

January 2022

PINNACLE

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

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Cover Photo
Chapel in the Snow,
Mountain City, Ga
Courtesy of Foxfire Museum

Executive Director's Report



Heather Feldman
Executive Director

- Happy New Year to everyone! We are excited about what opportunities the upcoming year will bring for the GMRC!
- I would like to thank all outgoing elected officials who left office at the end of last year. We appreciate all that they did for their respective communities and Region 2. We look forward to getting to know the newly elected officials. Additionally, I would like to thank all outgoing GMRC Council Members: Sam Norton, City of **Dahlonega**; Michelle Duquette, City of **Clayton**; and Andrea Gibby, City of **Young Harris**. I appreciate their leadership over the years, and hope that they will continue to keep in touch with the GMRC.
- I would like to welcome Mayor Liz Ordiales back to the GMRC Council. We look forward to having Mayor Ordiales as part of our GMRC team!
- Congratulations to Paul Chambers, AT&T who retired at the end of December. Paul was a friend to the GMRC and we will miss seeing him. Wishing him the best in his well-deserved retirement.
- The GMRC is one of two Regional Commissions who are receiving assistance from the Georgia Department of Transportation on the development of a regional Transit Development Plan (TDP). Adam and I recently held our kick-off meeting with GDOT and their consulting team. The purpose of this plan is to assess existing conditions and system performance, establish a needs assessment, and provide recommendations via an implementation plan for the region. More information including ways you can be part of the public input process will be forthcoming. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Adam Hazell or myself at 770-538-2626.
- **SAVE THE DATE:** The next regional City and County Managers meeting will be hosted by the City of **Gainesville** on **Wednesday, February 23rd at 10:00 a.m.** at the city's Administration Building. Please encourage your city and county managers to attend this meeting. This will be the first in-person meeting in two years!
- **SAVE THE DATE:** GMRC will be conducting a Newly Elected Officials Training on **Wednesday, April 20th beginning at 9:00 a.m. until noon.** Please encourage any of your colleagues to attend. More details to follow.
- Thank you to Saralyn Stafford with Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) for presenting their programs and services at the GMRC Council Meeting. We look forward to partnering in the future!

Sincerely,

Heather Feldman

Heather Feldman
Executive Director



Economic Development

Congratulations to **Hall** county and the Georgia Mountain Food Bank who were awarded a \$2,213,697 Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus fund (CDBG-CV) grant. The project will assist with capital improvements to the food bank's facility in **Gainesville** and will include a 10,000 square foot addition to the warehouse, adding a refrigerated loading dock, converting the cooler to freezer storage, adding office space for warehouse and administrative staff, adding an outdoor covered storage area and a new surface parking lot.



Remember! GMRC still has Revolving Loan Funds available through the CARES Act!

Micro Loan

- Business owners may apply for a low interest loan from \$10,000-\$20,000 repaid within 1-5 years.
- Loans below \$20,000 may be eligible with a personal guarantee.
- Documentation to show COVID-19 impact.

Traditional Loans

- Loan amounts above \$20,000 will require a personal guarantee and dollar for dollar collateral.
- The loan maximum amount is \$300,000.
- Years of business in operation will be a consideration.
- Job creation and/or retention, and training will be a consideration.
- Documentation to show COVID-19 impact.

For more information visit our website at: <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/rlf> or contact the Economic Development department.

Join us in welcoming Ashley Russell to the Economic Development department. Ashley was recently promoted to Grant Administrator. Prior to joining the ED department, Ashley served several months as the Administrative Secretary for the GMRC Ridge Road office. We are excited to have Ashley on board and engaged with all of our communities!

Information Systems

- GMRC is available to assist with City/County redistricting for voting wards, posts, or districts. We have the 2020 Census State Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File and the ESRI Districting tool in-house. Currently we are assisting **Clermont, Cornelia, Dawsonville** and **Homer**.
- The cities of **Hartwell** and **Dawsonville** have requested assistance with Zoning Map updates.
- By now, the highest elected official for your city or county, should have received notice from the US Census Bureau inviting you to participate, if you so choose, in the 2020 Census Count Question Resolution Program. This program gives the city or county the opportunity to request a review of your 2020 population count. GMRC is in the process of assisting White County with this process.
- Two types of reviews that you can request are boundary or housing count. This helpful web [link](#) describes the process in more detail. The Census Bureau will accept cases from January 3, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

GMRC Region Counties 2020 Census Population Totals:

	2020 Census Population	2010 Census Population	Increase/Decrease	2020 Census Self Response Rate	2010 Census Self Response Rate
Georgia	10,711,908	9,687,653	1,024,255	62.9%	
Banks	18,035	18,395	-360	64.4%	63.0%
Dawson	25,798	22,330	4,468	63.8%	59.5%
Franklin	23,424	22,084	1,340	56.2%	58.5%
Habersham	46,031	43,041	2,990	62.2%	58.5%
Hall	203,136	179,684	23,452	65.8%	67.5%
Hart	25,828	25,213	615	59.1%	61.6%
Lumpkin	33,488	29,966	3,522	66.0%	62.5%
Rabun	16,883	16,276	607	40.9%	32.1%
Stephens	26,784	26,175	609	57.7%	59.9%
Towns	12,493	10,471	2,022	48.3%	43.2%
Union	24,632	21,356	3,276	54.6%	50.8%
White	28,003	27,144	859	52.4%	51.0%

Planning

Local Success Stories and Planfirst Nominations for 2022

Each year DCA asks for nominations of Planning Success Stories from local governments. Planning Success Stories celebrate communities across the state that have implemented projects identified within their comprehensive plans. DCA highlights these outstanding initiatives and projects in order that these examples may foster creative thinking, new ideas, and lead to similar initiatives being undertaken across the state. (Visit DCA's Planning Success Story web page [here](#).)

If you have a story you'd like to share please contact the GMRC By **March 15th** and we'll submit a nomination for your behalf.

As an additional head's up, DCA's [PlanFirst program](#) is accepting nominations from interested communities once again.

Nominations are due by **May 15th** and any community interested may request that the GMRC write their applications at no cost. Simply contact the GMRC offices through the email or phone numbers listed below.



Lula's Veteran's Plaza, one of the City's accomplishments ahead of their PlanFirst designation.

- During December and January WorkSource staff attended community meetings in **Banks, Dawson, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, and White** reaching over 100 community partners and agencies. Staff attended two resource fairs at North Georgia Technical College – **Currahee** and **Clarksville** campuses reaching over 200 potential applicants.

- During the **Hall** county Stakeholders meeting in December, a WIOA participant Jeynci Galo was spotlighted for her participation in the Manufacturing Pathways Work-Based Learning program. Jeynci completed the Electro-Mechanical Refrigeration Bootcamp in 2020, and was hired by John Soules Food. After less than 200 days on the job, she was promoted to PSM coordinator, a salaried lead position and her employer is paying for her college courses.



- 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 nmcperson@gmrc.ga.gov. More information can be found at www.gmrc.ga.gov/employers.
- National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) funding is still available! Funds may be used for short-term training, full or part-time work experiences, and full-time on-the-job training opportunities. Let us help lessen the financial burden of going to school by assisting with tuition or help your business by reimbursing wages paid to these essential workers! Interested participants, agencies, and employers should contact Danielle Avelar at davelar@gmrc.ga.gov or 770-531-4043.

**ONE-STOP
CENTER**

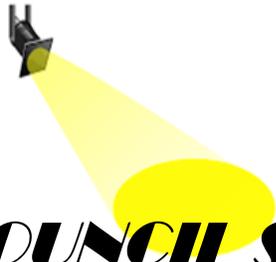
1856 THOMPSON BRIDGE ROAD - SUITE 3

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- 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.



GMRC COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT!

Wayne Randall, Franklin County



Wayne Randall represents the private sector for **Franklin** County. Wayne is a born and raised native to **Franklin** county. He graduated from **Gainesville** Jr. College, UGA, Clemson University, as well as The University of Alabama, Birmingham. He spent 32 years serving the community as a teacher, in K-12th grade, as well as in leadership roles, for **Franklin** County School Systems before retiring in May of 2019. In July of 2019 he founded the Agriculture Program at North Georgia Technical College where he has been the director for the past 3 years.

On top of a noteworthy career journey, Wayne and his wife, Paige, have been married for 28 years and have three wonderful children together. Along with Wayne serving the community, his wife and eldest daughter are in health care, and his second daughter is studying for a career in Criminal Justice; their son will soon be a high school graduate following the end of this school year. The Randall family enjoys working with the youth and music program in the community as well as Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, where they are members. *"Our priorities are faith, family, and career, in that order."* In Wayne's downtime he enjoys working on vintage cars, woodworking, and of course farming.

Wayne's favorite things about the region are the diversity and beauty of the region and the ease of traveling to the various venues from the mountains to shopping in the towns and cities surrounding. Wayne's vision for his region is *"I would like to see our region continue to grow responsibly while holding onto the small town feel that so many of our communities have. My hope would be that small towns in our region would be revitalized to attract locals and visitors alike."* We thank you Mr. Wayne Randall for your service to our amazing region.

UPCOMING GMRC COUNCIL MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS



- ⇒ Feb. 24, 2022 **Zoom Meeting**
- ⇒ March 31, 2022 **Banks County**
- ⇒ April 28, 2022 * **City of Lavonia/Franklin County**

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

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