

SEPTEMBER 2020

PINNACLE

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

In This Issue:

From Our Executive Director

Pg. 2

Planning

Pg. 3

Information Services

Pg. 3

Economic Development

Pg. 4

WorkSource:

Adult Programs

Pg. 5

Youth Program

Pg. 5

Save the Date:

Calendar of Upcoming Meetings
and Trainings

Pg. 6

*Cover Photo Courtesy of Phil Colgan
Appalachian Trail / Wildcat Mountain
White County, GA
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Heather Feldman
Executive Director

- The GMRC would like to send our sincere condolences on the passing of North Georgia Technical College President, Dr. Mark Ivester to his family, NGTC, and the Technical College System of Georgia. He was a wonderful friend to everyone he met, and he will be missed.
- GMRC would also like to send our condolences to the family of former **Demorest** Mayor, Malcolm Hunnicutt. Mayor Hunnicutt proudly served the City of **Demorest** for almost 40 years, and he will be greatly missed.
- Congratulations to GMRC Council Member Betsy McGriff, Economic Development Director, Dawson County Chamber of Commerce and Jessie Owensby, Community Development Manager, City of Cornelia on being accepted into the Appalachian Leadership Institute. The Appalachian Leadership Institute is limited to 40 Fellows annually, drawn from Appalachia's public, private and non-profit sectors. Fellows are chosen via a competitive application process and each class includes representatives from each of the thirteen states in the ARC footprint to reflect the region's diverse economic development challenges, opportunities, and strategies. Congrats to these two wonderful ladies!
- GMRC will soon be starting the second phase of MAP-21. Map 21 has been renamed to REVAMP – Roadway Element Validation and Mapping Program. In coordination with GDOT and CVIOG - Information Technology Outreach Service (ITOS), GMRC GIS staff will be working with all 13 counties for data collection on the following: speed zones, sidewalk presence, school zones, number of turn lanes, crosswalk presence, pedestrian signals, and on-street parking.
- In conjunction with our EDA CARES Act grant, the GMRC has issued a Request for Proposals for a contractor – Regional Economic Disaster Recovery Specialist for the purpose of supporting regional disaster recovery efforts related to COVID-19 in the Georgia Mountains Region and to expedite financial recovery and mitigation to minimize impacts from future disasters. A disaster recovery plan for Region 2 will be a significant project deliverable.
- GMRC has recently completed its RFP process for the 2021 Aerial Photography project. We are excited to announce that Quantum Spatial was approved as the vendor. Please contact Faith Bryan at fbryan@gmrc.ga.gov for more information on this project.
- I would like to take this opportunity to thank John Phillips for his 22 years of service to GMRC. He will be retiring on October 12th. He has been a valuable employee, and his work in economic and workforce development has made this region better. I wish him well in his retirement; he will be missed by all!
- Congratulations to Whitney Williams, who has been selected to replace John as Director of WorkSource. Whitney has served as the Adult / DW Supervisor for the last two years, and she brings an enthusiastic approach to workforce development in Region 2. I look forward to working with Whitney in her new role!
- The next City & County Managers Meeting is scheduled for October 21st at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. Please contact Heather Feldman at hfeldman@gmrc.ga.gov for additional information.
- Thank you to Scott Hilton, Executive Director of Georgians First Commission, who recently presented at our virtual Council Meeting. Scott gave a great presentation, and we appreciate all he does for Georgia.

Sincerely,

Heather Feldman

Heather Feldman
Executive Director



Planning

Planning for Pandemic Recovery and Prevention

The GMRC has received funds to perform several tasks in assessing the scope of impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and, most importantly, collecting information to help communities plan for improved economic resiliency and local health in advance of another future event.

The Planning Department will be facilitating two elements of this effort:

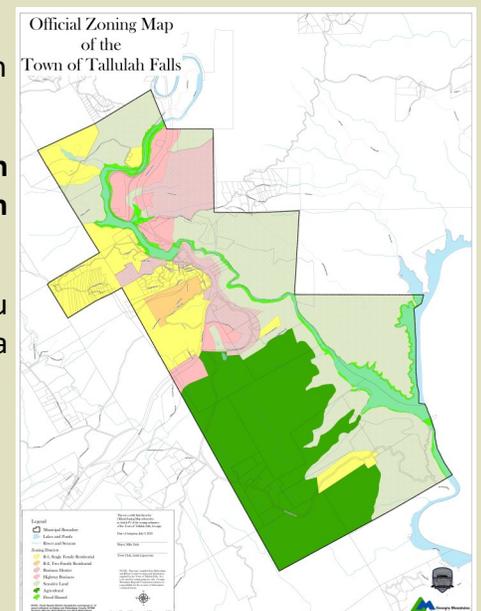
- 1) A *Medical Accessibility Study* that will analyze a community's health issues based on the inventory of accessible medical resources and offices; and
- 2) An *Economic Base & Sensitivity Survey* to highlight which industries are the most sensitive to local spending and thus more prone to losses/closure during extended shutdowns.



This information will be paired with other data about industries susceptible to pandemic transmission to identify potential hot spots during viral episodes. The completed effort will help our member communities with various planning efforts going forward, from hazard mitigation to economic diversification, and should contribute to everyone's goals for healthier, safer, and more prosperous communities!

Information Services

- Staff recently completed the Town of Tallulah Falls Official Zoning Map.
- Neither rain nor mud will slow us down too long! Field work continues on the City of **Cleveland** Utility project.
- MAP-21 Phase I project work continues for **Forsyth** and **Franklin** counties. Traffic control devices are being verified and located in **Franklin** County.
- The deadline is rapidly approaching to respond to the 2020 Census! You have until September 30th to self-respond on-line or via mail. After that, a census taker will visit you to complete the forms.



Economic Development

- Congratulations to the **Gainesville** and **Hall** County Development Authority on receiving a \$2,500,000 OneGeorgia EDGE grant for site preparation and infrastructure development which will support Fox Factory Holdings manufacturing facility in the **Gainesville** Industrial Park West. The project will create over 800 jobs and leverage over \$75 million dollars in private investment.
- On behalf of the City of **Cumming**, a Georgia Council for the Arts Cultural Facilities grant application in the amount of \$75,000 was submitted to assist with improvements at the new City Center development.
- The Georgia Mountains Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) committee met virtually on September 16 to finalize components for the 2020 update. While regional goals remain the same from the 2019 update, the committee outlined new priorities as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The top priorities for this update include:
 - 1.) Expanding Broadband & Wifi Hotspots;
 - 2.) Diversifying local and regional economies;
 - 3.) Fostering economic resiliency;
 - 4.) Implementing disaster recovery efforts; and
 - 5.) Addressing supply chain issues.

The final report will be released later this year. The committee also voted on and approved four new members: Barbara Fiedor, Charlie Fiveash, Denise McKay, and Rebecca Mincey.

The image shows a Zoom meeting interface with a 4x4 grid of participants. The bottom row of the grid contains four participants whose names are displayed in white text on a dark background: John Phillips, Barbara Fiedor, Adam GMRC, and John Sell. The right side of the screen displays a Zoom Group Chat window with the following content:

Zoom Group Chat

hot spots 7.18
Addressing diversification of local and regional economies 6.91
Fostering economic resiliency as a cornerstone 6.36
Disaster recovery needs 6.18
Addressing supply chain issues 5.64
Incentivizing/ Finding funding for small business grants or microloans 5.64
Renewed effort on entrepreneurship support 5.09
Redevelopment of retail and office spaces being vacated 4.30
Renewed support (funding) for tourism in the region 4.27
Healthcare investments, including substance abuse and mental health 3.73

sorry for the formatting

From Me to Everyone: 03:27 PM
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From Tim Martin to Me: (Privately) 03:27 PM
Thanks for the list! I'll have to compare to my thoughts.

To: Tim Martin (Privately) File ...
Type message here...

WorkSource Adult Programs

This September, a long awaited program was able to kick off! Five recent high school graduates started a 5-week Electro-Mechanical / Ammonia Refrigeration Academy at Lanier Technical College. This 'bootcamp' style program will prepare the participants with the skills needed to enter a maintenance position immediately after graduation. Participants attend classes Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to prepare them for a full-time work schedule and received training in electrical and mechanical skills, OSHA 10, ammonia refrigeration, soft skills, and more. This program was made possible thanks to the partnership and commitment of the Georgia Poultry Federation, **Gainesville** High School, and Lanier Technical College.

Career Coach Updates:

- The Adult and Youth programs both participated in the Greater **Hall** Chamber Job Fair this month. They provided career assistance and resources for the 600+ job seekers attending the event that day.
- The Adult program has kicked-off its virtual Career Training Workshop with the **Hall** County Treatment Court. These classes cover topics such as resume writing, job search strategies, and interviewing. Eleven participants attend our first class, and we look forward to training many more in the future!

**Due to an increase in COVID-19 cases, the Career Coaches continue online virtual services.*

Virtual Career Coach Sessions link is <https://tinyurl.com/y7fblc4q>

WorkSource Youth Program

- One Shift program graduate started a new job; another shift graduate started the Automotive Engine Repair program at Lanier Technical College.
- Youth staff is offering virtual workshops for local schools in the Region. Topics include dress for success, interviewing tips, college and careers, and 'ask the expert'
- Youth staff have also incorporated virtual workshops and mentoring into the Shift program services.

The Picture of Success

Jasmine Fitzpatrick recently received her GED after taking classes at Lanier Technical College's Adult Education program on the Lumpkin County Campus. She is a participant in the WIOA Out-of-School Youth grant which helped pay for her GED tests and transportation expenses. Jasmine also participated in a paid internship at Chestatee Emergent Medical Care in Dawsonville that was made possible by WIOA grant funds.

About her experience, Jasmine said:

"Getting my GED was to originally prove something to myself. But now, I get to have my son knowing that I have an education to make his life better".

Jasmine's GED instructors and the WIOA Out-of-School grant team members cannot say enough about how proud they are of her accomplishments. Congratulations, Jasmine!



Congratulations

John Phillips



Thank you for 22 wonderful years of faithful service and dedication to the communities in Region 2!

UPCOMING GMRC COUNCIL MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

- ⇒ October 29, 2020* ZOOM Meeting
- ⇒ November 19, 2020 ZOOM Meeting - *Rushton & Company, GMRC Audit*

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

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

