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COG CONNECTIONS

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Impact of TARCOG's Economic Development & Planning Department

Over the course of FY 2017, the TARCOG Economic Development and Planning Department has made a large impact assisting local governments, utilities and non-profit groups in the region through planning, community and economic development. During this time period the Department has forty three total on-going projects either under development, under review, under construction or fully completed. To date, TARCOG has assisted in acquiring approximately \$5,363,990 in grant funding during the fiscal year with a positive impact to over 400,000 citizens within the region. Successfully funded projects include, but are not limited to CDBG public infrastructure projects, transportation enhancement, downtown revitalization, municipal comprehensive planning and environmental planning efforts. TARCOG expects multiple grant award announcements to be made in the coming weeks relating to on-going efforts currently under review by various Federal and State entities.

In order to provide on-going assistance to our member governments the Economic Development and Planning Department has begun the process of developing the 2018-2022 TARCOG Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS); the development of this highly important document will occur over the coming summer months. The CEDS is a five-year planning document required by the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration. It is a tool to help us capitalize on our strengths and work to overcome weaknesses, creating a more viable and prosperous TARCOG region. It also presents opportunities to request grants to assist with public infrastructure needs, downtown redevelopments and other economic development projects from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration. As we reach out to you this summer please know that your input and participation is of vital importance as it will help us understand what is most important to local residents, leaders and business owners in DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison and Marshall Counties.

The TARCOG Economic Development and Planning Department remains proactive in exploring ways to help the citizens and local governments in the region; should you have an questions or believe we can be of assistance please do not hesitate to call us at any time.

From the Director's Desk

Economic development was the focus for TARCOG during the past quarter, as we focused on specific needs in the region, and how best to meet them. Phil Paradise, Region IV Director of the Economic Development Administration (EDA), came to the area to join the celebration of the 30-year anniversary of the Intermodal Facility at the Huntsville International Airport. While here, he also visited some of the potential job-generating projects in Limestone and Madison Counties for which grant applications have been submitted. Jim Byard, former Director at ADECA, was also here for the celebration, and joined in the project visits.

While attending the DDAA policy conference in Washington, DC in March, TARCOG Board President James O'Neal and Vice-President Helen Carter spoke to staff at our Congressional offices about the impact the EDA and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) projects have had throughout the region. Examples were given of how EDA and ARC funding have generated hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars of private investment in northeast Alabama.



Some TARCOG Board Members also took part in the annual AARC Legislator's Reception. Phillip Anderson talked over some regional issues with Representative Laura Hall.



As May is designated as Older Americans Month across the country, TARCOG also celebrates it with the Senior Fun Fest and other activities, keeping the Area Agency staff busy and in touch with the area's seniors.

Congratulations to the following employees for their dedicated years of service!

June 2017:

Kevin Bernard – 2 years

July 2017:

Kathy Jodoin – 11 years
LeQuitta Gaskin – 9 years
Lois Stone – 6 years
Lucas Blankenship – 3 years
Michael Goshen – 1 year

August 2017:

Patricia Meagher – 4 years
Steven Dubose – 3 years
Teresa Hazzard – 3 years
John Sanders – 2 years
Ashley Thomas – 2 years

Thank you for all that you do for the people of the TARCOG region.

Calendar of Events

June 15	RPO Meeting, 3:30 p.m., TARCOG Conference Room
June 16	Caregiver College, 10:30 a.m., The Atrium at Redstone Federal Credit Union
June 27	TARCOG Board Meeting, Annual Picnic, Swan Creek Park, Athens
July 12	Aging Advisory Council Meeting, 10:00 a.m., TARCOG Conference Room
July 25	TARCOG Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m., TARCOG Conference Room
August 22	TARCOG Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m., TARCOG Conference Room

DUTTON – WHERE COMMUNITY SUPPORT MAKES THE TOWN

Named for Marion M. Dutton, postmaster there in the early 60's, Dutton is one of Jackson County's smaller – and newer – towns, just becoming incorporated in 1963. Water – or the lack of it – was a driving force at the time. The purpose for incorporating was to have an entity in place in order to form the Waterworks Board of Dutton to be able to borrow government funds to install a water system. Although the city limits are about one square mile, they have just over 300 people living there.



The lovely Town Hall was built in 1989, and is right next door to the K-8 grade Dutton School, which has an excellent HeadStart program. It shares space with the Public Library and PreK, with the state of the art volunteer fire department attached right behind it housing 4 shiny fire trucks. If that weren't enough, a part of the fire department offers a basement area that serves anyone in need if there are tornado warnings issued. Diane Romans has served as Town Clerk for 36 years now, and has all the Town history in her head!



She explained that the Town Hall was built on land that was donated to the town. In fact, volunteer time and funding have helped make Dutton the successful community that it is today. Ray Reed, owner of the long-standing Reed's Grocery in town, donates all the fuel that the fire engines need. Volunteers help out at the school and at the library. A recent grant from Auburn University has enabled them to have 5 new computers at the library, so that schoolchildren and others can have easy access to Wi-Fi and the internet.

Dutton's Night Out has been such a success that it was presented with the Alabama Municipal Achievement Award and the National Night Out Award!

The Dutton Community Park, built in 1978 with help from the Ruritan Club and others throughout the community, is situated on 14 acres of land, with a covered pavilion in one spot for picnics and other gatherings. There are two ball fields, each one surrounded by attractive, mature crape myrtles. A lot of the work to grade the fields, install the ground material, line the fields, and do the landscaping was done by volunteers from the community, including TARCOG Board member Phillip Anderson. It is certainly a community focal point during the beautiful spring and summer months!

According to current Mayor Mark Dutton, the Town is a great place to raise kids! He should know – he's raised two daughters of his own there.



Senior Advocacy Day at the State Legislature

On April 12, senior citizens from the TARCOG region traveled to Montgomery to meet with their legislators and discuss important issues related to the aging population.



Representing the Silver Haired Legislature and TARCOG Advisory Council, these advocates personally visited senators and representatives, giving them the opportunity to discuss upcoming legislation affecting seniors. The group provided information to legislators concerning particular needs that have a bearing on a senior's ability to live independently and experience quality of life. Some of these needs, based on previous surveys, include transportation, recreation/group activities at senior centers, home-delivered/congregate meals, health care and crime prevention.

After visiting with legislators, the group gathered together to hear Representative Anthony Daniels discuss his role as House Minority Leader and the opportunities to promote legislation that benefit seniors. Rep. Daniels was also available to answer questions and receive input from the group. Activities throughout the day allowed supporters to speak with Representative Mac McCutcheon, House Speaker, Representatives Laura Hall, Howard Sanderford, Mike Ball, and Senator Clay Scofield.

The group was appreciative of the hospitality and availability of the delegates who represent the TARCOG region.

Spotlight On ...

Mayor Tracy Honea, Board Member, TARCOG Board of Directors

A lifelong resident of Albertville, Mayor Honea has always watched his community grow. After going to school and growing up there, he traveled to some other places, but always felt the pull to live there at home. He has always been involved in local commerce, with an award-winning car business, a car rental business, and currently is active in real estate there with ReMax. He says that "customers are your lifeline, and that's no different in business than in city government."

Previously serving on the Albertville School Board, he is now going into his 5th year as Mayor. He considers it a "fun challenge", seeing every request as an opportunity to help someone. He enjoys the really great people he works with and serves, and enjoys seeing the process of getting things accomplished.

Mayor Honea's wife of 34 years works as a school nurse. They have two grown children who live fairly close by. He remains active in the Chamber, Rotary, and other civic organizations. He appreciates that when good things happen, it doesn't impact just Albertville, but the whole area!

Success Story!

Mr. Sam E. King of Athens, Alabama, was enrolled in the Senior Community Service Employment Program in November 2013 and assigned to the Athens Senior Center as a custodian. Because he was willing to learn new skills, the senior center increased his duties to include the packaging, serving and delivering of meals to homebound clients, helping out with client transportation and the general running of a nutrition site. His hard work and dedication to the center caught the eye of the Limestone Council on Aging and when a Senior Nutrition Site Manager position opened up, Mr. King applied for it and was hired! His new position increased his work hours by 70% per week and increased his pay by 50% per hour. He is also receiving employee benefits.



"This is how the program is supposed to work," said John Sanders, SCSEP Director. "We are grateful to Host Agencies like the Limestone County Council on Aging that take a chance on our participants and find out that the person is dedicated and has a good work ethic." In FY16, SCSEP provided 94 seniors with part-time employment, making a combined income of \$738,000.

Thomas Robinson, General Maintenance Worker

Thomas initially started with TARCOG through the Senior Employment Program in 2011 as a Fleet Manager. He was officially hired to work with TARCOG in 2012 in the maintenance area. This covers a wide range of duties to include fleet maintenance, landscaping, many fix-it type projects and even the occasional opossum rescue!

Thomas loves to garden and has many fruits of his labor that he shares with others. He also loves to fish. He enjoys outdoor activities and his dedication shows in the care of the TARCOG grounds and the appearance of the crape myrtles that look so lovely as they bloom.

Thomas fills his spare time with visits with family and friends.

Senior Fun Fest 2017



On Tuesday, May 2, 2017 over 1200 seniors met at Sharon Johnston Park for Senior Fun Fest. The seniors enjoyed games, food, and amazing entertainment. With the month of May officially declared Older Americans Month, it was a perfect day all around.

Thank you to all our vendors and contributors and our co-sponsor, the Madison County Commission.

Welcome New Employees to our TARCOG Family!



Medicaid Waiver Case Managers
Dormika Scruggs and Ashley Yerbey

Transition



Congratulations go out to Pam Tidmore, who is retiring from her position as Human Resources Manager after working at TARCOG almost 30 years! We certainly wish her many good times and adventures in her retirement.

We are happy to announce that we have found someone right here "at home" to fill this critical position. Brenson Parks, shown here with Pam, will become the Human Resources Manager effective July 1. He has extensive experience and training in Human Resources, and will be able to work alongside Pam for a few weeks to ensure a smooth transition. We are glad to have Brenson in this new role!

Santa For Seniors Thank You Letter

Dear TARCOG + Their Friends + Supporters,
I am so grateful to you for your wonderful and thoughtful Christmas gifts. They brought me great joy at a lonely Christmas and your gifts continue to help me on a regular basis as I wear them and use them.
Thank you very much. I am sorry my difficult surgeries have taken me so long to write you. It affected my ability to write. I hope you know my great thanks to y'all
❤️

Welcome Home!

Meet Glenna, a recipient of the Alabama Community Transition (ACT) Waiver which gives people with disabilities and long term illnesses the option to live in the community instead of a long-term care facility. Having lived in a nursing home for some time, Glenna had the opportunity to move into her own apartment which puts her much closer to her family. Not only does an ACT Waiver recipient get to move to a home setting of their choosing, they are also provided with the services, furnishings and equipment they need in order to live more independently. The ACT Waiver also provides the purchase and installation of a personal emergency response system, further ensuring the safety of the recipient. By offering programs such as the ACT Waiver, Medicaid can expand participants' ability to decide on the care and the setting that best meet their needs. According to Transition Coordinator Pati Meagher, the most rewarding aspect of the program takes place on Transition Day. As Pati stated, "When the client enters their new place for the first time, I get to say, "Welcome home!"



TARCOG Area Agency on Aging was awarded a grant as part of Dementia Friendly Alabama to create a Dementia Friendly Community in its region. As part of the initiative, we will help build partnerships to create communities where those with dementia and their caregivers can live and thrive. EVERY part of the community plays a role and works together to create a dementia friendly culture.



The initiative has quickly spread throughout the TARCOG region. The Virtual Dementia Tour as well as dementia education was provided to forty law enforcement officials at the Auburn University at Montgomery Alabama Crime Prevention Clearinghouse & Training Institute held at Calhoun Community College in April.

TARCOG also hosted a Dementia Friendly Alabama event at Lakewood Elementary School. We had a blast educating 240 3rd – 6th graders on dementia through activities such as the memory game, a daily activity sequencing worksheet, learning the functions of the brain and playing "What's In the Box."

Please see TARCOG's Facebook page for upcoming Dementia Friendly Alabama events. If you would like additional information, please contact Lydia Weeks, Alabama Cares Coordinator at 256-716-2455 or lydia.weeks@tarco.us.

Congratulations, Karen Roncker and Jesse Johnson!



TARCOG was well represented at the Alabama Gerontological Society Awards Reception held on April 19. Ms. Karen Roncker, retired Nutrition Coordinator for the Marshall County Council on Aging, received the AGS Professional Award. Mr. Jesse Johnson of Huntsville received the AGS Individual Award for his contribution toward advocating for senior citizens in the TARCOG region.

Karen began her work with seniors in 1993 and for the next 24 years had the responsibility to ensure that thousands of homebound residents receive daily hot, nutritious meals. She gave direction and support to the senior center staff in Marshall County as they provided activities, socialization opportunities, and served meals to the many seniors who attend the centers. Karen also provided leadership by coordinating the combined efforts of many organizations and churches as they focused on projects that served seniors.

Jesse Johnson, a U.S. Veteran and retired from Sigma Tech Incorporated in Huntsville, has dedicated his retirement years to helping senior citizens. He has served as the Huntsville-Madison Senior Center Board President for two 6-year terms and also volunteers with the Center's exercise program, Studio 60. Jesse has broadened his leadership beyond Madison County by serving on TARCOG's Advisory Board. He is also an elected representative for the Silver Haired Legislature, serving as the Chairman for the TARCOG region.

TARCOG is fortunate to work with dedicated people such as Karen and Jesse who invest their time and energy to improve the well-being of senior citizens.