

March 2019

PINNACLE

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

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Cover Photo:

*Taken by Lamar Paris,
Union County Sole Commissioner*

Executive Director's Report



Heather Feldman,
Executive Director

• On March 13th, the GMRC hosted our 2nd Annual Newly Elected Official Training. It was great to see so many of our officials from throughout the region, and especially our very own council member, Annie Sutton. It was a very productive day with learning and sharing about programs and projects. I would like to thank Mayor and GMRC Council Member, Mike Eason and the City of **Dawsonville** for hosting the event at their Municipal Complex.



• I would like to welcome our newest GMRC Council Member, Ms. Denise McKay, **Towns** County Economic Development. Welcome Denise!

• The Economic Development Department and myself recently attended the Development District Association of Appalachia's annual conference. It was a great opportunity to network with our peers and learn more about the Appalachian Regional Commission's priorities including entrepreneurship and the opioid epidemic. While at the conference, I was honored to be named to the Development District Association of Appalachia board representing the State of Georgia. I look forward to working with my peers in the other 12 Appalachian states!



• DCA's PlanFirst program is now accepting nominations from interested communities. PlanFirst is DCA's Program to recognize and reward communities that clearly demonstrate an established pattern of successfully implementing their local Comprehensive Plan. Nominations are due by **May 15th** and any community interested may request that the GMRC write their applications at no cost. If your community is interested in applying, please contact Adam Hazell at 770-538-2617 or ahazell@gmrc.ga.gov.

• The Planning Department recently held a Lunch and Learn on the topic of Short Term Rentals. It was a packed house, and it was great to share best practices among communities in the region.



• The GMRC held a 2020 Census Complete Count Workshop on March 26th. Rusty Haygood, DCA Deputy Commissioner discussed the state's complete count efforts, hard to count populations, and how to use local knowledge and expertise to develop and coordinate a census outreach program. Thank you to Rusty for taking his time to participate in the workshop for the Georgia Mountains Region.

• I would like to thank the entire Finance Department and the GMRC Finance Committee for all of their hard work in preparation of the FY 2020 Budget.

• Please mark your calendar for June 7, 2019 for the 3rd Annual Youth Conference, which will be held at the Ramsey Conference Center at the new Lanier Technical College campus. For more information, please contact Jessica Williams, Youth Program Supervisor, WorkSource Georgia Mountains at jwilliams@gmrc.ga.gov or 770-538-2727.

• Thank you to Michael Nix, Executive Director—Georgia Emergency Communications Authority (GECA), for speaking at our March Council Meeting. Michael's program focused on NextGen 911, and he gave us great information and statistics regarding the state's current 911 system, updates to the system that are already in progress, and how more advanced technology will be utilized in the future. To learn more about GECA emergency communications and updates in your community, visit the Georgia Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency (GEMA) website at <https://gema.georgia.gov/emergency-communications>.



Sincerely,

Heather Feldman

Heather Feldman
Executive Director



Planning

Regional Plan update

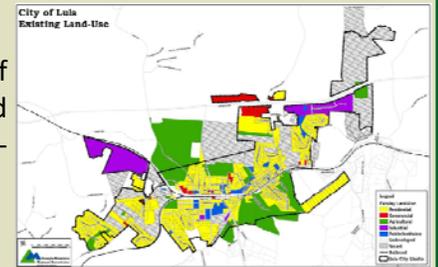
The process continues for updating the GMRC *Regional Plan*. If you've not yet taken our online survey please visit www.gmrc.ga.gov/RegionalPlan.htm and click the link marked "GMRC Regional Plan Survey" to share your thoughts. Be sure to check back for dates about upcoming events and to see draft materials which will be posted in April.

Educational Opportunity – Water Resources

The North Georgia Water Resources Partnership will host their *2019 Spring Annual Meeting/Educational Seminar* on May 1, 2019 at the Tellus Science Museum in Cartersville. The Counties of **Union, Towns, Lumpkin, White, Habersham and Dawson** are included within the NGWP service area but all interested parties are invited to register if interested. For more details and a copy of the proposed agenda, please contact Adam Hazell at ahazell@gmrc.ga.gov

Local Planning

The City of **Lula** has had their *Comprehensive Plan* approved by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA)... **Dawson** County and **Forsyth** County have both adopted their annual *Capital Improvement Element (CIE) updates*... The City of **Gillsville** is completing their *Comprehensive Plan update* and will submit the draft to DCA in April.



Economic Development

- On behalf of Development Authority of **Dawson** County an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant pre-application for \$50,000 was submitted to assist with the Develop **Dawson** Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- The first Economic Development Steering Committee meeting for **Towns** County was held on March 11th at **Hiwassee** City Hall. The GMRC Economic Development department is assisting with facilitating these meetings in coordination with Denise McKay, Economic Development Director for the City of **Hiwassee**, City of **Young Harris**, and **Towns** County.
- On March 20th, Daniel Martin served as a panelist and delivered a presentation on innovative approaches to Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) planning and implementation. This was an opportunity to share successes and best practices at the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Annual Conference in Washington D.C.



GIS Services

- GMRC hosted a Census Complete Count Workshop on March 26th. Rusty Haygood from Georgia Department of Community Affairs presented the State's efforts, hard to count areas in the region and how to motivate citizens to fill out the Census 2020 form. The presentation can be found on GMRC's website: gmrc.ga.gov/Documents. Contact Faith Bryan for additional information related to Census 2020, Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) or Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP). Other helpful Census information: www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2019/comm/2020-census-participation-likelihood mn.gov/admin/assets/2020-memo-2018_04-residency_tcm36-326525
- GMRC staff have completed the field work for **Dawson** County Traffic Control Devices and will be submitting those to GDOT for MAP-21. The next two counties that we will be working on are **Lumpkin** and **White**. Staff will be verifying number of lanes, road names, surface type, direction of traffic, medians and ownership for county and city maintained streets.
- Recently completed is the sidewalks layer for the City of **Dawsonville**.



WorkSource Adult/Dislocated Worker

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Self-Guided WIOA Overview Sessions continue to be offered on the Career Coaches throughout our region for those individuals unable to attend a regularly scheduled session. Three people took advantage during the month of February.
- Resume Workshops were conducted for 40 students at the Mountain Education Charter High Schools in **Hall** County, **Dawson** County, and **Forsyth** County.
- The Career Coaches were invited to participate in the Neighbors4Neighbors Mobile Food Pantry in **Stephens** County, during which three individuals took advantage of the services provided on board the Career Coach.
- A total of seven inmates from various counties participated in a Career Exploration Workshop aboard the Career Coach outside the Colwell Detention Center in **Union** County.
- Six individuals with various career/job related needs received assistance aboard The Career Coaches at the Community Helping Place Resource Fair sponsored by the Community Help Place of **Lumpkin** County.
- A resume workshop was conducted for six residents of the Salvation Army of **Hall** County.
- Eighteen people took advantage of the services provided by the Career Coach while it was parked at The Place of **Forsyth**. *(This is the second largest event date for this site!)*
- Eleven people registered for VOS aboard the Career Coach.

Career Coach Monthly Totals for February

Category of Responses	Month Total	Year Total	Responses Per County
Total Job Searches	60	107	Banks— 5
Total Job App	14	20	Dawson— 34
Total Resumes	57	165	Forsyth— 70
Total Interviews	0	0	Franklin— 5
Total Interest Survey	2	9	Habersham— 4
Total Training Sessions	3	3	Hall— 44
Total Testing	0	0	Hart— 5
Total Typing Assessments	0	0	Lumpkin— 13
WIOA Info	84	207	Rabun— 0
Public Relations	5	12	Stephens— 10
			Towns— 4
			Union— 5
			White— 17
			Other— 9

Youth

- Youth Staff participated in a Career Day at **Banks** County Middle school and East **Hall** High School.
- Youth Staff presented a workshop for **Hall** County Project Search students.
- Youth Staff held workshops at the **Gainesville-Hall** County Transition Fair for approximately 500 students from **Hall** County and several surrounding counties as well as participating in the resource part of the fair.
- In the Pathway to Success Program, eight participants completed their GED, five transitioned into occupational skills training, and two participants began internships.

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT):

- Corrugated Plastics and North Georgia Heat Treat in **Union** County are able to provide updated skills training for seven CNC Operators.
- PharmaTech Industries in **Hart** County has begun Six Sigma Green Belt Certification Training for 24 employees, which will make their company more competitive and improve cost savings by making employees more efficient.

On the Job Training (OJT):

- Scientific Games in **Forsyth** County began training a new HR Generalist. This OJT position provided training for a stay at home mom needing assistance re-entering the workforce.
- **Dawson** County Economic Development and **Lumpkin** County Development Authority met with Business Services staff to discuss how WIOA funding can be used by companies in their areas to train new and existing employees and increase their workforce and profitability.



Angel Retana, owner of Gainesville Seafood Market, first heard about the WorkSource Georgia Mountains' (WSGM) On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program at a Hall County Chamber Meeting.

He was happy to learn that **OJT** provided reimbursements to the employer to help compensate for the costs associated with training and loss of production for newly hired employees.

His new business was growing but needed more management staff to keep up with the demands of long operating hours. He completed the application process for assistance with Niki McPherson, WSGM's OJT Coordinator, and began searching for an assistant manager.

Meanwhile, **Fabricio Ortiz Duran** had recently moved to Gainesville, although he had 10 years of experience in the restaurant industry he lacked management training. He applied to Gainesville Seafood Market for the open assistant manager position. After completing the WSGM paperwork, he was hired on by Gainesville Seafood Market as a **full-time employee and started training to be an assistant manager.**



WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT OJT?

Retana noted that it's an awesome way for a business to expand it's workforce. A business has everything to gain by working with WSGM.

Duran said that he enjoyed this training program because he learned while he made a living wage to care for his family. He was able to get exactly where he wanted to be in his career!

UPCOMING GMRC COUNCIL MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

- ⇒ Apr. 25, 2019* City of Lavonia / Lavonia Depot - *Ben Cowart, GEFA*
- ⇒ May 30, 2019 Dawson County - *Legislative Appreciation Dinner*
- ⇒ Jun. 27, 2019 City of Cumming - *Michelle Daniels, Cumming-Forsyth CoC*
- ⇒ July 25, 2019* Rabun County
- ⇒ Aug. 29, 2019 City of Gainesville - *Tyler Reinagel, DCA*
- ⇒ Sept. 26, 2019 White County
- ⇒ Oct. 24, 2019* Lumpkin Co./City of Dahlonega

GMRC Council Meetings begin at 6:00 PM; Executive Committee meets prior at 5:30 PM.

**WD Board Meeting at 4:00 PM*

