In Memory of J. Robert McDaniel

Executive Director of the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission

February 4, 2008—May 2, 2019

On May 2, 2019 the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission suffered a devastating loss. Our Executive Director, Robert McDaniel, passed away after a sudden illness. Mr. McDaniel was truly a community leader with a servant’s heart. He will be missed tremendously by the SWGRC Council, staff and region.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*In Memory of J. Robert McDaniel* ................................................................. 2
*A Message from the Executive Director* ...................................................... 4

**SWGRC Council** ....................................................................................... 5-10
- Council Representatives ........................................................................... 5-6
- SWGRC Council Training ....................................................................... 7
- SWGRC Council Meeting Speakers ....................................................... 8-10

**SWGRC Staff** ............................................................................................ 11
- Staff Promotions ....................................................................................... 12
- Staff Awards & Recognition ................................................................... 13

**SWGRC Financial Snapshot** ................................................................... 14

**Southwest Georgia Regional Transit** ...................................................... 15

**SWGRC Planning** ................................................................................... 16-26
- Planning & Development Services .......................................................... 16-19
- Southwest Georgia Housing Task Force ................................................. 20
- 19th Annual Housing Conference ............................................................ 21
- Regional Success Stories ......................................................................... 22
- Planning Services Survey Results ............................................................. 23-26

**Economic and Community Development** ............................................ 27
- Community Home Investment Program .................................................. 28

**Geographic Information Services** .......................................................... 29

**GARC Annual Conference** ..................................................................... 30

**City/County Clerk’s Lunch & Learn** ......................................................... 30

**SWGRC Current Contact List** ................................................................. 31
A Message from the Executive Director...

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission is pleased to present the annual Report for the fiscal period ending June 30, 2019. Through partnerships with our federal and state agencies, we have had the pleasure to support and assist the fourteen counties and forty-three cities that we serve in Region 10. We are delighted to share our regional successes and accomplishments in this publication.

During FY19, we have celebrated our victories and achievements, but we have also suffered a devastating loss. Our Executive Director of eleven years unexpectedly passed away after a very sudden illness. Mr. Robert McDaniel was a true community leader with a servant's heart. He always made time to listen to anyone who needed an ear or a shoulder to lean on and he had a genuine desire to help anyone who crossed his path. His staff, Council and the communities he has so faithfully served will miss him tremendously.

But, as devastating as our loss was, we know that we must move forward to continue the important work for our member governments. As the new Executive Director of the SWGRC, and with twenty-four years of service to this Regional Commission, I strive to build strong relationships with our local governments and community partners and to deliver the excellent service to them that they so deserve. I know with the support of an excellent Council, staff, local, state and regional leaders, the SWGRC is postured for success and I, in this new role, endeavor to fulfill the expectations and confidence that has been placed in me.

In order to highlight our success in FY19, we can start with this—the allocation of funding to the SWGRC and our communities in FY19 totaled over $7.3 million. This is a return on investment to our member governments of $21.18; in other words, for every $1 that our member governments invested in the SWGRC, the region received $21.18 back in services, projects and development. From planning, community and economic development, grant writing, transportation services and much more, this report will guide you through our region’s successes and accomplishments in each of these areas.

I am looking forward to a prosperous year for southwest Georgia in FY 2020. Together, we can and will achieve our mutual goals for this region!

Best Regards,

Suzanne Angell
Executive Director
Southwest Georgia Regional Commission
sangell@swgrc.org

SWGRC MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission is to serve our local governments by providing collaborative, progressive leadership and professional, technical services to determine the needs of the region and improve the livability of communities for the citizens of the region.
Traditionally, the December Council Meeting includes Council members receiving honors when they have achieved 100% attendance. Executive Director Robert McDaniel awards (l-r) Donnie Baggett, Dwight Hickman, Nathaniel Keaton, and Al Hutchins with certificates for 100% attendance.

**CITY & COUNTY APPOINTEES**

**Baker County**  
Chris Moore, Commissioner  
John Spann, Councilman

**Calhoun County**  
Charlie Williams, Commissioner  
Diedre Evans-Severson, Councilman

**Colquitt County**  
Paul Nagy, Commissioner  
Ferrell Ruis, Mayor

**Decatur County**  
Steve Brock, Commissioner  
John Spann, Councilman

**Dougherty County**  
Kreg Close, Commissioner  
Anthony Jones, Councilman  
BJ Fletcher, Councilman  
Matt Fuller, Councilman

**Early County**  
Jeffery Haynes, Commissioner  
Al Hutchins, Councilman

**Grady County**  
June Knight, Commissioner  
Keith Moye, Commissioner  
Jim Sellers, Councilman

**Lee County**  
John Wheaton, Commissioner  
Billy Mathis, Commissioner  
Dennis Roland, Commissioner  
Dwight Hickman, Councilman

**Mitchell County**  
Ben Hayward, Commissioner  
W.D. Palmer, Councilman

**Seminole County**  
Brenda Peterson, Commissioner  
Mitchell Blanks, Councilman

**Terrell County**  
Ernest Johnson, Commissioner  
Ed Wade, Mayor

**Thomas County**  
Ken Hickey, Commissioner  
Terry Scott, Councilman

**Worth County**  
Joe Gaines, Commissioner  
Fred Dent, Commissioner  
Christopher Wheeler, Councilman  
Charles Jones, Councilman
The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Council is comprised of representatives from fourteen counties and forty-three cities. Each county has one county, one municipal and one private representative. Counties with over 25,000 in population may have an additional representative and counties with over 50,000 in population (Dougherty County) may have two additional representatives.

The Council meets the last Thursday of each month, with the exception of the November and December meeting. The November/December meeting date is decided by the Council and is normally held the first or second Thursday in December, in order to avoid holiday conflicts.

The Council establishes Commission policy and discusses, approves and reviews the activities of the Commission. Committees formed within the Council meet as necessary and make recommendations to the full Council. Committees include: Executive, Bylaws, Ethics, Audit, Personnel, Nominating, Transportation, Economic and Community Development, Human Services and Environmental & Natural Resources.
New 2019 Council Members gathered for New Council Member Training in March. They were introduced to staff and each staff member gave an overview of the area of the Commission they work in. The training was comprehensive. They learned about services the Planning Department offers, Grant Writing, Workshops, Geographic Information Systems, the Transportation Program, the SWGRC website, newsletter, and digital directory as well as how the Commission is financed. This training is offered at the beginning of each year after new county and city appointments are made.

Georgia Regional Commission Welcomes its New Council Members of 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Virginia Hart</th>
<th>June Knight</th>
<th>Nicole Nixon</th>
<th>Joe Gaines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colquitt County</td>
<td>Grady County</td>
<td>Miller County</td>
<td>Worth County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Public</td>
<td>County Representative</td>
<td>County Representative</td>
<td>County Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon Howard</td>
<td>John Wheaton</td>
<td>Al Bryan</td>
<td>Christopher Wheeler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dougherty County</td>
<td>Lee County</td>
<td>Thomas County</td>
<td>Worth County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Representative</td>
<td>County Representative</td>
<td>Non-Public</td>
<td>City Representative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Director Robert McDaniel decided that it was important, in light of the devastation of Hurricane Michael, that the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Council discuss hurricane response and recovery in lieu of a scheduled speaker. A council member from each county spoke of their county’s preparedness right before the hurricane, response right after the hurricane, and continued recovery. A common thread in the discussion from each county was community togetherness, great concern for displaced citizens, as well as concern for

Ms. Gina Webb is the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Region 10 Representative. At the August Council Meeting she informed the Council of personnel changes within the DCA. She also stated that DCA would be receiving tornado and Hurricane Irma disaster relief funds in the near future. Communities affected by those disasters would be eligible for that funding. Ms. Webb explained Federal Opportunity Zones and Georgia Opportunity Zones. In May, the City of Sylvester and Colquitt County became Plan First Communities. These communities can apply for Community Block Grants every year for three years instead of every other year. She said that one of the requirements to become a Plan First Community is proving that the city or county applicant is using and implementing their Comprehensive Plan. Gina is a great resource to our region! Feel free to call her with any

The mission of the Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center at Ichauway is to maintain and enhance quality of life within the region through programs in ecology and natural resource management that include integrated research, conservation, and education goals. Mr. Davis presented the council with a very informative powerpoint presentation that not only states the goals and gave a virtual tour of the Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center, but also

Our speakers’ materials, contact information, and presentations can be found on our website http://www.swgrc.org
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Staff Promotions

**Angell Promoted to Executive Director**

The SWGRC Council voted to promote Ms. Suzanne Angell to the position of Executive Director at the May 30, 2019 Council meeting. Mrs. Angell has served the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission for 24 years. She has served as Deputy Director for the past seven years and the Finance Director since 1995.

**Reddick Promoted to Deputy Director**

Mrs. Angell promoted Barbara Reddick to Deputy Director. Mrs. Reddick has been with the SWGA Regional Commission since March of 2000. She has served as Senior Planner and Planning Director. She will continue her position as Planning Director as well.

**Wade Promoted to Grants Administration Manager**

Brenda Wade has more than 17 years of experience in grant administration. The majority of her experience has been with the local governments in the region. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Albany State University.

She has been with the SWGRC for 24 years.

**White Promoted**

Heather White is the SWGRC Executive Assistant and now, in addition to that roll, supervises the reception staff. She earned a Bachelors degree in Education from Albany State University. She has many years of office administration and management experience as well as graphic arts, advertising, and marketing skills.
Executive Director Suzanne Angell presented Planner II Kimberly Brooks with a plaque honoring her 5 year employment anniversary.

Ms. Brooks has a Master’s of Public Administration, a Bachelor’s of Arts Degree in Political Science and a minor in History from Albany State University. She is currently enrolled in a Doctorate Program.

Ms. Kimberly Brooks was recognized as one of the 40 Under 40 leaders from small rural communities by the Rural Leader Magazine and

Daniels Hired as Grants Management Assistant

Shanique Daniels comes to us via the Worksource SWGA Work Experience Program. Shanique is from Moultrie and graduated from Colquitt County High School. In addition, she has earned a Business Technology Certificate from Southern Regional Technical College (SRTC). She is currently enrolled at SRTC to complete her Associates Degree in Business Technology. Following completion of her Work Experience Program, we are pleased to announce that Shanique was hired full time as

Casey Hired as Part-Time Receptionist

Abby Casey has been a High School intern for approximately two years at the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission. She has been hired as a part-time receptionist at the Regional Commission.

Shiver Returns to RC as Part-Time Planning Assistant

A graduate of Georgia Southern University with majors in Sociology, Geography, and Business, Beka Shiver rejoined the Regional Commission team in FY19 as a part time planning assistant. Her experience includes working as the City of Pelham’s Main Street Manager, Regional Commission Planning Assistant, and Small Business Ownership. She is excited to be back at the Regional Commission bringing with her extensive marketing and customer services experience, writing, and downtown

Our website http://www.swgrc.org has bios and contact information for all of our staff.
The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (SWGRC) endeavors to impact and assist the local governments it serves by acquiring and administering funds and services for those communities. The SWGRC receives local, state and federal dollars to provide a wide variety of planning, grant writing, GIS, economic development, grant administration, transportation and other services to our member governments. In FY19, over $7 million was acquired for services, projects and development across the region.

**FY19 Funding - $7,343,508**

**FY19 Population – 346,756**

### Planning

$363,060

- Comprehensive Plans
- Pre-Disaster Plans
- Zoning Assistance
- Historic Preservation
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning
- Solid Waste Planning
- Housing Plans/Assessments
- Rural Transit Development Planning
- Grant Writing

### Grant Administration

$132,779

- CHIP Grant Administration
- CDBG Grant Administration
- USDA Grant Administration
- Immediate Threat & Danger Grant Administration
- HPG Administration

### GIS Services

$117,402

- Map 21
- Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA)
- Tax Parcel Conversion/Maintenance
- Map Design/Production
- Maintenance of E911 Data
- Fire District Mapping
- Utilities Mapping

### Community Services (Transportation)

$5,329,825

- DHS Transportation Services
- GDOT 5311 Public Transportation Services
- GDOT Capital (Vehicles and Equipment)

### Community & Economic Development

$1,400,442

- CHIP Grant Funds
- ITAD Grant Funds
- USDA Grant Funds
- Housing Preservation (HPG) Funds
The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (SWGRC) partners with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) to effectively implement a regional, coordinated solution to rural transportation in SW Georgia. SWGRC, through third party contracts, operates a regional public transit system in thirteen of our fourteen counties. Services are available to all citizens throughout the thirteen counties and trips are not impeded by city or county borders within the regional boundaries. Transit services are also provided in all fourteen counties to eligible clients of the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) to deliver these consumers to senior centers, day centers, medical providers, and a myriad other DHS services and programs.

Southwest Georgia Regional Transit currently operates 76 vehicles and provides over 300,000 trips annually. FY19 funding provided to SWGRC from GDOT and DHS to deliver these services totaled approximately $5.3 million. The collection of public rider fares totaled $120,975. Non-emergency transportation services to eligible Medicaid clients, funded through the Georgia Department of Community Health, are also provided on the SWGRC transit system through direct contracts with our...
Planning & Development Services – “Helping Communities Plan for the Future”

The Planning Department of the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (RC) provides services needed or requested by local governments. These services can be answers to short or long term problems with suggested solutions. Governments are constantly assessing services to see when, where, and how they will grow. This process involves looking at several elements impacting a community’s growth and development, addressing the population, housing and transportation needs. The Regional Plan and the Comprehensive Plan are two tools that the Regional Commission utilizes to assist local governments.

**Regional Plan**

The Planning Department submitted the Regional Plan 2017-2022 for Region 10 to the Department of Community Affairs (GDCA) in 2017. The plan was approved by DCA and adopted by the Regional Commission Council.

The Regional Plan is a comprehensive assessment of the region utilizing information contained in local comprehensive plans to determine regional priorities and strategies. The plan is reviewed and updated annually with a full update due every 10 years.
Planning and Zoning

Comprehensive Planning

Community members, stakeholders, local governments and the RC worked together to develop Comprehensive Plans for cities and counties every 10 years. This process is quite detailed and takes several months to complete and results in a community-based process that draws on information obtained from the general public, and other stakeholders. The SWGRC completed Comprehensive Plans for Lee, Thomas and Colquitt Counties. We are working on completing the last of the Comprehensive Plans that are due in late 2019 for Worth and Terrell Counties. A county and its cities are encouraged to create a joint plan, but may choose to create separate plans. All comprehensive plans must be prepared in accordance with the Georgia Local Planning Requirements.

Zoning

Zoning is a tool used by cities and counties to decide how land should best be utilized. It separates uses that are thought to be incompatible. It also includes regulation of the kinds of activities that will be acceptable on particular lots, the densities at which those activities can be performed, the height of buildings, the amount of space structures may occupy and the location of a building on a lot (setback). Zoning also identifies how much landscaped space, impervious surface, traffic lanes, and whether or not parking is provided. The Planning Department is in contract with the Cities of Camilla, Donalsonville, and Sylvester to provide zoning and regulation services.

Capital Improvement Element

The City of Thomasville and Lee County updated and reviewed the Capital Improvement Element (CIE) of their comprehensive plan. The CIE is a long-term plan for developing or improving public facilities that are financed in whole or in part by impact fees. A Capital Improvement Element is a great way for local governments to budget for large and expensive projects and anticipate and budget for these items years in advance. This useful tool is used by communities who want to charge impact fees. A local government that includes a CIE in its Comprehensive Plan must update it annually. Thomasville and Lee County are the only governments in our region that utilize Capital Improvement Elements.
Solid Waste Plans

The state of Georgia requires local governments to have a current solid waste plan that sets a path towards improved solid waste management. The plan contains annual reporting of municipal solid waste management activities including costs, reporting, collection and disposal with a compilation of these reports to be prepared and submitted to Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). RC staff completed the solid waste plan for Colquitt County and are working with the City of Bainbridge and Calhoun County and its cities on updating their plans.

Hazard Mitigation Planning

The Planning Department worked with several communities on Pre-Disaster Mitigations Plans that allow communities to conduct hazard mitigation planning prior to a disaster event. These plans make communities safer for local residents while also reducing the reliance on funding when actual disasters occur. The Planning staff worked with Miller, Baker and Grady Counties.

Training & Career Development

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission is committed to being the best point of reference for our area by investing in our own staff. Effective training help the Commission retain good employees and builds organizational capacity. As we grow, it becomes increasingly important that training and development programs support the organization and staff, which directly impacts the value of the Commission. When we invest in our employees, we get a return that benefits the organization and our local governments. This year our staff received over 200 hours in training and development.

Some training conferences and workshops attended in FY2019 included the annual GARC conference, the GA Geospatial Conference, the DCA Fall Conference, the DCA Community Planning Institute and the DCA CDBG annual Participant’s Workshop and a Planning and Zoning Workshop hosted by River Valley Regional Commission.

RC staff also participated in online webinars and other training events in the areas of grant writing and planning.
**Housing Plans & Assessments**

Assessments are tools used by local governments to identify housing issues and solutions that can be used to make decisions related to housing and community development. These tools many times give leaders the information they need to secure funding and provide for the needs of the community. The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission worked on a Housing Assessment for the City of Sylvester and housing plans for the Cities of Arlington, Camilla, Donalsonville, and Edison.

**Transportation Planning**

The Georgia Department of Transportation provides funding to Regional Commissions to provide technical assistance and continuous support for transportation planning. This is vital in an area where there are very few transportation options. Here are just a few ways we work with local governments.

- **Rural Transportation Planning**

  The Regional Commission worked with local governments to include a Transportation Element in each of his Comprehensive Plans. This is not a required element, but RC staff feels it is a vital element that should be included. Transportation directly affects community livability, economic development, access to education, healthcare, and many other aspects of rural life. Without adequate transportation systems, resident can’t take advantage of services, jobs and other opportunities. The RC developed Transportation elements for Lee, Thomas and Colquitt Counties. In addition RC staff also developed and distributed an online transit survey to identify and assess regional transit and transportation needs. All of this information was utilized to develop a Regional Transit and Transportation Review.

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning**

  A new law regarding school bus safety (Senate Bill 25) in Georgia went into effect recently. The new law requires drivers to stop for a school bus when no physical barriers, separates the road lanes. Motorist have been confused about the law, but we certainly don’t want our kids to be. As a result, the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission provided two safety trainings to students at the Boys and Girls Clubs in Camilla and Pelham, Georgia. RC staff also conducted sidewalk inventories in the Cities of Cairo and Colquitt to assess connectivity within the city and throughout neighborhoods.

- **Safe Routes to School**

  RC staff attended the Georgia Walks Summit in Norcross Georgia and were able to get valuable information from transportation and public health professionals, community advocates and other stakeholders committed to making streets and communities in Georgia great places to walk. Staff also distributed hundreds of “See and Be Seen” pedestrian safety arm bands.
The mission of The Southwest Georgia Housing Task Force is to provide affordable housing solutions through partnerships with all residents of southwest Georgia. Educational sessions are held monthly featuring regional housing topics of interest. An Annual Regional Housing Conference that targets local governments, non-profit and faith-based organizations is conducted to provide training and other capacity building resources.

The Housing Task Force was identified in the Regional Plan as a need in Southwest Georgia. Following the same model as the Regional Partners Network, the Task Force holds monthly meetings that bring together housing professionals and other interested parties to work on solutions to the pressing problems in housing. The efforts of the Task Force have been very successful and have been recognized by the state as an innovative approach to housing issues.

### Schedule of Speakers
**2018—2019**
*(2nd Tuesday of each month at 10:00 AM or 6:00PM)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Coordinator</th>
<th>Speaker &amp; Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 16, 2018</td>
<td>Blakely, Georgia</td>
<td>Career Planning</td>
<td>Barbara Reddick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 13, 2018</td>
<td>Camilla, Georgia</td>
<td>Regional Partners Network/Housing Task Force Annual</td>
<td>Everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2018</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>NO MEETING</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 12, 2019</td>
<td>Leesburg, Georgia</td>
<td>Homebuyer Education</td>
<td>Betty Jackson Burton Sharon Edwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 12, 2019</td>
<td>Camilla, Georgia</td>
<td>Grant Writing/Surviving as a Nonprofit</td>
<td>Barbara Reddick Kimberly Brooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14, 2019</td>
<td>Thomasville, Georgia</td>
<td>19th annual Housing Conference</td>
<td>Sharon Edwards Everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11, 2019</td>
<td>Camilla, Georgia</td>
<td>Planning Session</td>
<td>Everyone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grant Writing Workshop

The Southwest Georgia Housing Task Force (SWGHTF) conducted a Basic Grant Writing workshop in Camilla at the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission. The interactive workshop was facilitated by Karen Young, Consultant and Grant Specialist, and provided basic grant writing instruction to nonprofits, faith-based and community organizations. The day-long event provided valuable resources and other materials to novice grant writers and also those attempting to write their first grant! The Workshop was well attended and

Workshop participants were provided with grant writing samples, links to grant funders and a free grant workbook! The SWGHTF provides similar training to community based organizations annually to increase their capacity to better serve and support local initiatives.

Homebuyer Education Workshop

The Southwest Georgia Housing Task Force partnered with Certified Credit Counselors in Region 10 to conduct a Homebuyer Education Workshop in Lee County. The workshop provided potential home owners information and resources on how to improve their credit. Participants also learned about housing programs and down payment assistance that is available through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, City of Albany, Habitat for Humanity, Federal Home Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, Fannie Mae and many others. These workshop are extremely popular and are offered annually. Task Force members are committed to removing barriers to home ownership and credit is the greatest barrier most families face. These workshop have paved the way to many families owning their first home!
The 19th Annual Housing Conference was held on May 14, 2019 at the Southern Regional Technical College in Thomasville, Georgia. The theme this year was “Better Jobs! Better Health! Better Housing!”, which focused on promoting and understanding that better jobs and health equals better housing.

The conference began with a welcome from Todd Mobley, City of Thomasville City Council. The first session started with Joe Fretwell, DCA Housing Tax Credit Grants Coordinator, Department of Community Affairs, discussing the Housing Tax Credit that’s offered by DCA. Melody Pierce, Executive Director, WorkSource Southwest Georgia presented information about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to promote jobs within the area. Donna McMillen, Archbold Memorial Hospital, discussed the health issues in the area and solutions to some of the health issues. Nolah Shotwell, Thomasville GICH Team, presented an update on what the City of Thomasville GICH Team was in the process of completing. Sondra Hampton, Southwest Georgia Community Action Council and Feleica Harrington, Lowndes Associated Ministries to People, Inc. presented during lunch about the homelessness resources that their respective agency offers, as well as, other programs to combat homelessness. Debra Bell Dison, USDA, spoke on the different housing programs offered through USDA. Bambie Hayes-Brown, President & Chief Executive Officer, Georgia Advancing Communities Together, Inc. (GA Act), discussing housing throughout the state, gave participants a chance to learn about the different housing programs each agency offers. The entire day was full of housing resources for anyone and everyone!

The conference was made affordable through sponsorships from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Southwest Georgia Regional Commission, Georgia Power, Southern Regional Technical College, Georgia, Georgia Power, Chick-Fil-A, and the Lighthouse Café, Bar and Lounge.

For more information about the Southwest Georgia Housing Task Force, please contact Kimberly Brooks at Southwest Georgia Regional Commission at 229.522.3552, ext. 1615 or kbrooks@swgrc.org.
REGIONAL SUCCESS STORIES

**BACONTON COMMUNITY CENTER**

On Friday, July 6, 2018 the City of Baconton held a ribbon cutting for the new Baconton Community Center. The project took three years and two months from the ground breaking to the day of the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.

The project was built with SPLOST funds. This building will benefit not just the youth and elderly but the community as a whole. The mayor and attendees expressed the excitement with the Baconton Community Center being a place of fellowship for the community as a whole.

A $65,000 USDA Grant has been applied for in the hopes of the new community center housing a STEM lab and a library. The Rural STEM library will allow children to build critical skills in reading, science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

**CITY OF COLQUITT STATE THEATER**

Downtown in the City of Colquitt, an iconic landmark, had sat vacant since the early 70s. Back in the 50s and 60s this old movie theater was at its prime. The city has recently restored the building to be used as a public facility for community and private events.

It has full seating capacity with tables and chairs for close to 200 people. There is full service catering kitchen. There is also a 12’ by 24’ stage and a state of the art audio and video system that will eventually enable movies to be shown once again.

This space may be rented to local citizens for baby showers, class reunions and other events. The façade is nostalgic. OneGeorgia Authority, an organization dedicated to helping rural communities grow, offered financial help, while private donations totaled just under $80,000.

This renovation has inspired renovations throughout the downtown area.
Question 1: Thinking about the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission’s “Planning Department” would you say the Planning department is getting worse, getting better or about the same?

![Pie Chart](image)

*Getting Better: 38%*
*About the Same: 52%*
*Getting Worse: 5%*
*No Response: 5%*

Question 2: When was your last contact with the Regional Commission?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Bar Graph</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 – 12 Months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 9 Months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 6 Months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 Months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-14 Days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-7 Days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 3: How many contacts have you had with the Regional Commission in the last 12 months?

- 2
- 3
- 3-4
- 5 (2)
- Weekly
- 6 or more
- 12 or more
- 4
- 20 or more
- Many
- Several (2)
- 24 or more
- Not Sure (2)
- About 20
- 3
- 3-4
- 4
- 20 or more
- Many
- Several (2)
- 24 or more
- Not Sure (2)
- About 20

Question 4: Based on your last contact, how satisfied were you with the results of that contact?

- Very Satisfied: 0%
- Satisfied: 38%
- Not Satisfied: 62%

Question 5: Which of the following SWGRC Planning Services has your community used in the past 12 months?

- OTHER: 4
- HOUSING: 7
- LAND USE PLANNING: 3
- ZONING & SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS: 5
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: 5
- MAPPING & GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM: 4
- TRANSPORTATION PLANNING: 0
- HISTORIC PRESERVATION: 2
- GRANT WRITING ADMINISTRATION: 8
- ENVIROMENTAL PLANNING/HAZARD MITIGATION & SOLID: 11
**Question 6:** The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Planning Department serves all 14 counties and 43 cities in Southwest Georgia. Staff members are Barbara Reddick, Planning Director, Steve O’Neil, Planner II, Kimberly Brooks, Planner II, Shelby Rhymes, Administrative Assistant, Brenda Wade, Grants Administration Manager, and Shanique Daniels, Grants Administration Assistant. Please rate the quality of service received from the Regional Commission Staff:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Great</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Writing/Administration</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Planning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Information Systems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14 (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Planning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17 (81%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping &amp; GIS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Preservation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15 (71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use Planning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14 (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning &amp; Subdivision Regulations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13 (62%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 7:** What extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission’s Planning Department?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides services in a timely manner</td>
<td>20 (95%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides services correctly the first time</td>
<td>20 (95%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff demonstrate a willingness to help local governments</td>
<td>21 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff demonstrate knowledge and expertise</td>
<td>20 (95%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC employees are courteous and respectful</td>
<td>21 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The RC makes information easily available</td>
<td>21 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the range of services provided by the Planning Department</td>
<td>20 (95%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 8: What services or information do you need that you are not currently receiving?

- The reduction in cost for services, especially since municipalities are required to pay a quarterly fee.
- Public officials training.
- Not sure.
- None.
- Housing and Transportation Planning
- I always get an answer to my question from SWGRC.

Question 9: Please Check the primary method you prefer to receive information.

- Email
- Internet
- Pamphlets/Manuals
- Meetings
- Newsletters
- Networking
- No Responses

Question 10: Please add any additional comments here and tell us how we can better serve you.

- Please add more N/A categories. Some of these questions didn’t apply to me.
- Offering more classes to public officials training.
- Thank you.
- I the mayor plan to attend meeting and learn how to better serve our community.
- Southwest Georgia Regional commission does a wonderful job assisting local governments.
Grants and Other Designations

During FY 2019, the Planning Department assisted local governments with various grants and other opportunities to meet community needs. Listed below are the projects we assisted with:

1. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Housing Preservation Grant.
   - The HPG program provides funds to the RC to conduct housing preservation through the rehabilitation of the homes of very low and low-income residents. The funds are utilized to remove or correct safety hazards and make needed repairs to individual housing that is owner occupied.

2. Economic Development Authority (EDA) City of Albany.
   - To install critical infrastructure underground utilities near Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital including 33 blocks that included businesses in the target area.

3. Immediate Threat and Danger (ITAD) for the City of Leary.
   - Water Facilities

4. Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) for the Cities of Arlington, Camilla, Donalsonville and the Sylvester Housing Authority.

5. Community Development Block Grant: City of Bronwood.
   - Water System Improvements

6. Rural Zone Designation for the City of Sylvester.

7. USDA Communities Facilities Grant (for police cars) for Cities of Leary and Edison.

Grant Administration

RC staff provides financial oversight and administrative support in monitoring grant funds and making sure that all grant activities are in compliance with the grant/contract guidelines. Assistance is also provided within the areas of grant research/identification and project development. In FY19, RC staff managed more than $130,000 in grant funds annually. The Community Development Block Grant and Community Home Investment Program grant are the most widely used by local governments, however; RC staff are trained and have expertise in administering all state and federal grants. Listed below are grants that have been recently awarded to assist our local communities.

CDBG: Cities of Arlington, Bronwood and Poulan,
CHIP: Cities of Arlington, Camilla, Cordele, Cairo & Grady County, Colquitt, Donalsonville, Meigs, Moultrie, Sylvester, Dawson and Dougherty County
CEDS

The Planning Department prepared an updated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Region 10 in December 2018. This full document outlines the Quality Control Measures for the region, economic development gains and weaknesses and regional statistics. Simply put, the CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. It examines regional issues and opportunities and outlines goals and implementation strategies that can be used to address these issues. The CEDS provides the foundation by which the public and private sectors working in conjunction with individuals, firms and industries, create the environment for regional economic prosperity.

Revolving Loan Fund

The Southwest Georgia RC Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is a locally controlled source of capital used to finance start-up and expanding businesses whose projects will create permanent jobs and leverage private sector investment. As borrowers repay their RLF loans, the principal and interest payments are returned to the fund to other businesses to create more jobs and investment opportunities. At the end of FY19, the SWGRC had five active loans. $193,745 was loaned from the RLF for these five projects; there was $274,000 of private investment and $35,000 invested from other public sources. Thirteen jobs were created. The current outstanding balance on the loans is $110,365.

Housing Preservation Grant (HPG)

The HPG program provides funds to the RC to conduct housing preservation through the rehabilitation of the homes of very low and low-income residents. The funds are utilized to remove or correct safety hazards and make needed repairs to individual housing that is owner occupied. These repairs improve the general living conditions of residents, including improved accessibility by handicapped persons. All repairs comply with applicable development standards or codes. The RC assisted homeowners with various repairs to roof, bathrooms, floors and handicap ramps.

City of Cairo

home rehabilitated with HPG Funds.

BEFORE

AFTER
FY2019 Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) Awards Announced

On March 6, 2019, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) awarded $6.7 million in grants through the DCA 2019 Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) to 21 local communities around the state. The selected communities will contribute approximately $1.5 million in matching funds to these grants. This program helps local governments, nonprofit organizations and public housing authorities provide safe and affordable housing in Georgia communities. Funds may be used to assist eligible families with the rehabilitation of unsafe or substandard homes and to build new single-family homes for resale to low- and moderate-income homebuyers.

“The CHIP program is a great example of how strong partnerships with local governments, nonprofits, and public housing authorities can improve housing outcomes in communities all across the state,” said DCA Commissioner Christopher Nunn. “These funds will help the selected communities preserve existing homes and build new affordable homes in Georgia.”

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (RC) was the grant writer and will be administering four (4) CHIP awards for a total of $1,224,000 for the cities of Arlington, Camilla, Donalsonville and the Sylvester Housing Authority, with each local government receiving $306,000 in CHIP grant funds.

For more information about this program, visit website: http://

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHIP Projects awarded in FY 2019</th>
<th>CHIP Funds Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arlington, Early County</td>
<td>$306,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camilla, Mitchell County</td>
<td>$306,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donalsonville, Seminole County</td>
<td>$306,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvester Housing Authority, Worth County</td>
<td>$306,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CAMILLA CHIP HOMES

BEFORE RENOVATION

AFTER RENOVATION
Local Update of Census Addresses Operation (LUCA):
LUCA is the only opportunity offered to tribal, state, and local governments to review and comment on the U.S. Census Bureau’s residential address list for their jurisdiction prior to the 2020 Census. The Census Bureau relies on a complete and accurate address list to reach every living quarters and associated population for inclusion in the census. The Census Address List Improvement Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-430) authorizes the LUCA. The GIS Department is assisting with the registration and creating the most accurate address information possible.

Maintenance of E911 Data:
The Regional Commission maintains and updates E911 data for several counties including Mitchell, Decatur, Grady, and Worth Counties.

Fire District Mapping:
The GIS Department Creates and maintains data used by fire departments, including fire district, fire hydrant, alternate water source mapping. In FY19, we provided fire district maps to the City of Cairo.

Maintenance of Utilities Data:
The GIS Department creates/converts and maintains Utilities system data such as Water, Gas, Sewer and electrical systems for many of our cities including Camilla, Bainbridge, Funston, the City of Colquitt, Sale City and Cairo.

Tax Parcel Mapping:
The GIS Department maintains digital tax parcel data for several counties in our region including Decatur, Early, Grady, Mitchell, Seminole, and Worth.
Annual Georgia Association of Regional Commissions Conference Attended by Staff and Council Members in Savannah, Georgia

November 7th through 9th in Savannah, Georgia, the Annual Georgia Association of Regional Commissions was held. SWGRC Staff and many SWGRC Council members attended the conference. Some topics of break out sessions they attended included Georgia’s Sentinel Landscape Program, a DCA update from Commissioner Nunn, USDA Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, a GDOT Update, and ACCG and GMA update, Housing and Transportation Options for Seniors, Rural Broadband, and much more. A Georgia Ports Authority Tour was offered for Commission Council members attending the conference as well as their guests.

Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Hosts the Annual City and County Clerk’s Lunch & Learn

On November 27th City and County Clerks gathered at the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (SWGRC) for a Clerk’s Lunch and Learn.

Barbara Reddick, SWGRC Planning Director, explained the Community Home Improvement Program (CHIP). There were many questions answered and everyone left with more knowledge about the program and how it can help their community as well as the process to apply. Ms. Reddick then discussed Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and how they are used to help the communities and the application process.

Executive Assistant, Heather White and Dougherty County Clerk Jawahn Ware discussed the Georgia Open Records Act. Each clerk in attendance received the most up to date information form both the Georgia Municipal Association and from ACCG. After much discussion, it was agreed that it is time to arrange Open Records and Meetings training.

Ms. White showed the clerks the SWGRC Website and the Clerk’s Resources area. She discussed the process of making appointments to the SWGRC Council.

The next clerk’s meeting will be held in February on a date yet to be determined. It is very important for Clerks to attend this one hour lunch and learn not only to learn materials that are presented but also to make valuable connections with one another so that they can communicate when they have questions about their day to day work challenges.
If you have a question, where do you turn?

Administrative:
Suzanne Angell, Executive Director, sangell@swgrc.org
Heather White, Executive Assistant, hwhite@swgrc.org
Helen Williams, Reception, hwilliams@swgrc.org
Abby Casey, Reception, acasey@swgrc.org

Finance:
Barbara Wilbon, Finance Director, bwilbon@swgrc.org
Laura Davis, Accounting Tech & HR Administrator, ldavis@swgrc.org

Transportation:
Michelle Richardson, Transportation Coordinator, mrichardson@swgrc.org

Planning and Community Development:
Barbara Reddick, Deputy Director, breddick@swgrc.org
Becca Shiver, Economic Development, bshiver@swgrc.org
Kimberly Brooks, Planner II, kbrooks@swgrc.org
Kay Olubowale, Planner II, oolubowale@swgrc.org
Shelby Rhymes, Planning Admin. Assistant, srhymes@swgrc.org

Grants Administration:
Brenda Wade, Grants Administration Manager, bwade@swgrc.org
Shanique Daniels, Grants Administration Assistant, sdaniels@swgrc.org

Geographic Information Systems (GIS):
Heidi Penny, GIS Manager, hpenny@swgrc.org
Jeffery Hamilton, GIS Assistant, jhamilton@swgrc.org

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“Representing Southwest Georgia”