

AUGUST 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 Success Stories

*Pg. 5*

**Save the Date:**

Calendar of Upcoming Meetings  
and Trainings

*Pg. 6*

Cover Photo:  
Fiery Sunset  
Murrayville, GA



Heather Feldman  
Executive Director

- We are excited to announce that we have been awarded supplemental funding from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) through the CARES Act. GMRC received \$400,000 in funding to prepare a disaster recovery strategy and plan for the region. We will be working on selecting a contractor to begin work on surveys, research, and preparing the plan.
- We are underway with our FY20 Audit. Rushton and Company was in the office the week of August 10<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to the entire Finance staff and Administrative staff for working with the auditors to get them what they need.

- Congratulations to the City of **Cornelia** on the recent dedication of their new Municipal Complex. Faith Bryan, Patrick Larson, and I had the opportunity to attend the event, and it was a pleasure to see that the building was named in honor of former mayor, J.C. Irby.



- Save the date! The Georgia Department of Community Affairs will be hosting their Fall Conference virtually this year. The dates are October 5-8<sup>th</sup>. For more information, please visit: [www.dca.ga.gov](http://www.dca.ga.gov)
- As with many events, the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions has agreed to cancel the annual conference at St. Simons normally held in November. In place of this, the GARC Committee Chairs, will be working to hold virtual professional development tracts for staff.
- The final date for self-response is September 30<sup>th</sup>. The most recent data for Region 2 indicates an overall response rate of 61% compared to the state average of 59.1%. The Census is so important for the State of Georgia and the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission. Census results help determine how billions of dollars in federal funding flow into states and communities each year. Additionally, results also determine how many seats in Congress each state gets.
- Governor Kemp recently signed House Bill 244 which will allow the state's Public Service Commission to decide how much Electric Membership Corporations (EMC's) can charge telecommunications providers for broadband attachments to their utility poles.
- Thank you to Janet Cochran, Project Manager for the Center for Rural Prosperity for speaking and presenting to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Council on August 27<sup>th</sup>. I appreciated her overview of the center, and I am excited about all the ways that GMRC can partner with the center.
- I am so excited to announce that the GMRC has received three National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Impact Awards for the following projects: Planning Department - City of Dahlonega Parks and Trails Study; Economic Development Department - Apprenticeship 101; WorkSource – Youth Division - ROUTE 180 Center. Congratulations to all staff who worked on these projects and/or submitted your nomination to NADO. I am extremely proud of all of them! This makes 15 awards since 2016!!

Sincerely,

*Heather Feldman*

Heather Feldman  
Executive Director



## Planning

### Towns County Economic Development

The GMRC is developing an *Economic Development Strategy* for **Towns** County and the cities of **Hiawassee** and **Young Harris**. To date, the project has collected data from multiple resources and reviewed past studies and projects in an effort to create a unified and coordinated action plan on behalf of each government, the **Hiawassee** Downtown Development Authority, and the **Towns** County Joint Development Authority. On the heels of **Hiawassee's** Broadband Ready designation and pursuit of Rural Zone status, the communities recognize their assets in tourism and handicaps in industrial recruitment, so this will be the first ever attempt to develop a comprehensive strategy and guide for how **Towns** County should grow employment opportunities and develop a more diversified economic base. The partner entities are devising a safe public input process now and the goal will be to have a draft document as soon as possible in 2021.

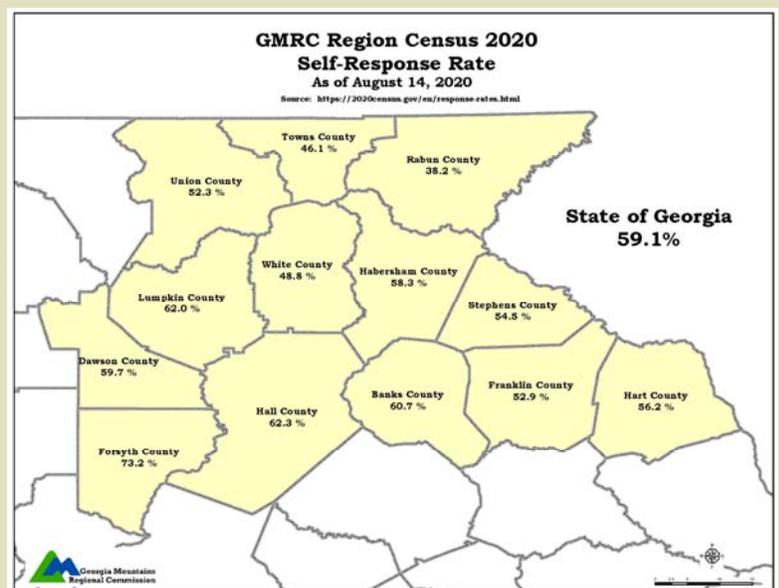


### Local Comprehensive Plans

**White** County and the cities of **Cleveland** and **Helen** have begun the 5-year update of their *Joint Comprehensive Plan*. As part of this cycle, the communities will be emphasizing broadband technology and early planning for the eventual expansion of GA 400 from **Dahlonega** to **Cleveland**. The City of **Toccoa** has begun early work on their *Comprehensive Plan* update. Objectives for this cycle include continuation of their improvements in downtown and surrounding neighborhoods as well as an economic development strategy for the city now that SR 17 has been widened all the way to I-85. **Franklin** County and its municipalities are working to update their *Service Delivery Strategy*. This will be the first major update and amendment to the document since the industrial boom along I-85 began in earnest, and will factor in the utility upgrades along their stretch of the interstate as the communities try to capitalize on the highway corridor.

## Information Services

The 2020 Census is happening now. You can complete your questionnaire online, by phone, or by mail. Results of the 2020 Census will help determine how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding flow into communities every year for the next decade. That funding shapes many different aspects of every community, no matter the size, no matter the location. Deadline for self-response is September 30, 2020. Follow this link to respond to the 2020 Census: <https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond.html>



## Economic Development

- Congratulations to **Banks** County on receiving an Economic Development Administration (EDA) infrastructure grant in the amount of \$1,500,000 for sewer improvements to accommodate a new manufacturing industry expansion. This project will create 50 jobs and leverage over \$20 million dollars in private investment.
- On behalf of **White** County, an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Pre-Application was submitted for a \$70,000 grant to support funding an Economic Development Blueprint.

### GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

#### **Land & Water Conservation Fund:**

- Maximum funding is \$500,000
- Minimum match: 50% of total project

#### Examples of competitive project types:

- Baseball/softball field construction
- Soccer fields
- Restroom additions at existing parks
- Splash pads
- Ball field parking lots
- Ball field fencing/lighting



Pre-Applications open September 1, 2020!!

#### **Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program:**

- Minimum funding is \$500,000
- Minimum match: 25% of total project

#### Examples of competitive project types:

- Invasive species removal
- Wildlife habitat acquisition
- Riparian zone restoration
- Reservoir enhancements
- Trail construction
- Canoe/kayak launch construction

Pre-Applications are open now!!



**CONTACT OUR STAFF TO PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION TODAY!**

## WorkSource Adult Programs

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>

- The Career Coach saw eight people utilize the Virtual Career Coach Sessions in the month of July in the following counties: **Hall** (2) , **Forsyth** (2), Other (2), Not Disclosed (2)
- Five participants requested resume assistance.
- There were a total of eight job searches.
- Three people requested WIOA Information.
- As of August 10, 2020 two people have utilized the Virtual Career Coaching options.

THE MOST  
IMPORTANT THING  
ABOUT GOALS IS ...  
*having one*

## WorkSource Youth Program Success Stories

### CLOIE BOGER



Cloie Boger 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. Cloie also participated in a paid internship at the Good News Clinic in **Gainesville** that was made possible by WIOA grant funds. About her experience, Cloie said: "Getting my GED was super simple and I had so much support from teachers, my friends, and family." About her internship Cloie said, "I proved to a lot of people my (young) age doesn't mean I can't achieve amazing things". Cloie's GED instructors and the WIOA Out-of-School grant team members at Lanier Tech cannot say enough about how proud they are of her accomplishments. Congratulations, Cloie!!!

### ASHLY MENDOZA



Congratulations to Ashly Mendoza for graduating from **Union** County Mountain Education Charter High School. Ashly was able to use the WIOA program to help with transportation and childcare while she completed her diploma. Ashly plans on attending college to obtain a Criminal Justice Degree. Her favorite quote is, "Your past doesn't define you. Each struggle is a stepping block to reach your true potential." We are so proud of Ashly and her hard work!



## 2020 GMRC Annual Meeting Cancelled

GMRC's Annual Meeting held each December is a highly cherished event that allows us to celebrate our region and each other. Over the past few years, the event has grown to over 375 people and is a testament to the pride we collectively share for this region. The health and well-being of our attendees is our chief priority so, bearing the health pandemic we are currently facing, the GMRC has decided to cancel the 2020 event. Due to rising numbers in cases and increased hospitalizations throughout the Georgia Mountains, we felt that this was the most prudent option for the safety and well-being of everyone. GMRC does plan to present our annual awards and celebrate the accomplishments and people of this great region and more information on this will become available in the near future. The GMRC Council and staff would like to express our sincere appreciation for everyone's support of the GMRC throughout the year, and we look forward to an awesome event in 2021!!!

### UPCOMING GMRC COUNCIL MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

- 
- ⇒ September 24, 2020 ZOOM Meeting - *Scott Hilton, Georgians First Commission*
  - ⇒ 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*