

April 2022

PINNACLE

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

LAVONIA
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Save the Date:

Calendar of Upcoming Meetings

Cover Photo
Lavonia Historic Train Depot
Lavonia, GA
Courtesy of Lavonia Welcome Center

Executive Director's Report



Heather Feldman
Executive Director

- The Georgia Department of Transportation and the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission have initiated the process of creating a Regional Transit Development Plan (TDP). The TDP will help identify transit needs and opportunities and inform future transit system investments across the 12 counties making up the Georgia Mountains Region. The Regional TDP process will assist the GMRC in developing a robust regional transit vision that will lay the foundation for regional partnerships that address intercounty transit needs. The GMRC will be hosting a drop-in public hearing on May 11th at North Georgia Technical College beginning at 4:00 p.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m.

- Earlier this month, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs released a Notice of Funding Availability for the opportunity of one-time funding of \$17 million allocated in the FY2022 Amended State Budget for the purpose of supporting transformative economic development projects in rural downtowns that will revitalize the community. The availability and use of these funds are subject to all applicable state laws and regulations and is further subject to DCA's policies. DCA is the administrator of the state's Rural Downtown Redevelopment Grant Program. The objective is to provide financial resources to communities who have planned for and are ready to initiate projects within their core downtown areas that have the potential to revitalize the community, while being transformative in nature. Please contact the Economic Development Staff if you are interested in applying or for additional information. Please contact Daniel Martin at 770-538-2610 for more information.
- Released three weeks ago, the President's FY23 Budget Request proposed a \$546 million budget for the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). This would represent a 46 percent increase above the enacted FY22 appropriations level of \$373.5 million for EDA. The President's Budget Request does not determine final FY23 appropriations levels but rather identifies topline priorities and sets the stage for the congressional appropriations process to begin.
- The Georgia Department of Community Affairs' PlanFirst Program is now accepting nominations from interested communities. PlanFirst is DCA's program to recognize and reward communities that clearly demonstrate an established pattern of successfully implementing their local Comprehensive Plan. Nominations are due by May 15th and any community interested in applying may request the GMRC to write their application at no cost. Please contact Adam Hazell at 770-538-2617 or ahazell@gmrc.ga.gov
- Thank you to Dr. Patrick Fulbright with Small Business Development Center who presented at this month's GMRC meeting. Dr. Fulbright gave a great presentation and overview of the Small Business Development Center and services offered to entrepreneurs and small businesses owners.
- Congratulations to Adam Hazell and Ashley Russell for recently completing the Georgia Academy for Economic Development Essentials Class!



Sincerely,

Heather Feldman

Heather Feldman



Economic Development

- The Georgia Mountains Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) committee recently met at North Georgia Technical College in **Clarksville** to discuss the upcoming 5-year rewrite. The group discussed a variety of needs and mitigation strategies for the Region. For more information on CEDS visit our website at: <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/ceds>
- On behalf of the City of **Cornelia**, a Department of Transportation's RAISE grant application in the amount of \$5,801,000 was recently submitted. The request is to assist with:
 - 1) The **Cornelia** Greenway, which is an approximately 2-mile multi-use trail along an old abandoned railbed.
 - 2) The Iron Ore Traffic Signal and Road, which will include the installation of a traffic signal at the interchange of US 23/Georgia Highway 365 (GA 365) On/Off Ramp and Old Historic US Highway 441 (Old 441) as well as the completion of Iron Ore Road from its current terminus to the new traffic signal.The total project cost is \$6,901,000.

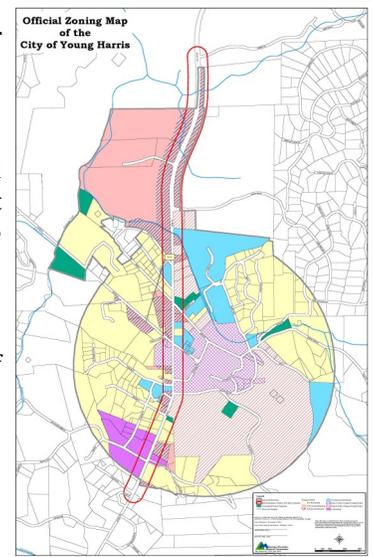
NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY

- **Rural Downtown Redevelopment Grant Program**

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) recently announced one-time funding of \$17 million allocated in the FY2022 Amended State Budget for the purpose of supporting transformative economic development projects in rural downtowns that will revitalize the community. DCA is seeking to fund construction projects that have likely to have already undergone a large degree of planning by the community. As a result, applicants should be able to provide commitment of all necessary partnerships, plans, architectural/engineering designs, the remaining balance of funding, and any other relevant documentation to demonstrate the readiness of the project to proceed. The intent is to award applicants that propose to create transformational change within the downtown area as a result of the application's implementation. Ideal grant amounts range from \$1,000,000 - \$5,000,000 with a 10% match. The deadline for applications is June 3, 2022 at 11:59 PM. Contact the Economic Development department for more information.

Information Systems

- The City of **Lula** has contracted with GMRC to create an Official Voting District Map.
- GMRC staff are working with the cities of **Royston** and **Dillard** on updating their Zoning Maps.
- **Union, Rabun, Franklin, and Hart** counties will be processed over the next several weeks for the REVAMP project. GMRC is compiling data on sidewalks, on street parking, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, school zones, and turn lanes within these counties and incorporated areas.
- 2022 Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) will be submitted for the cities of **Gillsville, Dawsonville, Dahlonega, Toccoa, Lula, Hartwell and Baldwin**.



Planning

Reminder of Upcoming Local Planning Due Dates

For Georgia counties and municipalities seeking to maintain their Qualified Local Government (QLG) status, they must complete the timely update of their various state reporting requirements and their community planning documents. Maintaining these documents not only ensures compliance with state laws but also demonstrates a commitment to working with up-to-date information and sustaining a dialogue with your constituents in order to respond to their needs. And as always, the GMRC and other agencies are available to assist with these processes!

Please remember that the deadlines for all comprehensive plans, Capital Improvement Elements (CIE), or service delivery (SDS) documents are the dates by which DCA must have verified that your SDS is compliant - ie: the deadlines are not submittal dates, they are process completion dates. We recommend 60 day lead times to ensure that reviews can be completed and any necessary revisions conducted and subsequently reviewed before passage of applicable deadlines.

	PLANS	CIE	SDS
*Hall County	6/30/2022	6/30/2022	6/30/27
*Clermont	6/30/2022		6/30/27
*Flowery Branch	6/30/2022		6/30/27
*Gainesville	6/30/2022	6/30/2022	6/30/27
*Oakwood	6/30/2022		6/30/27
*Hart County	10/31/2022		10/31/22
Gillsville	6/30/2023		6/30/27
Lula	6/30/2023		6/30/27
Banks County	10/31/2023		10/31/28
Homer	10/31/2023		10/31/28
Maysville	10/31/2023		10/31/28
Dawson County	10/31/2023	10/31/28	10/31/28
Dawsonville	10/31/2023		10/31/28
Habersham County	10/31/2023		10/31/28
*Cornelia	10/31/2023		10/31/28
Franklin County	10/31/2024		2/28/32
Rabun County	10/31/2024		

*= In Progress

WorkSource



- WIOA funds are making an impact and great things happen when partners come together! Join us in congratulating the welding graduates from Arrendale State Prison in **Habersham** County. This is the first boot camp to collaborate with Kubota and work as they learn during the 10-week welding boot camp. Participants attended soft skills training and welding classes one day a week at North Georgia Technical College and completed their AWS certifications in order to be hired permanently in welding positions.



- The City of **Cornelia** has filled its Firefighter Internship position and will use WIOA Funding to train their new candidate. Funding is available on a first-come, first-served basis through Business Services. Employers interested in partnering with WorkSource Georgia Mountains for Internships or On-the-Job Training or that need Incumbent Worker Training, should contact Niki McPherson at 770.538.2734 or nmcpherson@gmrc.ga.gov. More information can be found at www.gmrc.ga.gov/employers.

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In other WorkSource news:

- Staff attended **Habersham** Family Community Resource Night at Mountain Education Charter High School
- Staff presented Resume Building workshop at North Forsyth High School.
- Summer Virtual Work Experience for eligible youth starts May 31st – July 1st – contact

Career Compass Academy
SUMMER 2022: MAY 31 - JULY 1

Great Career Academy is a paid virtual work readiness program for WIOA eligible youth, ages 18-24. This 42-hour, 6-week program activities youth with work ready skills and addresses barriers with opportunities to explore and practice work activities in a virtual environment.

Career Experience Skills

- Be available Monday through Wednesday to attend live webinars.
- Attend all scheduled events on time and in a safe, participative, collaborative and professional manner.
- Complete assigned online self-paced course modules on time.
- Create and submit an online cover portfolio including cover plan, resume, and sample cover letters.

Eligibility & Commitment

- Be WIOA eligible to attend or out of school youth between the ages of 18-24.
- Have an ability and interest to learn about high demand industries and jobs.
- Provide strong verbal communication, be organized, and maintain attention on the online, self-paced modules.
- Have access to internet, computer or mobile phone and headphones.

Online Support For more information, contact: Summer Enrollment at 770.538.2734 or enrollment@gmrc.ga.gov

WorkSource Georgia Mountains partners with the following organizations:

WorkSource Georgia Mountains | CareerForce | WorkSource Georgia Mountains | CareerForce | WorkSource Georgia Mountains | CareerForce

Events Around the Region

<p align="center">Clayton Farmers Market Reopening!</p> <p>April 2 - October 1, 2022 9a.m.-12p.m. Saturdays only</p> <p>Clayton Food Bank 46 Plaza Way Clayton, GA 30525</p> <p>Homemade foods, plants, honey, breads, mushrooms, pottery, and more!</p> <p>Call (706)490-1179 or visit the page on Facebook for more information</p>	<p align="center">Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds— Towns County</p> <p>Hiwassee Highlands Wine Festival – May 7, 2022</p> <p>Scotty McCreery – May 14, 2022</p> <p>Hiwassee Pro Rodeo – May 27, 28 & 29 2022</p> <p>The Rhododendron Festival – May 1, May 6-8, May 13-15, May 20-22</p> <p>Visit the website below for more info and ticket prices!</p> <p>Georgiamountainfairgrounds.com</p>	<p align="center">Pickin' In the Park and Car Show</p> <p>639 Main Street Clermont, GA 30527</p> <p>Car Show 3p.m.-7p.m. and Live Music from 7p.m.—9 p.m.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 7, 2022 • June 11, 2022 • Aug 6, 2022
<p align="center">Fishing Rodeo at Black Rock Mountain Lake</p> <p>Saturday, May 7, 2022 9 a.m.. to 12 p.m.</p> <p>.Black Rock Mountain State Park - Mountain City, GA</p> <p>Join children 12 and under for a morning of fishing at Black Rock Lake. Anglers can get the chance to win prizes for their big catch.</p> <p>\$5 parking.</p> <p>706-746-2141.</p> <p>Black Rock Mountain State Park Department Of Natural Resources Division (gastateparks.org)</p>	<p align="center">Toccoa Train Day</p> <p>May 7th, 2022</p> <p>Historic Depot</p> <p>Events throughout the day</p> <p>706-282-3309</p> <p>Come join us for Toccoa Train Day! The welcome train arrives at 6:15 a.m. and the train displays at the museum from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Events throughout the day including a kiddie train ride.</p> <p>www.mainstreettoccoa.com</p>	<p align="center">Of These Mountains Spring Marketplace</p> <p>Rabun County Civic Center Pavilions 201 W Savannah St Clayton, GA 30525</p> <p>Saturday, May 14th, 2022, 10a.m. to 5p.m.</p> <p>Shopping, local artists, makers, vendors, and small businesses from the surrounding areas.</p> <p>FREE admission for all ages!</p> <p>OTM Spring Marketplace & Vendor Info- Of These Mountains</p> <p>http://www.rabunciviccenter.com/</p>
<p align="center">Cruzin' Down Doyle</p> <p>May 21, 2022</p> <p>Historic Downtown Toccoa, 43 West Doyle Street</p> <p>3p.m. - 7p.m.</p> <p>706-282-3309</p> <p>Any year car, truck, motorcycle or tractor welcomed! From May until September, the cruise-in will be held once a month on the third Saturday. Registration and admission is free.</p> <p>www.mainstreettoccoa.com</p>	<p align="center">Mountain Fling Arts & Crafts Show</p> <p>May 28 & 29, 2022 Saturday 9a.m.-4p.m. Sunday 10a.m.-4p.m.</p> <p>Free Admission</p> <p>The Ridges Resort on Lake Chatuge 3499 US-76 Young Harris, GA 30546</p> <p>https://www.mountainartscrafts.org/</p>	<p align="center">Memorial Day Cookout and Barbeque at the Dillard House</p> <p>Sunday May 29, 2022</p> <p>5:30 p.m.-8p.m. With a Cash Bar!</p> <p>Come to the Memorial Day Celebration at The Dillard House! Enjoy our outdoor BBQ with LIVE entertainment! For more information or to purchase tickets, call 1-800-541-0671 or email reservations@dillardhouse.com.</p> <p>http://www.dillardhouse.com/</p>



GMRC STAFF SPOTLIGHT!

Alicia Page, Finance Director & HR Manager



This month we recognize Alicia Page. Alicia joined the GMRC in the summer 2021. Alicia is GMRC's Finance Director as well as the HR Manager. In her role as Finance Director, she is responsible for financial operations of the agency as well as the overall fiscal health of the regional commission. Alicia develops indirect cost allocations and budgets to ensure fiscal responsibility for the agency. As the Human Resources Manager, Alicia maintains and administers the employee health benefits and the GMRC risk management programs. She also conducts pay studies, reviews, and rewrites job descriptions for member governments upon contracted requests.

Alicia has worked with local governments since 2009. During her time, she has served as President, Past President, Secretary, and sat on various committees for the Georgia Finance Officer's Association. She holds a level I & II Local Government Finance Officer Certification. She has completed training through the Government Finance Officer's Association's Advanced Government Finance Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Public Finance Leadership Academy through the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia. She served for the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission as Comptroller, as well as Administrative Services Officer and Interim CFO for the City of Gainesville.

Originally from Quad Cities, Illinois, Alicia has been in Georgia since 1998. She and her husband, Christopher, have a blended family of 3 boys, Corey (27), Trevor (24), and Gabriel (21), as well as twin girls Serra and Jaydin who are 15. They have a beautiful granddaughter, Elloise, who is 7 years old.

Alicia's favorite thing about the region is the diversity of places and things to do. She enjoys that she can take a weekend trip to the mountains for seclusion, or can spend an evening shopping and dining with family and friends.

When not busy with work, Alicia loves to play golf and watch sports. She is a die-hard Ohio State Buckeye fan as well as a Chicago Bears fan. Her favorite baseball team is the Chicago Cubs. She also will cheer for Georgia teams, just so long as they are not playing against any of her teams!

Thank you, Alicia, for your commitment to the GMRC and we look forward to many years to come!

UPCOMING GMRC COUNCIL MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS



- ⇒ May 26, 2022 **Dawson County / Reggie Taylor, USDA**
- ⇒ June 30, 2022 **City of Hiawassee / iParamedics Disaster Resilience Plan**
- ⇒ July 28, 2022* **Rabun County**

GMRC Council Meetings begin at 6:00 PM; Executive Committee meets prior at 5:00 PM.

*** WD Board Meeting at 4:00 PM**