daniel Martin as the new Director of Economic Development. Daniel has experience in both the public and private sectors, but his true passion is public service and economic development.

OneGeorgia Grant Awarded

Congratulations to the **Franklin County** Industrial Building Authority (FCIBA) on receiving approval of a \$500,000 OneGeorgia Authority grant for infrastructure improvements to the Central Franklin Industrial Park.

Appalachian Regional Commission Program Updates

Effective at the beginning of Georgia Fiscal Year 2017, the following changes have been made to the ARC Program:

- Increased the maximum investment award from \$300,000 to \$600,000 per project. Projects requesting this amount must show significant public benefit, particularly in the areas of job creation, leveraged private investment, or other criteria such as significant public health benefits for citizens of a community or region.
- Adjusted the application schedule from one annual cycle to two. ARC expects to announce a second funding application deadline in the early spring of 2017, and will announce awards during the summer of 2017.

CDBG Grant Deadline – April 3, 2017

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has announced the deadline to apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding is **April 3, 2017**. The primary objective of the CDBG program is for the development of viable communities through improvement of infrastructure, housing, and economic development opportunities in cities and counties. Please contact a member of the Economic Development Department if you are interested in learning more about the program and/or project eligibility.

CEDS Meeting

The next meeting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee is scheduled for **Thursday, February 9, 2017 at 3:00 p.m.** at North Georgia Technical College.

Congratulations to Patrick Larson, Economic Development Representative on celebrating five years of working for the Regional Commission!



Information Services

It's that time of year again! Time for the US Census Bureau Boundary and Annexation Survey for cities and counties. An accurate boundary is critical for the upcoming Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) project, Census 2020 population count and grant applications. The deadline to file US Census BAS is March 1, 2017. If your City or County needs assistance with this project, please contact Brandon Carlock at 770-535-5458 or email bcarlock@gmrc.ga.gov.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend a meeting at the GMRC office on January 30th at 2:00 pm to discuss the 2018 GMRC Aerial Photography and LiDAR acquisition project. Contact Faith Bryan at 770-538-2614 or email fbryan@gmrc.ga.gov for additional information.

GMRC Staff attended a meeting regarding the MAP-21 project. The GDOT Office of Transportation Data (OTD) is charged with specific database validation requirements associated with GIS-based road centerline attribution mandated by the federally-enacted surface transportation act, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). The Georgia Association of Regional Commissions signed an agreement with UGA's Information Technology and Outreach (ITOS) division, to perform the MAP-21 work required in each regional commission area. The project kickoff meeting for all Regional Commissions will be held in March.

In December, GMRC hosted Natalie Lee with Michael Baker International. She presented information regarding NextGEN-911 and implementation deadlines. NG911 is an Internet Protocol (IP)-based system that allows digital information (e.g., voice, photos, videos, text messages) to flow seamlessly from the public, through the 911 network, and on to emergency responders. Existing 911 systems cannot handle or process some of the above-mentioned data. The implementation deadline to have all 911 systems updated is 2020. We have placed the presentation and information handouts on our website for download and review.

Planning

The City of Clermont has had their *Comprehensive Plan update* approved by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

Dawson County has had the annual update of their *Capital Improvements Element* approved by DCA.

The GMRC is participating in several water quality projects, including developing a *Watershed Improvement Plan* for the upper Chattahoochee River in **White County**, a *floodplain mitigation assessment* in **Towns County**, and *erosion and sedimentation management projects* for both the Chestatee River in **Lumpkin County** and the Stekoa Creek watershed in **Rabun County**.



Georgia Mountains

Youth Services

Four youth participating in the GED program from **Forsyth, Hart, Towns, and Union** Counties, began college Spring Semester 2017!

Youth staff led four workshops in **Hall** and **Banks** Counties on inter viewing, future planning and career planning

One Youth participant in **Hall County** graduated college and one completed high school diploma from Credit Recovery Program in **White County**.

Other News

Molly Simonds completed her Accounting degree with the help of the WIOA program. At the time that she applied, she and her husband were not working and had just purchased a house. Molly started out in the nursing program but switched to the accounting program. She said, “We had spent so much money on nursing school for me, that when I changed my major I didn’t see how we could come up with money to start over, but GMWD made it possible.”

Molly heard about the WIOA program through North Georgia Technical College at an orientation. She had been told several times that she was not eligible, but Molly was persistent and kept on trying. She said, “It couldn’t have come at a better time.” Molly enjoyed the Accounting program and felt that she had found her calling, even though she felt that some of her professors were nothing more than added stress.

When asked what she thought of the WIOA services, she said, “It may require a lot of paperwork but it is totally worth it. My husband ended up losing his job; the only income we had. Without WIOA, I would have had to quit school and go back to work.” Now that Molly has completed her degree, she and her husband are back in the workforce and she cannot wait to start working with numbers. Molly says, “Don’t let the paperwork intimidate you. It’s really not that bad. Just because you’re not eligible now, your circumstances may change and you may become eligible.”

Career Coaches

The Career Coaches were invited to participate in an Georgia Department of Probation Employment Workshop at the Goodwill in **Habersham**. Five individuals completed resumes and received WIOA information.

The Coaches were also invited to an outreach event for Ninth District Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program in **Franklin County** held at the Ninth District Office. Eight individuals were assisted with various requests and a 2nd event has been scheduled for January.

A total of 235 persons registered on VOS via the Career Coaches by the end of 2016! The equals 19.5 persons per month average!

While the month December saw the least number of persons and responses, 2016 saw the largest amount of people to utilize/visit the Career Coaches. 2,017 people came through the unit (124 more than 2015) which is an increase of 6.5%. 4,024 responses (572 more than 2015) were performed which is an increase of 16.5%!

Category of Responses	Month Total	Year Total
Total Job Searches	36	942
Total Job App	4	134
Total Resumes	19	646
Total Interviews	0	4
Total Interest Survey	0	559
Total Training Sessions	0	8
Total Testing	1	4
Total Typing Assessments	0	40
WIOA Info	24	1109
Total Unemployment Claims	0	0
Computer Trainings	0	0
Microsoft Office Classes	0	0
Public Relations	1	577

RESPONSES PER COUNTY	
Banks—1	Lumpkin—0
Dawson—0	Rabun—12
Forsyth—9	Stephens—7
Franklin—22	Towns—0
Habersham—8	Union—0
Hall—15	White—7
Hart—4	Other—0

Event and Meeting Schedule

DATE	TIME	EVENT/MEETING	LOCATION/HOST
January 26	4:00 pm	WorkSource Board Meeting	City of Cumming
	5:00 pm	Local Elected Officials Board	City Park Recreation Building
	5:30 pm	Executive Committee	
	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	
January 30	2:00 pm	GMRC 2018 Aerial Photography/LiDAR Project	GMRC Office—Gainesville
February 9	3:00 pm	CEDS Committee	North GA Technical College—Clarkesville
February 23	10:00 am	GMRC Council Training/Meeting	City of Helen—City Hall
March 30	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	City of Cornelia
April 27	4:00 pm	GMWD Board Meeting	City of Lavonia
	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	
May 25	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting Legislative Appreciation	Dawson County
June 29	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	Hall County
July 27	4:00 pm	WorkSource Board	Rabun County
	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	
August 31	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	City of Gainesville
September 28	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	White County
October 26	4:00 pm	WorkSource Board	Lumpkin County/City of Dahlonega
	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	
November 16	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	City of Dawsonville
December 1	6:00 pm	GMRC Annual Meeting	Dillard House Conference Center