

FEBRUARY 2020

PINNACLE

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

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*Cover Photo:
View from Blue Ridge Parkway
Blairsville, GA*

Executive Director's Report



Heather Feldman
Executive Director

- Congratulations to GMRC Council Member and City of **Hartwell** Councilman, Tray Hicks for recently receiving the Certificate of Dedication Award from the Georgia Municipal Association. Tray received this award at the recent Cities United Summit in Atlanta.
- We have been scheduling and/or conducting retreats for many of our communities. We just completed the City of **Lavonia's** retreat, and we are currently working with the City of **Baldwin** for a retreat in the spring and the City of **Royston** for a retreat in the fall. If you are interested in having GMRC conduct a retreat for your city or county, please let me know.

- Congratulations to the staff of the Youth Division of WorkSource Georgia Mountains. On Thursday, February 20, 2020, we held a Grand Opening of the new Youth Center. The purpose of the Youth Center is to provide a safe place for youth in the region for growth future/career planning, specified training, tutoring, workshops, work skills training, entrepreneurship skills development, mentoring, and peer groups. Furthermore, the center is designed to assist in providing a pathway to employment for young adults in the Georgia Mountains Region by equipping them through education, training, and advancing skills in a competitive market that will lead to self-sufficiency.



- GMRC's senior management staff recently met with **Clarkesville's** new City Manager, Keith Dickerson to share our programs and services. We appreciated the hospitality and his time in allowing us to come, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with the City of **Clarkesville**.

- We had great turnout at our recent City and County Managers meeting. It was a great day of sharing best practices and discussing many important issues that affect local governments. I would like to thank the City of **Lula** for hosting this meeting. It was also great to have our very own Council Member, **Alto** Mayor Audrey Turner in attendance with us this day.



- Congratulations and best wishes to Stan Brown, **Oakwood** City Manager on his retirement!! We have appreciated his partnership and support of the GMRC over the years.

- The President's Budget Request has been released. The FY 2021 Budget proposes the elimination of various programs that are important to GMRC, including the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is preserved in the President's budget with a request of \$165 million for ARC. While it is anticipated that the FY 2021 Congressional appropriations process will once again preserve funding for USDA-RD, EDA, CDBG, it is nonetheless important for communities to ask their representatives in Congress to continue to support funding for these programs.

- After 42 years of service, Peggy Lovell will be retiring at the end of March. Peggy has worked for five of the six GMRC Executive Directors, has served under all three agencies: Georgia Mountains Area Planning and Development Commission, Georgia Mountains Regional Development Center, and Georgia Mountains Regional Commission. She began her employment as a Key punch Operator and was promoted several times during her tenure with GMRC, ultimately serving as the Executive Assistant for the last fourteen years of her employment. Peggy received the GMRC's Employee of the Year Award in 2008 and was awarded the Chairman's Award in 2017. Peggy is going to be missed by all! We will be honoring her with a reception on Thursday, March 12th from 4-7pm. Please drop in anytime between then. RSVP to Gina Kessler @ gkessler@gmrc.ga.gov



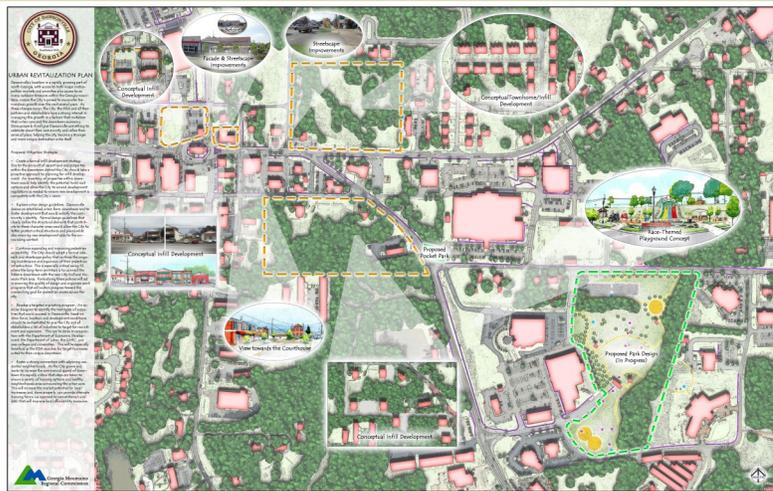
Sincerely,

Heather Feldman

Heather Feldman
Executive Director



Planning



Dawsonville City Design Guidelines

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission is drafting new city-wide design guidelines for **Dawsonville** based on past efforts identifying this need through their Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Master Plan, Urban Redevelopment Plan, and Downtown Design Guidelines. A committee of local citizens and stakeholders have been formed to meet and discuss challenges and opportunities that the city will be facing and how these guidelines can guide the city forward and balance growth and development. Some issues to be identified include: land use analysis, new development and redevelopment opportunities, businesses development, expansion and development for future parks and trails and streetscape improvements for sidewalk connectivity and bicycle/pedestrian mobility. GIS maps will be created along with the overall document to identify these key components of the guidelines.

Information Services

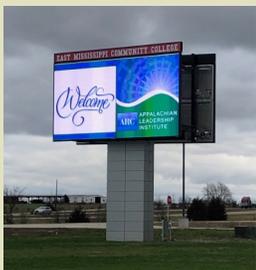
- GMRC presented to the **Toccoa** Rotary Club on February 18th. Current and past projects were discussed as well as the GMRC Story Map.



- The City of **Dahlonega** requested a quotation for a multi-phase Water and Wastewater Infrastructure GIS project.
- GMRC staff are working with **Union** and **Rabun** Counties to complete MAP 21 road validation and attribute collection. **Franklin** and **Stephens** will be next.
- The City of **Cleveland** added the GPS collection of water meters to their existing contract with GMRC.
- In preparation for the decennial census, GMRC is assisting the following with the Boundary and Annexation Survey for the purpose of correcting city and county boundaries: **Dawsonville, Gillsville, Toccoa, Baldwin, Cornelia, Lula, Young Harris, Royston, Lavonia, Tallulah Falls, Clayton, Clermont,** and **Banks** County.
- The cities of **Royston, Baldwin,** and **Lula** have requested assistance with updating their Official Zoning Maps.

Economic Development

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – The GMRC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) committee recently elected new officers at it's January 30th meeting. Congratulations to the following new officers: Charles Cawthon, Chair; Phyllis Ayers, Vice-Chair; and Dwayne Dye, Secretary. Thank you to the entire CEDS Committee and Mitch Griggs, outgoing Chairman, for your leadership and service.
- Appalachian Leadership Institute – Daniel Martin, an Appalachian Leadership Institute Fellow, recently visited Starkville, MS to discuss challenges and opportunities in cultivating a ready workforce. Highlights from the February session included strategies to develop a competitive, skilled workforce for jobs in demand by investing in education, healthcare, and public-private partnerships. The schedule also included a tour of the East Mississippi Community College Communiversity; a plant tour of engine manufacturer, PACCAR; and an interactive discussion with Governor Haley Barbour.



WorkSource Mobile Training Units

- The Career Coaches attended a Goodwill sponsored job fair for **Dawson** County.
- A resume workshop was conducted for 36 students from **Stephens** and **Dawson** Mountain Ed Centers.
- Eleven people completed WIOA applications on board the Career Coaches this month.
- Eight inmates from Colwell Probation Detention Center in **Union** County participated in a Career Exploration Workshop hosted by the Career Coach.
- Sharon Forks Library in **Forsyth** County saw it's busiest day yet with 11 people receiving assistance on board the Career Coaches.
- The Career Coach also assisted residents of the Salvation Army of **Hall** County.
- **Union** County library was buzzing with activity as nine people came on board to receive assistance. This is the second busiest day in Union we've ever had!

Career Coach Monthly Totals for January

Category of Responses	Month Total	Year Total	Responses Per County
Total Job Searches	45	45	Banks— 0
Total Job App	3	3	Dawson— 25
Total Resumes	59	59	Forsyth— 31
Total Interviews	0	0	Franklin— 3
Total Interest Survey	0	0	Habersham— 0
Total Training Sessions	1	1	Hall— 13
Total Testing	1	1	Hart— 0
Total Typing Assessments	0	0	Lumpkin— 0
WIOA Info	23	23	Rabun— 5
Public Relations	1	1	Stephens— 23
			Towns— 0
			Union— 15
			White— 2
			Other— 16

WorkSource Youth Program

WorkSource Georgia Mountains Youth Services opened the ROUTE 180 Center on Thursday, February 20, 2020 with many partner agencies and community affiliates in attendance. The ribbon cutting ceremony began with Youth Services Supervisor Jessica Williams thanking the Youth Staff as well as all WorkSource and GMRC staff who had a hand in the success of the center's completion. She also thanked the partner agencies and community affiliates for taking time out of their day to participate in this event.

Ms. Williams informed those in attendance of the community support from throughout the 13 County Georgia Mountains Region allowing the Center to be fully furnished by donations only. The Youth Committee Chair, NGMT Adult Education Dean Shelby Ward, cut the ribbon as WorkSource Director John Phillips, Youth Services Staff, and participants held the ribbon. The tour guides for the Grand Opening were four participants of the Youth Services program. They were stationed throughout the Center to explain what each area and room was designated for. The Recreation Room was also open for attendees to try their hand at some of the games. Some found their way to the photo booth to take a snapshot with funny props.

The Center is now open from 8:00 am – 6:00 pm Monday – Friday. GED classes for the SHIFT program are held Tuesday – Thursday. Workshops and Peer Groups will begin in March.





Please Join Us
for a Retirement Reception
in honor of

Peggy Lovell

Thursday, March 12, 2020
Drop-in 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
1310 West Ridge Road
Gainesville, GA 30501

R.S.V.P. to Gina Kessler
gkessler@gmrc.ga.gov

UPCOMING GMRC COUNCIL MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS



- ⇒ Mar. 26, 2020 Hart County - *Cyber Security, Randall Toussaint*
- ⇒ Apr. 30, 2020* City of Lavonia - *Native Intelligence Report, Frank Norton*
- ⇒ May 28, 2020 Dawson County - *Legislative Appreciation*
- ⇒ June 25, 2020 City of Hiawassee
- ⇒ July 30, 2020* Union County - *State Road & Tollway Authority, David Cassell*

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

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