

SGRC COUNCIL

Travis Harper, Chair
Mike Dinnerman, First Vice-Chair

Clarence Billups, Secretary
Lamar Royal, Immediate Past Chair

ATKINSON Tommy Guthrie Ellie Morris Felton Morris	BACON Roger Boatwright Wayne Williams Jackie Welch	BEN HILL Phillip Jay Gerald Thompson Lavonia Stepherson	BERRIEN Elna Bragdon Travis Harper Crissy Staley
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BRANTLEY Ronald Ham Ronnie Jacobs Marvin Peebles	BROOKS Howard Lawson Curtis Pickels Jackie Shelton	CHARLTON Jessie Smith Bill Staeger Austin Hickox	CLINCH Wayne Clifton Carol Chambers Willie Hardee
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COFFEE Jimmy Kitchens Johnnie Lee Roper Adam Smith	COOK Michael Dinnerman Buddy Duke Willie Batchelor	ECHOLS Leon Zeigler Willie Collier	IRWIN Joey Whitley Lamar Royal Lemoria Moses
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LANIER Ronnie Bennett Bill Darsey Ruth May	LOWNDES Joyce Evans John Fretti Robert Jefferson	PIERCE James Dennison Tom Davis Richard Larson	TIFT Grady Thompson Jamie Cater Ronald Nixon
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TURNER Daryl Hall Sandra Lumpkin Charles Kinney	WARE Carlos Nelson Clarence Billups Richard Henderson
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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE	Lt. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE Keith Stone	SPEAKER'S OFFICE Randy Crenshaw
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REGIONAL CALENDAR

JULY

=> 22 SGRC Staff Mtg., Douglas
=> 28 SGRC Council Mtg., Homerville

AUGUST

=> 5 GARC, Macon
=> 19 SEGA Financial, Waycross
=> 29-1 NADO, Chicago

SEPTEMBER

=> 8 MPO Policy Cmt., Valdosta



JUNE/JULY ■ 2009

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(912) 285-6097

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SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION HOLDS INAUGURAL COUNCIL MEETING

The South and the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Centers have officially ceased operations and have been dissolved, and, in their place, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) has been formed. This action was mandated by House Bill 1216 which became law last year. The SGRC is governed by a Council that consists of county and municipal elected officials as well as representatives from the private sector and education. The Council members were appointed from within the agency's 18-county region. The inaugural meeting of this Council was held in Nashville on July 1, 2009, which coincided with the SGRC's first day of operation.



SGRC Exec-Dir. Leadership Committee (l-r): Clarence Billups, John Leonard (Ex. Dir.), Travis Harper, Lamar Royal and Michael Dinnerman

During the Council meeting, John Leonard was appointed as the Executive Director of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission. Mr. Leonard held this same position at the former South Georgia RDC. As for the past Executive Director of the Southeast Georgia RDC, Lace Futch, he has announced his retirement effective January 31, 2010, but will remain active in local government outreach at the SGRC until his retirement.

In addition, the Council elected its officers and appointed an executive committee. Nashville Mayor Travis Harper was selected to serve as Chairman, Michael Dinnerman (Cook County Commissioner) was chosen as Vice Chairman, and Clarence Billups (Waycross Mayor) was named as Treasurer. The SGRC's Executive Committee members are: Buddy Duke, Adel City Councilman; Carol Chambers, Homerville Mayor; Grady Thompson, Tift County Commission Chairman; Austin Hickox, Homeland Mayor; and Gerald Thompson, Fitzgerald Mayor. Ocilla Mayor Lamar Royal will serve as Immediate Past Chair.



SGRC Executive committee (l-r): Gerald Thompson, Austin Hickox, Carol Chambers, Grady Thompson and Buddy Duke

The SGRC will maintain two offices in the region, one in Valdosta and the other in Waycross. The 18-county region includes Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware counties. According to Executive Director John Leonard, the 90-person staff of the SGRC is the second largest in the state and that the primary purpose of the agency will be to continue providing excellent service to its customers – the municipal and county governments in the region.



327 W. Savannah Avenue
Valdosta, Georgia 31601

1725 S. Georgia Pkwy, West
Waycross, Georgia 31503

Area Agency On Aging

Contact: Marsha Stacy

Kinship Care Program Assists Grandparents In Sending Kids To Summer Camp

Through its Kinship Care program, the Southern Georgia Area Agency on Aging (SG AAA) assists residents of its region in raising extended family members such as nieces, nephews and grandchildren. As part of this Kinship Care program, the agency coordinates three Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support groups in six counties including Ware, Pierce, Brooks, Lowndes, Coffee and Atkinson.

This summer, AAA staff members arranged for thirteen grandchildren of support group attendees to attend various summer camps in Waycross and Valdosta including programs provided by YMCAs in Waycross and Valdosta, the Girl Scouts, and the Ware County Recreation Department / Waycross-Ware Co. Drug Action Council. The camps were funded by a stipend made available through the AAA.



One 5-year-old girl in Pierce County attended her first Girl Scout camp in June. The Weird and Wacky Science Day Camp provided the scouts with hands-on activities investigating science, crafts, games, outdoor cooking and nature. In addition to receiving a camp scholarship, the girl was also registered as a Girl Scout member, allowing her to participate in all future scouting events. Her grandmother was very grateful for the assistance and said that her granddaughter couldn't wait to be a "real girl scout."

The agency also assisted one great-grandparent in sending four great-grandchildren to camp at the Valdosta-Lowndes County YMCA. "There is no way I would've been able to afford to send my grandchildren to camp over the summer," the great-grandmother said. "It's a wonderful gift for them and a big help to me."

Three grandchildren attended the summer camp program sponsored by the Ware County Recreation Department / Waycross-Ware Co. Drug Action Council. The goal of this camp was to enrich the personal growth of the children through camp activities and personal achievements. Field trips to Summer Waves on Jekyll Island, the Jacksonville Zoo and the Harriet Tubman Museum in Macon also offered attendees opportunities to travel and explore.

According to the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service Grandparents Raising Grandchildren handbook series, "Summer camps are a great way for grandchildren to make new friends and develop their talents." It is the goal of the SG AAA Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program to continue to assist grandchildren to develop their social skills and meet their potential, all while having a little fun in the process.

Loan Services

Contact: Michelle Frey

Loan Program Assists Better Mood Clinic



Better Mood Clinic is a full-service mental health and behavioral health clinic owned and operated by Nancy Weingartner, board certified as a licensed clinical social worker, and Dr. Tiffany Kumpel, dually board certified as a psychiatrist and family practice doctor. Between them they have 35 years of career experience and have been in private practice together in Valdosta for the last two years. The new facility will create seven new jobs.

Better Mood Clinic is located at 2935 North Ashley Street, Building F, in Valdosta. The building was financed by the Southern Georgia RC through a Small Business Administration 504 loan in participation with Guardian Bank.

Information Technology Services

Contact: Vance Roberts

Excel Spreadsheets - Latest Trend In Output Reports

The latest trend in reporting is to output reports directly to Excel spreadsheets. This has not only saved in paper costs, but has allowed reports to be saved to a local PC or to a server for future use. In the past, reports were printed and then stored for audit purposes or for staff use. Now, the reports may be stored on a server and accessed from a PC at any time. This means that the mountains of paper are no longer needed. Changing reports to go to Excel is relatively easy and may be done on an individual basis. Some of the examples of Excel reports currently being created are Financial reports, Utility Billing registers, Budgeting and Payroll reports. The programming staff at the SGRC Computer Center are available any time to answer any questions you may have.



Geographic Information Systems

Contact: Chris/Rachel Strom

GIS Welcomes New Opportunities



With the formation of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission on July 1, 2009, there come some new opportunities for our GIS program and our communities.

For those communities new to the GIS services we offer, welcome! Over the next several months, our staff will be working to create opportunities for you to discover the services and flexibility of our GIS program. These opportunities will take the shape of user group meetings for tax assessors, public safety, city/county administrators and other professionals in local governments. We also plan to visit your communities and learn how we can serve you best.

It is our mission to deliver top-notch geospatial data and services to every community in our region. Whether you need a simple map printed, a quick how-to, some custom GIS analysis, or a new data layer constructed, we promise to deliver high-quality, professional, efficient service. If you have any questions or requests of us, please do not hesitate to call. We look forward to the opportunities and new partnerships ahead.



What was old is new again. The fact that Valdosta and Lowndes County has an interactive GIS website is hardly news to anyone in the community. But over the past month, SGRC-GIS staff has been working to make some improvements to the site. These improvements include the addition of many new data layers such as elevation contours, weekly crime incidents, traffic camera locations, links to live video from these cameras, and many other map layers. Other improvements include enhanced searches, improved symbolization, a new print function, new tools, and it all refreshes much faster than before! Check out the latest at www.valorgis.com and follow the interactive map link.

If you live outside of the Valdosta-Lowndes community and would like to explore the possibilities of an interactive map for your community, give us a call. It's easier than you think and SGRC is ready to get to work for you.

Community & Economic Development

Contact: Sherry Davidson

The City of Lakeland Receives Nearly \$50,000 In Immediate Threat & Danger Funds

Following a routine compliance inspection of the City of Lakeland's Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP), it was determined that the ammonia contents within the treatment ponds were exceedingly high due to excess organic matter within the cells and that only five of the thirteen blowers were in operation. The remaining eight blowers were short-circuited due to the organic matter of the cattails planted within the pretreatment pond. As a result, the City of Lakeland was advised to remove all cattails within the eight (8) cells, clean the cells of all wastewater, and replant giant bulrushes, which are believed to be less problematic than the existing cattails and vegetation.



Altogether, an approximate total of \$87,886 will be invested into the clean-up and replanting of the eight-cell Water Pollution Control Plant. The City contacted the SGRC to apply for Immediate Threat & Danger funds from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

The Immediate Threat and Danger (ITAD) Program has been established by a set-aside of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The ITAD Program is intended to respond to events or situations which have a particular urgency and uniqueness which adversely affect or impact the health or welfare of the community and its citizens and where other financial resources are not available to meet such need.

The City of Lakeland was awarded \$43,943.00 in Immediate Threat and Danger funds from the Department of Community Affairs to help alleviate the financial burden of this project. Funds received will be applied to the cost of purchasing and planting the giant bulrush plants.