

GRANT - A TOWN WITH A VIEW

Having some of the most scenic views in the TARCOC region, Grant has sweeping vistas from its 1310 ft elevation that draw in tourists daily. Although Grant has been busy enough to have a post office since 1887, it did not officially incorporate until November of 1945.

Grant is considered a residential community, since most people work in neighboring cities. While a scenic destination all by itself, Grant is also an easy drive from Huntsville, Birmingham, and Chattanooga – and only 5 miles from Cathedral Caverns. There's not a large manufacturer there any longer, but there are some active locally-owned businesses, and the Town has all the basic services, according to 3-term Mayor Larry Walker. Grant's population count of 903 doesn't quite account for all the people who live close by and around the Town, but not actually inside the city limits.



There has always been a big focus on kids in Grant, the town known as the home of the Kate Duncan Smith DAR School, established in 1924. While the land is still owned by DAR, the school is now 4-A and part of the Marshall County school system, and still features the iconic log buildings at the top of Gunter Mountain. The unique vertical log gym, on the register of national historic places, is now used for special events since a new gym was built.

To support activities for the schoolkids, as well as for the rest of Grant residents, there's a new gymnasium, a walking trail, the renovated Tucker Fitness Center exercise facility, and a new ball field. Mayor Walker said that the City Council actually did a lot of the construction work themselves to save money, working to build the concession stand, the ball fields, and the sidewalk.

Public safety is as important as activities in Grant. They have a 6-person police force, and can provide 24/7 coverage. Mayor Walker feels that having a strong presence in the community results in a low crime rate. Fire protection is volunteer, but heavily supported by the Town, with a building, 6 trucks, turnout gear and equipment.

Mayor Walker is proud that the town is in good financial shape, saying that the town saves up adequate money before making big purchases. Some ADECA funding is helpful in the upcoming expansion of a sidewalk that will enable kids (and adults) to safely walk from one end of town to the other.

Asked what he likes best about living in Grant, Mayor Walker replied "Seeing things get accomplished, and knowing you've been a part of it, things that are benefitting people. In a small town, you get to do so much yourself." Grant's philosophy of active community participation obviously makes it a great place to live.

Santa for Seniors

For most people, the Holiday Season is a joyous time of year. Unfortunately, for the homebound, it is also a time when feelings of depression and loneliness occur. These seniors do not have the privilege of visiting with family or friends due to existing health conditions, distance, and limited resources. As a result, some are alone during the Holiday Season and do not even receive a gift to unwrap.

For 15 years, TARCOC has made an effort to show generosity that comes from the simple gesture of spreading joy during the Holiday Season. The "Santa for Seniors" campaign provides gifts to the most vulnerable Medicaid Waiver clients, and has reached over thousands of recipients. Each year numerous sponsors open their hearts to seniors in need by giving gifts to them. Wish list gifts often include much needed items such as personal care items, slippers, cleaning supplies, and food. Since the items provided may be the only gifts recipients receive, the packages are often wrapped and decorated beautifully.

TARCOC is grateful for the many churches, community groups, and individuals who share their resources in order to make the Holiday Season brighter for our seniors.

For more information on the 2017 "Santa for Seniors" campaign, please call Melissa Burgess at 256-716-2469.



Spotlight On ...

Limestone County, Mark Yarbrough

Yarbrough is in his first term as Chairman of the Limestone County Commission. Mark was born and raised in Limestone County. He founded All Power Construction in 1984, focusing on real estate development and infrastructure construction. During the 29 years he owned the company, All Power built and developed over 200 residential subdivisions as well as installing infrastructure on Redstone Arsenal and other surrounding city, county, and state projects.

After selling his company in 2014, Yarbrough entered public office at the urging of several local leaders and business owners. Chairman Yarbrough's main focus since taking office has been transparency in County Government, fiscal responsibility and economic development. He immediately implemented "live streaming" of County Commission meetings, so the public could actually see their government in action. Under his leadership, Limestone County has become the third fastest growing county in the State of Alabama, with over \$400 million of new investments and 2500 jobs.

Yarbrough has also overseen and completed over 10 million dollars of construction projects ranging from the restoration of the Limestone County 100 year old courthouse to the expansion of the existing Limestone County Jail.

Chairman Yarbrough and his wife Gina, have been married since 1986. They have one son, Ben, daughter-in-law, Mary Jo, and grandson, Hunter.

Success Story!

When William "Ben" Smith, of Huntsville, Alabama, was enrolled in the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in March 2017, he was assigned to the Huntsville/Madison County Senior Center as a custodian/-maintenance worker. Ben had initially said that most of his employment history had been based in maintenance, but it had been three years since he had worked at a "real" job and was a little unsure if he could bounce back into it. His willingness to work hard and fast was evident to all but especially to his supervisor, Katina Jasper. Katina stated, "Ben is a very hard worker and goes over and above in his work. He is such a team player that when Ben got his work accomplished, he would seek out his co-workers to see if they needed any help!" Ben was on the program for less than seven months when he learned that a local business would interview any veteran that applied for a job. He filled out an application and was interviewed. In October, he was offered a custodial job with Office Pride Commercial Cleaning in Huntsville. Andrew McClendon, Operations Manager with Office Pride, said that, "Ben is doing really well in the time he has been working with us."

John Sanders, Director of SCSEP, says the program is a "stepping stone" for many individuals that have been out of the workforce for several years. It is an excellent opportunity for them to regain confidence that they still have much to contribute in the work world.

Rene Breland, Director of Aging Programs

In 2012, Rene Breland and her family relocated to the City of Madison for her husband's employment. Before the move, she worked at the Jefferson County Council on Aging as the SenioRx Coordinator; therefore, she was very interested in continuing her work to assist senior citizens. Rene immediately sought employment at TARCOC and was offered the position of Community Ombudsman. Since then, she also held the position of Medicaid Waiver Program Manager and currently serves as the Director of Aging Programs. As Director, Rene has the opportunity to provide oversight and direction to TARCOC's Aging programs which include legal services, senior employment, Medicare benefits counseling, family caregiver services, nutrition programs, medication assistance, information and referral, advocacy for long-term care facility residents, and Medicaid Waiver services.

Rene has over fourteen years of experience in providing services to the elderly and has volunteered in church settings to assist seniors. She and her husband, Bert, were caregivers for both of their mothers for several years. This provided Rene with first-hand knowledge in understanding the many contributions that seniors bring to their families and community as well as the many challenges they may experience.

Rene holds a Bachelor's Degree in Human Development and Family Studies from Samford University. She is very pleased to call this area "home" and has a great appreciation for its scenic beauty and quality of life opportunities.



Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments

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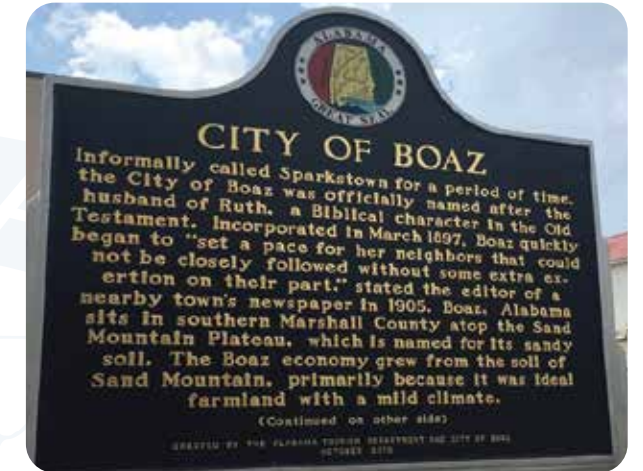
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COG CONNECTIONS

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Community Development in Boaz

In an effort to address issues related to a lack of reliable water service, repetitious water main breakages, wide ranging pressure fluctuations, and resulting issues with water quality the City of Boaz and TARCOG teamed to successfully obtain an ADECA FY 2017 CDBG Large Cities Fund grant to install approximately 3,500 LF of 6-inch ductile iron pipe to replace existing deteriorated 4-inch cast iron lead jointed water mains serving North & South Walnut, Douglas, Daily and Bassett Streets within the City. This water system rehabilitation project is vital to the City as existing water system lines are currently too small to provide adequate flow capacity and fire protection. (10) 6-inch gate valves and (6) new fire hydrant assemblies will be added to the project area in an effort to provide for adequate fire protection and maintenance capacity within this low to moderate income neighborhood. This in turn will lower ISO ratings for 157 project area beneficiaries including 123 low to moderate income residents.



From the Director's Desk

Local governments throughout the region have already been contacted by the US Census Bureau about the importance of the 2020 Census. Since census data is used to allocate federal resources and funds – to be used for critical services and programs such as education, Aging programs, Medicaid, and many of the community assistance programs that we work with at TARCOG, it becomes a very important economic tool for our state. Local government participation in getting an update of census addresses has a direct impact on the accuracy of the address list that will be used. TARCOG is partnering with ADECA in our common mission to serve local communities by helping with census information updates to every extent we can. Getting an accurate count of our population is a priority for the State of Alabama, and must also be a priority for our region over the next 2 years. The number of meals we receive for seniors, the amount of funds our area could receive for community development, and the number of Congressional seats for our state are examples of programs that depend on population counts. Please let us know if we can help with participation in the Census Address update.



TARCOG was pleased to have Greg Lein, Director of the Alabama State Parks Division, as the keynote speaker for the 2017 Annual Meeting. Mr. Lein cited the improvements that have been made to the organizational structure of the Park System over the past couple of years, and addressed funding issues. The event was held at the RFCU Atrium building, with 70 guests attending. At the end of the evening, TARCOG Board Officers for FY 2018 were announced: President Helen Carter, Vice-President Mary Caudle, Secretary Thornton Stanley, and Treasurer Nancy Griggs. James O'Neal will serve as Immediate Past President.

Staff and Board members participated in the AARC Annual Training Conference in October, which had a strong legislative presence from the TARCOG region. House Speaker Mac McCutcheon conducted a "standing room only" workshop on Infrastructure Needs in Alabama, and spoke to the full conference as part of a legislative panel the next morning. Senator Steve Livingston received the 2017 AARC Senate Leadership Award for his outstanding work with his peers in the Senate, his ability to tackle challenging issues facing the state, and his communication with people in the region. And Representative Randall Shedd was recognized by the AARC Board for the important role he will be playing as the Chair of the new House Standing Committee on Rural and Urban Development. It is great to have such leadership from this region as problems are being addressed over the state.

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

December 2017:

Falguni Patel – 9 years
Kristina Chappell – 5 years
Susan Helms – 3 years
Brent Wright – 2 years
Kenyatta Bynum 1 year

January 2018:

Davitta Phillips – 5 years
Shelanda Pride – 3 years
Helen Shepherd – 3 years
Julie Schenck-Brown – 1 year

February 2018:

Lisa Lucente – 6 years
Amber Williams – 4 years
Stephanie Holt – 2 years

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

Calendar of Events

December 5	TARCOG Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m. TARCOG Conference Room
December 14	Hearing by Legislative Urban & Rural Development Committee, 10:00 a.m., Jackson COA, Scottsboro
January 10	Advisory Council Meeting, 10:00 a.m., TARCOG Conference Room
January 23	TARCOG Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m. TARCOG Conference Room
February 27	TARCOG Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m. TARCOG Conference Room

City of Bridgeport Rebounds With the Announcement of Mohawk Industries

During January 2017, the Beaulieu Group announced plans to shut down most of the operations at the Bridgeport Alabama factory (375 jobs lost), where it extruded nylon, polyester and polypropylene fibers and provided heat set and cabling for fibers. The plant, open since 1987, was the city's second largest manufacturing employer. Beaulieu immediately launched a search for a buyer, and received a helping hand from local leaders and a host of economic development agencies.



Mohawk Industries purchased the fiber mill to support the growing demand for its carpet and rug collections. In an effort to provide adequate water, fire protection and natural gas to this site, sizable infrastructure improvements had to be made to accommodate this new industry in an effort to assist in the creation of 65 new jobs. To do so, The City of Bridgeport, with the assistance of TARCOG, submitted a successful application to ADECA for CDBG-ED funding in the amount of \$190,423.00. The City of Bridgeport was notified of its grant award on September 12, 2017. The total cost of the CDBG-ED water system improvements is \$238,027.90.

Jackson County officials said the revival of the fiber plant represents a major economic boom to Bridgeport, a community with a population of around 2,400. Brian Carson, president of Mohawk Flooring North America stated: "We are impressed with the Bridgeport plant's team and manufacturing capabilities, and we look forward to growing the plant to produce innovative fibers into the future." "We are excited to welcome Mohawk to Bridgeport," Mayor David Hughes agreed. "We are eager to work with them to make their move a success."

Rainsville
ALABAMA

The Crossroads of Sand Mountain

Earlier this summer the TARCOG Planning Department initiated a "Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulation Development" project with the City of Rainsville. A steering committee organized by the City is currently assisting TARCOG Planners in Zoning Scheme Concept Development, the drafting and the calibration of new Zoning Regulations for implementation within the City in addition to a new Zoning Map. This project was financed entirely by funding provided by the City of Rainsville without grant assistance. The TARCOG Planning

Department greatly appreciates the opportunity to work with Mayor Rodger Lingerfelt on this project and we look forward to assisting other municipalities within the Region should they need assistance relating to Zoning issues.

In Memoriam

TARCOG was shocked and saddened to lose two of our community leaders in October. On October 2 Representative Jim Patterson (District 25) died suddenly of a heart attack. He was very active as a legislator, passionate about many programs, and was very supportive of TARCOG functions.

Commissioner Bob Harrison passed away on October 25. Among other activities, Commissioner Harrison had been an active supporter of the Senior Fun Fest, held each year at Sharon Johnston Park.

SENATOR STEVE LIVINGSTON RECEIVES LEADERSHIP AWARD

State Senator Steve Livingston, R- Scottsboro, was recently presented the 2017 Senate Leadership Award by the Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC) during its Annual Training Conference. Senator Livingston received the award for his unwavering support and advocacy to enhance access to transportation, senior services and broadband throughout the state.

Livingston, speaking to nearly 300 attendees at the conference, said he felt honored to receive the award and hoped that the many of the employees associated with the Regional Councils and private sector contractors across the State knew how important they are to Alabama citizens. "We've got a lot of challenges ahead," said Livingston, "Together, we can face those challenges like infrastructure needs, transportation and having an up to date census so Alabama does not lose a coveted Congressional Seat in 2020."

TARCOG Executive Director Nancy Robertson presented the award on behalf of AARC, and commended Senator Livingston for representing the North Alabama area with distinction and for his service to the State of Alabama.

"Sen. Livingston has shown real leadership and has been very accessible to discuss issues important to our area in North Alabama," said Robertson, "He's a true statesman and wants to see our State be successful."



Salute to our Veterans

On Friday, November 3rd, the Jackson County Council on Aging hosted the annual Veterans Appreciation Day at the Scottsboro Senior Center. With over 70 people in attendance, local veterans were honored and recognized for their service. The program began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer by Mr. Jon Howland, a Vietnam veteran who served in the Navy. Program speakers included Commission Chairman Mike Ashburn and Sheriff Chuck Phillips. Mr. Charles Boyd, a Navy veteran, also shared his experiences in World War II.



Lunch was served by Commissioners Mike Ashburn, Mike Sisk, and Bobbie Manning. Also serving lunch were Sheriff's Department deputies and Scottsboro Mayor Robin Shelton. An MIA Ceremony Table was placed and decorated in memory of those who did not return from battle.

Special "thank yous" go to Southern Care New Beacon Hospice for the barbeque and beautiful flag cake, and Heartlite Hospice for donating gift bags for the veterans. The Council on Aging would also like to recognize the Scottsboro High School students for making cards for the veterans. "I would like to express appreciation to all the people who made the program possible," said Mr. Howland, "and a special thank you to all the veterans that came to this event."

Welcome New Employees to our TARCOG Family!

Jose Rivas, Senior Aide Custodian and Ashley Thomas, Receptionist/Administrative Assistant

