

October 2021

# PINNACLE

*Georgia Mountains Regional Commission*

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**Save the Date:**  
Calendar of Upcoming Meetings  
and Trainings

Cover Photo  
Fall Scene  
Courtesy of GMRC Files

## Executive Director's Report



Heather Feldman  
Executive Director

- Congratulations to **White County** on being named a Georgia Broadband Ready Community. This designation shows **White County's** commitment to furthering broadband for their community and will greatly help the county in applying for state and/or federal funding for broadband activities.
- Congratulations to the cities of **Clayton** and **Lavonia** on receiving Rural Zone designations for their communities. With this designation, certain businesses creating jobs within the zone are eligible to earn tax credits. Additional tax credits are available to investors who acquire property within the zone or rehabilitate structures, provided that new jobs are created as a result. Thank you to Adam and Joe for assisting our communities with these applications.

- The next quarterly meeting of the Region 2 City and County Managers is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 3, 2021** beginning at 10:00 a.m. via zoom. If you are interested in attending please contact the GMRC office at 770-538-2626.
- The State of Georgia received \$552 million from the U.S. Treasury's Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program to provide relief to individuals, families, and landlords whose finances have been negatively impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds will be used to bring past due rent and utility payments current. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs administers this program which opened in March 2021. The money will be distributed directly to landlords, and eligible applicants will receive up to 18 months of payment relief. Individuals must qualify for unemployment or have experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19; demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability, and have household income at or below 80 percent of the area median income. Please visit <https://georgiarentalassistance.ga.gov> for more information.

The following grant applications were submitted recently for the state recovery funding:

- **City of Blairsville** Wastewater Infrastructure: \$2,047,000 grant; \$2,297,000 project cost
- GMRC Tourism Technology/GIS Platform: \$46,239 grant; \$46,239 project cost
- **City of Young Harris** Brasstown Creek Sewer Outfall Extension: \$2,520,000 grant; \$3,600,000 project cost
- **City of Clayton** Water System Improvements: \$3,000,000 grant; \$4,500,000 project cost
- Thank you to Lee Beckman, Governmental Affairs Manager for the Georgia Ports Authority for speaking to our recent Council Meeting. Lee gave a great presentation on the new Inland Port being developed for the region, the ports in Georgia, and the supply chain/logistics update of our current economy. We thank Lee and the Georgia Ports Authority for all they do for Georgia.

Sincerely,

*Heather Feldman*

Heather Feldman  
Executive Director



## Economic Development

Congratulations to all our communities that were recognized at the DCA Award Recognition Event held at **Cornelia** City Hall on Thursday, October 28. The following awards were presented to:

**City of Clayton**- \$750,000 CDBG Award & Rural Zone Designation

**Rabun County** - GICH Designation

**Rabun County** Habitat for Humanity- \$449,200 CHIP Award



**City of Cornelia** - \$750,000 CDBG Award

**City of Gainesville**- \$600,000 CHIP Award & PlanFirst Designation (Reauthorization)



**Hall County** - \$750,000 CDBG Award



**City of Hiawassee** - \$600,000 ARC Award & PlanFirst Designation

**City of Lavonia**- Rural Zone Designation



**City of Toccoa** - PlanFirst Designation (Reauthorization)



**Towns County** GICH Designation

**White County**- \$70,000 ARC Award



*Pictures courtesy of Georgia Department of Community Affairs*

## Information Systems

- GMRC staff have been assisting the cities of **Dawsonville**, **Clermont** and **Cornelia** with 2020 population counts within their respective voting districts or wards. Each district needs to be equally populated and not deviate +/- 5%.
- The **City of Lavonia** has requested assistance with updating water line maps.
- GMRC has contracted with the **City of Royston** to update the Rosehill Cemetery digital data and to develop an online mapping application to assist with locating burial plots and identifying open plots for sale.
- **White County** has requested a 2020 Census population within the Board of Commissioners and Board of Education voting districts.

## Planning

### Planning for Parks



For many communities, the demand for quality outdoor spaces for recreation and experiencing nature is becoming ever more critical. Parks, plazas, trails, and preserves, can provide not only a welcome respite from the busyness of urban and suburban scenes, but they often serve as a prime social spot for residents and visitors. They can also protect and celebrate the most scenic and beautiful places within your community. It's no surprise, then, that when done well a local park system can boost tourism and lure investment by appreciative industries and homeowners seeking a high quality of life. Yet few communities actively incorporate consideration for parks into their long-term planning process.

Fortunately, there are resources to assist with park planning. The [National Recreation and Park Association](#) has many publications and resources to help local governments address their facility and programming needs, including a variety of performance metrics communities can use in gauging their performance. Their [Georgia affiliate](#) provides additional resources and support, including a program to promote and celebrate notable agencies. (The City of Gainesville was a recent winner of their Agencies of the Year!) There is also the [American Trails Association](#), which can provide education and guidance in establishing and maintaining a quality network of greenways and pedestrian trails.

These organizations typically support local parks and recreation departments, but their resources can and should be employed when considering land use planning, as well. Knowing the best practices and recommended standards for these facilities can go a long way to shaping discussion with local stakeholders about maximizing local park options and ensuring your community has great public spaces. So even traditional planning operations should get familiar with these resources, especially when needing to explore the best and most cost-effective options for expanding park and trail systems for growing communities. Plus, when you're ready to get started with parks and recreation planning, your GMRC team is available to help!



Join us in congratulating the six Electro-Mechanical Refrigeration Academy graduates from **Habersham, Hall, Hart, and Lumpkin** counties who have successfully obtained employment with John Soules, Fieldale, and Wayne Farms! This partnership with Lanier Technical College, The Georgia Poultry Foundation, and local employers has proven to succeed with another 100% employment rate!



Currently, six participants from **Franklin, Habersham, Hart, Stephens, and Towns** counties are completing applications to begin a 4-week welding class through Workforce Innovators of America. Upon completion, graduates will have a welding certification, among many others. WorkSource staff sends a big *Thank You* to the **City of Lavonia** for hosting the course at their Community Center.

These 4-5 week programs provide fast-track training and end with interviews with local employers; if you would like to discuss opportunities available to businesses in your area, please get in touch with Niki McPherson at 770.538.2734 or [nmcperson@gmrc.ga.gov](mailto:nmcperson@gmrc.ga.gov).



- WorkSource staff attended community meetings in **Banks, Habersham, Lumpkin, Stephens, and Rabun** counties speaking with over 100 people and community partners.
- Over 150 Lanier Technical College students attended their Resource Fair and were given the opportunity to receive information and be pre-screened for WorkSource applications.
- Lanier Technical College is seeking a part-time GED instructor to teach material at our WorkSource location. If you are interested, please click [here](#) for the full job description and requirements.

# Events Around the Region

## Gainesville Chicken Festival

11 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Saturday, Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>  
Lake Lanier Olympic Park



## Franklin County Hometown Hero's

Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>

Starts at 9am  
Parade at 11am  
Fireworks at 6pm  
Franklin Co. Courthouse Square



## Gainesville's Annual Jingle Mingle

4-8 p.m. Saturday  
Nov. 20, on the historic downtown square



## Rabun County

Turkey Trot 5K  
Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>, 9am  
Thanksgiving Morning  
Earl Street,  
Downtown Clayton  
[Click](#) for more info



## Royston Depot

Small Business Saturday Holiday Market  
Nov. 27, 2021  
10:00 – 4:00  
Art and Crafts, Gift Items



## Tugalo Bend Family Day

Toccoa Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>



Sunday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>  
First Baptist Church,  
475 E. Tugalo St. Toccoa

## GMRC Annual Meeting Cancellation

Unfortunately, due to the rising number of COVID cases the GMRC has decided to cancel its 2021 Annual Meeting. While this is such a fun event, the health and safety of our communities is of paramount importance. We will still have our annual awards later this year virtually and look forward to honoring the recipients.

## UPCOMING GMRC COUNCIL MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS



⇒ Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Zooming meeting/GMRC Audit, Rushton & Company

**GMRC Council Meetings begin at 5:00 PM; Executive Committee meets prior at 4:00 PM.**

**\*WD Board Meeting at 3:00 PM**