

APRIL 2020

PINNACLE

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

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Cover Photo:
Full Bloom
Flowery Branch, GA



Heather Feldman
Executive Director

- COIVD, COVID, COVID.... What can I say, that is the topic of the day for everyone! GMRC staff has been working remotely since the week of March 16th. The staff has exceeded my expectations on their work. I am thoroughly pleased with their level of output and staying on top of their work. The Department Heads and I have weekly Zoom Meetings to discuss projects and making sure we are meeting deadlines.

- Census 2020 is underway. Recent reports show that Georgia has a response rate of 46.5%. The national response rate is 49.1%. Additionally, the enumeration process has been pushed back until August 11. This will ultimately push back all the dates that follow in the Census Bureau's timeline, but this means the self-response period is also extended. Households will continue to have the opportunity to respond online, through the mail, or by phone through the summer months.
- Patrick Larson recently had the opportunity to facilitate and present an Appalachian Regional Commission webinar on the benefits of local downtown Strategic Planning. He co-presented with **Hiawassee** Mayor, Liz Ordiales and ARC Program Manager Annaka Woodruff. Congrats to all for a job well done and representing Georgia on this webinar!
- We have a new GMRC staff member. Ms. Catherine Allen started on April 1st as a Case Manager for the Adult/DW Division. She has done a great job assimilating into her position, especially during these unprecedented times. We are excited to have her join our team!
- Stan Brown, former City Manager for the City of **Oakwood** has joined Georgia Municipal Association as a Member Services Consultant for state regions 1 and 2. I had the opportunity to talk with him earlier this month and look for ways that we can partner together.
- We were also able to have a Workforce Development Board Meeting earlier this month via teleconference. There are many important items in the coming month such as the adoption of the local plan, one-stop operator, etc. Additionally, we are in the process of applying for a Dislocated Worker grant from the US DOL to help with layoffs in the region.
- We look forward to continuing serving our 51 governments in the Georgia Mountains Region. If there is anything that GMRC can do for you, please don't hesitate to contact me at 770-538-2606 or hfeldman@gmrc.ga.gov
- GMRC held it's first ever virtual Council Meeting. We had 28 council members on the call. While this was new territory for all of us, it was very successful!



Sincerely,

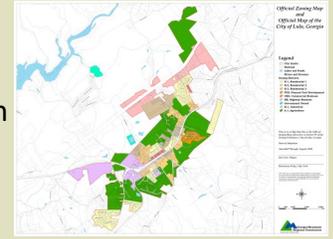
Heather Feldman

Heather Feldman
Executive Director



Information Services

- MAP 21 counties approved and submitted to Georgia Department of Transportation include **Banks, Habersham, Union** and **Rabun**. The road features validated were ownership, surface type, direction of flow, median and road name. Currently we are working on **Franklin** and **Stephens** counties.
- The cities of **Lula, Royston, Baldwin,** and **Tallulah Falls** have requested assistance with updating their official zoning maps.
- The ESRI User Conference will be held virtually this year. The following is an outline of our current plan, with more information available in the [Esri UC FAQs](#):
 - The event will take place July 13–15, 2020.
 - The Plenary Session, technical workshops, and Esri Showcase will be virtual, featuring many demonstrations and live discussions during the conference.
 - There will be many opportunities for networking, collaboration, and real-time interaction with Esri experts and staff.
 - User presentations and the Map Gallery will be featured digitally.
 - A library of recorded sessions and demos will be created and kept available as an ongoing resource.
 - Registration will be complimentary for all Esri customers who are current on their maintenance or subscription.



Economic Development

- Congratulations to the City of **Cumming** on receiving a \$200,000 Recreational Trails Grant to assist with the construction of a trail and boardwalk that will meander above the Kelly Mill Branch stream, its tributaries, and wetlands. This trail will be located at the new Cumming City Center.
- Procurement Webinar: Procurement of professional services and engaging the public are some of the first activities undertaken by local governments when applying for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. In an effort to assist local governments in submitting a successful 2021 CDBG application, Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) will host a webinar which will provide detailed information about meeting threshold requirements for the procurement of professional services and citizen participation, including ensuring meaningful access for limited English proficient (LEP) individuals.
The Professional Procurement & Citizen Participation webinar:
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2020
Time: 10:00 am – 11:30 am
Log-on and dial-in information: Join Microsoft Teams Meeting +1 470-582-0138 United States, Atlanta (Toll) ; Conference ID: 370 914 900#
Please follow the step-by-step instructions for accessing the meeting through Microsoft Teams. Registration is not required.
- Grant Opportunity: Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) - Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) partners with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in facilitating and providing an opportunity for local governments to pursue non-traditional transportation related activities such as pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian streetscaping projects. TAP improves the quality of life for citizens in communities across the state by providing local governments the means to pursue projects that might not otherwise be possible. For detailed information on eligible applicants and projects, visit: <http://www.dot.ga.gov/IS/Funding/TAP> or contact the Economic Development Department.
- Job Opportunity: Grant Administrator – For more information, visit <http://www.gmrc.ga.gov/>

Planning

- The City of **Hartwell** and their Historic Preservation Commission have applied for a Historic Preservation Fund grant through the State Historic Preservation Office. The grant would fund updating their Historic Resource Survey and include 300 historic properties in their historic districts and aid the City and HPC in future preservation planning activities.
- The City of **Hiawassee** has had their Comprehensive Plan amendment approved by the State as they move forward with their Broadband Ready status nomination. The Cities of **Hartwell** and **Baldwin** are each updating their respective Comprehensive Plans.



WorkSource Adult / Dislocated Worker / On the Job Training

- Through the On the Job Training (OJT) Program, McGee Heating & Air in **Hart** County began training a new Commercial & Residential Maintenance Technician. This OJT position provided training for a dislocated worker whose employer recently closed.
- WorkSource Outreach Coordinator Danielle Avelar has continued to connect with individuals interested in training through virtual Overview sessions. So far, 35 applicants have used online or self-guided Overview Sessions this month; as of April 20, 2020, eleven applications have been submitted. Danielle has also been providing virtual application assistance. Eighteen individuals have taken advantage of this service and she has made 8 referrals to other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) areas. Danielle, along with Career Coach instructors Jason Norsworthy and Micah Thomas, have each found new ways to continue providing overview sessions, resume assistance, job search assistance, and employment opportunities and resources to our region during the last month. Check out the WorkSource Facebook page by visiting www.facebook.com/worksource.gm and see what they have been up to!

WorkSource Youth Program

- The Youth Department is excited to announce that our youth have been very productive during this devastating time. Four participants gained employment and have dedicated themselves to not only working their assigned hours, but have also volunteered to work double shifts to provide relief to full-time employees. Kudos to them for going above and beyond the call and making a big contribution to our community!
- Youth Staff presented virtual overviews to five **Hall** County Counselors, **Forsyth** County Board of Education, and an instructor with **Stephens** County.
- The Youth Department has continued to accept applications for services since April 1, 2020. Approximately twenty applications have been reviewed and accepted beginning with the April 1 date.

STIMULUS BILL

On March 27, 2020 an economic stimulus bill designed to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, H.R. 748, was signed into law. The bill includes \$1.5 billion in supplemental funding for the Economic Development Administration (EDA), which will allow EDA to provide needed resources to communities to address the needs they are facing resulting from the COVID-19 public health crisis and the resulting economic decline. This bill is the third tranche of funding passed in response to COVID-19, following the passage of HR 6074 and HR 6201. In addition to the supplemental funding for EDA, the bill also includes additional funding for other agencies that may be of interest to GMRC members:

◇ **USDA Rural Development**

\$25 million to support Distance Learning and Telemedicine

\$100 million for the ReConnect Program to help ensure rural Americans have access to broadband

\$20.5 million to support \$1 billion in Business and Industry loans

◇ **Small Business Administration (SBA)**

\$562 million to ensure that SBA has the resources to provide Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) to business that need financial support.

\$10 billion in direct grants to businesses that do not qualify for the EIDL program

\$17 billion to have SBA step in and make six months of principle and interest payments for all SBA backed business loans

◇ **Department of Transportation – Transit Systems**

\$25 billion for public transit operators to protect public health and safety while ensuring transportation access to jobs, medical treatment, food, and other essential services remain available during the COVID-19 response

◇ **HHS Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA)**

\$275 million for HRSA, including \$185 million to support rural critical access hospitals and rural and tribal health and telehealth programs

◇ **Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Disaster Relief Fund**

\$45 billion to provide the immediate needs of state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to protect citizens and help them recover from the effects of COVID-19

◇ **Department of Labor (DOL)**

\$360 million for DOL to invest in programs that provide training and supportive services for dislocated workers, seniors, migrant farmworkers, and homeless veterans

◇ **HUD Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)**

\$5 billion to allow states, counties, and cities to respond rapidly to COVID-19 and the economic and housing impacts caused by it

UPCOMING GMRC COUNCIL MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

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- ⇒ May 28, 2020 Via Zoom Meeting - Mr. Frank Norton, Jr. - Native Intelligence Report
 - ⇒ 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**