



Happy New Year 2024

TARCOG is Ready for an Epic 2024!

Message from our Executive Director, Michelle Gilliam Jordan

Happy New Year to you and your families as we celebrate the first week of 2024.

Beyond the stress, hustle and bustle, and family times of the holiday season, I hope you found some time to be alone and reflect on the year behind you and the year ahead. What went well? Where are you now? What do you want to change for the upcoming year? We encouraged our entire staff to answer these questions as we prepare for what we believe will be an epic year for TARCOG.

First, we begin by reflecting on the past year. We had several big changes in 2023. The year began with a flood that caused catastrophic damage at our longtime location. We moved to a temporary location in Research Park, and are now busy working on plans for a new office building. In addition, we had several significant changes involving our executive staff.

Click below to read more about our past year and how 2024 will be epic!

[Message from Michelle](#)



Serving People: 48 Years and Counting for Del Schafer

Did Del do that? Probably.

You may not have ever met Del Schafer or even heard his name before now, but chances are great that the work he's done throughout his career has impacted your daily life.

From job creation or preservation, road, water and sewer projects to building senior centers or funding equipment for law enforcement, Del has done all of this and more.

For 48 years, Del has worked at TARCOG. Before he joined the staff as a planner in 1975, he had worked as a consultant for three years. He's been with the agency almost as long as it's been in existence. He is our living, breathing, working history.

[Read the Full Story](#)



Pictured: TARCOG Director of Economic Development and Planning, Lee Terry, Triana Police Officer, Mark Zivat, Triana City Clerk, Sharon Humphrey, and TARCOG Planning Manager, Del Schafer. Throughout his career Del has helped secure grant funds for the Town of Triana and its Police Department.

Improving Communities: Crossville Senior Center

Where friends gather and puzzles are solved

On top of Sand Mountain, Crossville is a town of about 1,800 residents. Of those residents, nearly 330 are age 60 or older. The Crossville Senior Center serves meals to 25 people each day. Teresa, who has been the manager since 2009, says her goal is to make those who come to the center feel at home and accepted.

"I think there's a misconception about what a senior center is, but once they get in here one time, they understand," Teresa added. "We are a family and we care about each other."

The center not only serves meals. It is a place where seniors can socialize, play games, sing, work a puzzle, or check out a book.

[Read the Full Story](#)



Pictured: Judith Rusk works on a puzzle at the Crossville Senior Center in DeKalb County.

Growing Our Economy: Time to Start Grant Planning!

As we enter 2024, the TARCOG Economic Development and Planning (ED&P) staff are announcing a new process to create more competitive grant applications to fund needed projects in the region.

"Usually, our government leaders know what is needed but just need a way to fund it," said Lee Terry, director of ED&P at TARCOG.

Planning ahead is critical to the process, Terry said. While grant application deadlines may be months away, the time to start work on applications is now. TARCOG staff are a wonderful resource for general guidance, and are able to help focus an idea into a viable project.

[More: 5 Strategies for Grant Success in 2024, and grants available for TARCOG members](#)



Employee of the Month: LaTanya D. Rhines

LaTanya D. Rhines, Elder Law Attorney, is TARCOG's first Employee of the Month! LaTanya has worked at TARCOG for over 24 years, providing legal assistance and advice to senior adults. Let's get to know LaTanya!

What did you want to be when you grew up? An attorney or English professor.

What do you hope to accomplish within the next year? I want to be healthier and to enjoy each day as it comes.

Who is your hero and why? I do not really have any heroes but there are several people who I admire. These are not necessarily famous people, but people I have seen in my family and community who exhibit strength, resilience and integrity. People who choose to do the right thing, even when it is not easy or popular.

[Learn more about LaTanya](#)



Even More News from TARCOG!

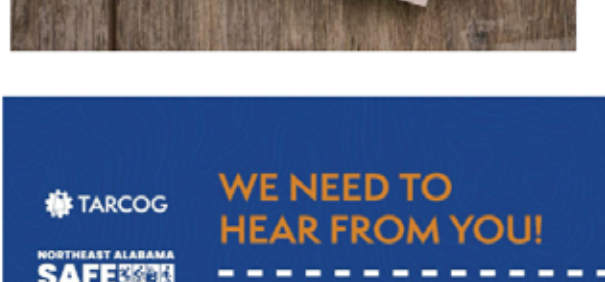


• More than 1,000 gifts were delivered to 373 recipients of TARCOG's **Winter Wishes Drive** during the 2023 holiday season.

• If you are 55 and looking for a paid part-time community service role, TARCOG can help! [Click here](#) for more information.



• **TARCOG needs your help.** Please take a moment to provide input on Northeast Alabama's roads, sidewalks, and bikeways. An online survey is being conducted as part of a new Regional Safety Action Plan that TARCOG is developing for DeKalb, Jackson, Marshall and portions of Limestone counties.



Upcoming Events



• The Jackson County Council on Aging will host its **Senior Expo** on Friday, Jan. 26, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Goosepond Civic Center in Scottsboro.



• **Senior Fun Fest** is scheduled for Tuesday, May 14, 2024. More details to come, but for now, save the date!



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