



Pinnacle

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Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

Executive Director's Report



- ◆ Preparing for the 2015 kickoff has been our December theme. Of course the largest single project ever in the history of the GMRC is being kicked off in early January. Kudos to Faith Bryan for heading our flyover project that will be conducted in five different regions. We expect this to be completed by March and then the mapping completed by October. This is an exciting project for the region and all of our partners.
- ◆ Kudos to Heather Feldman and the Economic Development staff for working with the Finance Department and especially Becky Sievers in closing out the Economic Development budget and grants for 2014 on the highest note ever. Great financial planning and operations for last year. This might be the best year ever for fiscal operations for the GMRC.
- ◆ I am impressed that we are now serving more folks in more counties than ever in the Workforce Development department, due to John Phillips' leadership. I promised the Council that we would serve all 13 counties and not just 1 to 3 counties as we had previously done, and that is being accomplished annually by our WD staff. One of my favorite accomplishments is that we were able to assist with two GED's in our RYDC program this year. This was an idea of John Phillips and Jessica Williams and I was so proud to see this happen during our first partial year into the new program.
- ◆ Our Mobile Training Units (MTUs) are active all over the region serving the largest number of clients ever for this region as are our fixed sites. Thanks to Micah Thomas and Keith Krauth for leading that charge. If you hear of us coming to a library, senior center or other public facility in your county, please get the word out so we can continue to drop our unemployment rates in our counties. We are indeed making a difference.
- ◆ Adam Hazell and his Planning Department seem to be doing more in the region than ever before. I appreciate Joe Rothwell, Caleb Davidson and Adam and their work with our communities as they continue to grow and expand their services. Call Adam for info on how they can support your community.
- ◆ It is a great time to be with the GMRC as we work together, grow together and plan for the future... together.

Employee Spotlight



Wanda Payne was born in Gainesville. She has travelled throughout her life visiting Germany twice, Florida beaches, and Charleston, S.C. Wanda met and married Tommy Payne in **Gainesville**. They have two sons Chris and Jody. Both of her sons have served in the military. One of the most important roles for Wanda is being Nana to seven grandchildren.

After five years in the wallpaper industry and 15 years in banking, Wanda decided to commit herself to GMRC Workforce Development Division. Wanda is known at GMRCWD for providing the best customer service. Wanda was the proud recipient of the GMRC Employee of the Year for 2014. She offers assistance in any way she can to her co-workers. Gardening and cooking are hobbies for Wanda, anyone who has discussed flowers with her or tasted her coconut cake would agree. We are fortunate to have her on our staff.

Economic Development

- ◆ Congratulations to Meisa Pace for graduating the Georgia Academy for Economic Development!!



- ◆ On behalf of the following communities, the following projects were submitted to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for Recreational Trails Grant funding:

City of Dawsonville – Main Street Park Trail

City of Cornelia – Tallulah Falls Rails to Trails Project

City of Lula – Nature Trails at Rafe Banks Park

City of Maysville – Nature Trails at Maysville City Park

Hart County – Trail Project

- ◆ On behalf of the following communities, Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) were submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for grant funding:

Franklin County

City of Lavonia

City of Royston

City of Toccoa

Stephens County

- ◆ Patrick Larson and Nancy Smallwood attended the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Applicant's Workshop hosted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Nancy Smallwood was asked by DCA to make a presentation at the workshop and did a great job showcasing the **Lumpkin County** CDBG project for water improvements.

Awards

- ◆ Congratulations to the 2014 Annual Award recipients!!! On December 5, 2014 at the GMRC Annual Awards Dinner Chairman Sam Norton and Executive Director Danny Lewis presented the following awards:

Chairman's Award—Congressman Doug Collins

Elected Official of the Year—Dean Scarborough

Appointed Official of the Year—Charlie Auvermann

Council Member of the Year—Bill Chafin

Employee of the Year—Wanda Payne

Workforce Development

- ◆ Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC) youth received GED through Georgia Mountains Workforce Development program
- ◆ College youth graduated with Criminal Justice Degree
- ◆ Georgia Mountains Workforce Development Youth Department held Employability and Character building workshops in **Franklin, Habersham, Union, and Stephens Counties**
- ◆ 14 Hall County youth attended December Employability and Character Building monthly workshop
- ◆ Met with regional Department of Juvenile Justice to continue development of partnership for out-of-school youth
- ◆ Met with **Flowery Branch** High School to implement new program

Information Services

- ◆ The US Census Bureau has contacted the highest elected official at the City/Town/County level regarding the Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) to update their records regarding changes to legal boundaries, names and governmental status of all governmental units effective on or before January 1 of the survey year. This voluntary survey is an important opportunity for you to ensure that the US Census Bureau has the correct boundary and legal name for your government. The Census Bureau will use the boundary information you provide to report data from the Population Estimates Program (PEP), the American Community Survey (ACS) and other Census programs and surveys. If you need assistance with the BAS 2015 submittal, please contact me at (770)538-2614 or via email at fbryan@gmrc.ga.gov.
- ◆ The 2015 GMRC Aerial Photography/LiDAR Project is officially underway. On December 12th, we held the project kickoff meeting at our offices. Jeff Simmons and Michael Martin with Quantum Spatial and Nathan Roberson with Pictometry spoke to the participants regarding the workscope, flight plans and deliverables. As of January 20th, planes have been in the air acquiring the imagery and LiDAR for several of the southern-most counties in our project. Interested in learning more about our project? Contact Faith Bryan at (770)538-2614.
- ◆ GMRC Staff recently completed the GMRC Digital Economy Plan in cooperation with a grant received from Georgia Technology Association. To download or view the final document, please visit our website at www.gmrc.ga.gov.
- ◆ The **City of Dawsonville** has requested assistance with updating their Zoning Map and work progresses on the **City of Toccoa** Cemetery and **Towns County** Parcel Conversion projects.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
January 29	3:00 pm	WD Board Meeting	Habersham EMC—Clarkesville
	5:00 pm	GMRC Executive Meeting	Habersham EMC—Clarkesville
	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	Habersham EMC—Clarkesville
February 26	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	Hall County—Location TBA
March 26	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	Stephens County—Gate Cottage at Toccoa Falls College

Annual Dinner

