



Pinnacle

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Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

Executive Director's Report



- ◆ The GMRC Council has approved for the Executive Director Danny Lewis to select an Interim Deputy Executive Director. This individual will come from within the organization and will help in the transition from our current Executive Director to the new Executive Director (which will be determined later by the GMRC Council). The Council will determine the salary of the Interim Deputy Director at the March meeting in **Lavonia**. The Interim Deputy Director can be considered as the next Executive Director, if so determined by the Council, too. (Danny expects to retire between August 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016, as was announced at the February meeting).
- ◆ Hope that all Council members will make it a point to be at the March 31st Council meeting. Zack Johnson of the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) will be bringing our program. Be sure and invite your City and County Managers and Clerks to hear Zack's presentation. Also, Jim Dove President of the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) and Executive Director of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission will be in attendance to meet our Council and guests.
- ◆ Our annual Legislative Appreciation Meeting will be held on May 26, 2016 at 6:00 pm, in **Dawson County**. Please go ahead and invite your legislators to plan to join us for this important session. Details will be sent out later.



UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	TIME	EVENT/MEETING	LOCATION
March 31	5:00 pm 6:00 pm	GMRC Executive Meeting GMRC Council Meeting	Franklin County/City of Lavonia Lavonia Depot
April 21***	4:00 pm 5:00 pm 6:00 pm	WD Board Meeting GMRC Executive Meeting GMRC Council Meeting	Banks County/City of Homer Funopolis Family Fun Center
May 26	5:00 pm 6:00 pm	GMRC Executive Meeting GMRC Legislative Appreciation Dinner	Dawson County—Location TBA

PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE FOR APRIL COUNCIL MEETING

Economic Development

- ◆ On behalf of the **City of Lavonia**, an application was submitted to the Appalachian Regional Commission for funding for the I-85 Northern Sewer Trunk Line Project.
- ◆ On behalf of the **Stephens County** Development Authority, a OneGeorgia EDGE grant application for \$400,000 was submitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. As recommended by the Georgia Department of Economic Development, the application outlines a request for funding to offset building construction costs for a new business in **Stephens County**.
- ◆ On behalf of the **City of Clarkesville**, a Rural Business Development grant was submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development for \$99,500 in grant funding for the city's downtown redevelopment project.

Planning Services

- ◆ Both the **Coosa-North Georgia** and **Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Water Councils**, which combined represent 11 of the region's 13 counties, have begun work on updates to their respective parts of the *State Water Plans*. Contact the Planning Department to see how you and your community could be involved.
- ◆ The **Town of Clermont** has begun working on the update of their *Comprehensive Plan*.
- ◆ *PlanFirst nominations* are due to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) by May 15th. Contact the Planning Department if you'd like assistance with an application.
- ◆ **Lumpkin County** and **Dahlonega** have begun working on their respective *Comprehensive Plan* updates.
- ◆ **Dawsonville** is updating their *Downtown Revitalization Plan* and looking to begin *streetscape improvements* this year.

Employee Spotlight



Originally from Nashville, Tennessee, Andrea Newsom moved to Athens and attended UGA where she received a Bachelor's in Psychology. After 18 years in the restaurant business, she left the industry and began work in Human Resources. With the Regional Commission since 2011, Andrea is the Human Resources Specialist and the Revolving Loan Fund Administrator.

Residing in Jefferson, Georgia, Andrea is busy getting her M.S. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. When not in school or at work she is taking care of her six year old Boston Terrier French bulldog rescue and her seven year old Boston Terrier who are like her children. In her spare time, Andrea bounces between Nashville, Ohio, and Hilton Head with friends and family.

Success Story



When I first learned about Georgia Mountains Workforce Development (GMWD), I was working as a bus driver for the **Hall County** School System and waitressing. I had just graduated with my Associate Degree in Social Work when I was told that I would not have any Pell grant funds to complete my bachelor's degree in Human Services Delivery and Administration (HSDA). This news was heartbreaking and I was not sure how I would ever finish my education.

I went by the Georgia Department of Labor seeking any help that was available. While there, I inquired about a brochure from GMWD. I attended the overview session to learn more about the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and began getting my application paperwork together. There was a lot of paperwork and leg work that had to be done, but I was determined this program was going to help me finish what I had started 20 years ago.

I was very thankful for the services provided by GMWD. My program required 650 internship hours to graduate which meant that I could no longer continue working. With the WIA funds provided for afterschool care of my nine year old and the transportation reimbursement, I was able to get by. In addition, the assistance with books, supplies, and tuition was a big load off my back.

WIA not only pushed me beyond my comfort zone, it allowed my children to see how important getting my degree was. A month after I graduated from UNG, I interviewed for a job with Department of Juvenile Justice where I had completed a total of 1120 internship and volunteer hours. I was hired on July 1, 2015.

If not for GMWD and the WIA program, I would not have finished my degree and be working as Juvenile Probation officer. This was like a dream come true. I am now able to encourage both youth and their parents to take advantage of the resources that GMWD and WIA offer. Currently, three youth that I am serving are able to attend college thanks to assistance from GMWD.

March 25, 2016



**In observance of
Good Friday**

Workforce Development

- ◆ Rapid Response along with its partners: Danette Smith, Tim Martin and the staff at Caterpillar, have been coordinating important services for the soon to be dislocated workers. The Caterpillar Plant located in **Toccoa** will be closing its doors as of May 31, 2016.
- ◆ Caterpillar submitted a petition for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and it has been approved as of March 3, 2016.
- ◆ Rapid Response and its Mobile Career Coaches performed two separate days of Resume Writing Workshops onsite so that all three shifts would have the opportunity to create their own current professional resume. Over 37 employers took advantage of these resume workshops.
- ◆ Rapid Response and partners have coordinated a Job Fair to be conducted onsite at Caterpillar. It has been scheduled for May 12, 2016.
- ◆ Rapid Response Layoff Aversion funding for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) has been ramping up as well.
- ◆ A successful IWT was just completed for Global Tank & Tower located in **Lavonia**. They now have a Certified Tower Climber Safety and Rescue Training instructor on site. They are wanting to hire and train more employees.
- ◆ Eaton Aerospace has requested a second round of IWT for approximately 37 employees to receive Geometric Dimensioning & Tolerance training offered and conducted by North Georgia Technical College.
- ◆ Rapid Response Coordinator Daniel Thornton along with On the Job Training Coordinator Niki Sievers presented information on their respective programs to the employers at the **White County** Career Fair on March 10, 2016 in **Cleveland**.
- ◆ Youth Department Staff conducted workshops at Avita Clubhouse in **Hall County**.
- ◆ Youth Department Staff participated in the **Gainesville/Hall County** Transition Fair. Youth Department Staff also conducted a "Dress for Success" workshop at the Transition Fair, and the Mobile Career Coaches were present for students to complete a skills inventory. There were approximately 350 students from **Hall County, Lumpkin County** and **Union County** in attendance.
- ◆ Youth Department conducted time management skills workshops at the **White County** Mountain Education Center and future planning workshop in **Habersham County**.
- ◆ Stephanie Stringer is the newest employee at GMRCWD. Stephanie is an Adult/Dislocated Worker Case Manager and will be a great addition to our team. Welcome aboard Stephanie!

Career Coach

- ◆ The Career Coach visited The Place of Forsyth in **Cumming** and St. Francis of Assisi in **Union County**. A total of 15 individuals were able to receive assistance with various requests.

Category of Responses:	Month Total	Year Total
Total Job Searches	77	151
Total Job App	11	26
Total Resumes	37	92
Total Interviews	1	1
Total Interest Survey	14	21
Total Training Sessions	2	3
Total Testing	0	0
Total Typing Assessments	1	1
Total GMRC Info	59	137
Total Unemployment Claims	0	0
Computer Trainings	0	0
Microsoft Office Classes	0	0

RESPONSES PER COUNTY

Banks - 11	Lumpkin - 6
Dawson - 5	Rabun - 6
Forsyth - 41	Stephens - 26
Franklin - 1	Towns - 2
Habersham - 21	Union - 4
Hall - 82	White - 3
Hart - 0	Other - 0

Information Services

- ◆ GMRC staff presented to the **City of Homer** our capabilities on assisting them with mapping the City's Water Distribution System. We have also been discussing mapping utilities for the **City of Toccoa**. If your City needs mapping assistance regarding the water, sewer, storm water or gas infrastructure, give us a call or drop an email to fbryan@gmrc.ga.gov.
- ◆ Faith Bryan gave a presentation to the statewide Geographic Information System Coordinating Committee (GISCC) last month. She provided to the group information regarding the 2015 GMRC Aerial Photography/LiDAR Project. It was a very successful project that GMRC is proud to show off. At the end of the presentation, it was also announced that this project was the largest in the State of Georgia for 2015.
- ◆ The **City of Lula** has requested our assistance with the city maintained Westview Cemetery.
- ◆ Zoning Map updates have been requested by the **City of Dawsonville**.

Around the Region

