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<b>TURNER</b> Daryl Hall Sandra Lumpkin Charles Kinney	<b>WARE</b> Carlos Nelson Clarence Billups Richard Henderson
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<b>GOVERNOR'S OFFICE</b> Terri Lupo Gary Strickland Dr. Steve Smith	<b>Lt. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE</b> Keith Stone	<b>SPEAKER'S OFFICE</b> Randy Crenshaw
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**REGIONAL CALENDAR**

**March**

- = 18 Clerks Mtg., Ashburn
- = 23 RC Mtg., Pearson
- = 24 WIA, Regional Commission

**APRIL**

- = 1 GARC, Macon
- = 2 Good Friday
- = 4 Easter
- = 14 WIA, Regional Commission
- = 23-26 ACCG, Savannah



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## Staff Assists Turner County With First Governmental Retreat

On February 25<sup>th</sup> members of the SGRC staff assisted Turner County in conducting its first ever Government Retreat which was held at the Lake Blackshear Resort in Cordele. The event was conceived by the new Chairman of the Turner County Board of Commissioners, Sam McCard.

Approximately 35 people were in attendance, including representatives from all County Departments, each of the County Commissioners, representatives from the Turner County Development Authority and the Ashburn-Turner County Chamber of Commerce, the County's auditor, the County Extension office, Dave Wills of ACCG, and others

Sherry Davidson, SGRC, facilitated the day's events, which involved informative presentations and a good exchange of information between the various departmental presenters, attendees, and the County Commissioners and Chairman. Vance Roberts, SGRC, provided those in attendance an excellent explanation of the data processing services that the Regional Commission provides for Turner County, and Todd Miller, SGRC was on hand to answer any questions regarding the Partial Update to the Greater Turner County Comprehensive Plan.

At the end of the day everyone in attendance had a much better understanding of the needs and constraints that are currently facing each department and the County overall; particularly, the status of the county's finances, the needs of the public safety departments, the condition of various community facilities and services, and where economic development efforts could be increased and improved. The meeting concluded with discussions of potential consolidation opportunities and the upcoming SPLOST renewal.



### City of Lake Park Receives 2009 FEMA Assistance To Firefighters Grant

The City of Lake Park was awarded a 2009 FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant for Equipment and Personal Protective Equipment. The total project cost was \$52,130, 95% or \$49,524, of which will come from FEMA funding, and the remaining 5%, \$2,606, from the City of Lake Park.

The FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) is a yearly grant program available to volunteer and professional fire departments, rural or urban. The City of Lake Park is currently served by a volunteer fire department who enlisted the help of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to apply for funding in April 2009. This grant will allow the City of Lake Park to purchase new equipment to replace outdated and dilapidated equipment on the City's 1999 pumper truck. This equipment includes over 2,000 feet of hoses and 6 nozzles, as well as new hose fittings and connectors. The City will also receive funding for 12 new pagers which will be distributed to all members of the volunteer department, who currently use pagers borrowed from Lowndes County. This will allow Lake Park to quickly notify all of its volunteer members of an emergency situation.



Finally, the City will also be able to purchase new Personal Protective Equipment, known as PPE. The equipment Lake Park is currently using is over 20 years old, but with the AFG funding, the City will be able to purchase 12 full sets of PPE, including coats, pants, helmets, gloves, boots and hoods, which will fully equip the 12 member volunteer squad. Additionally, Lake Park will also receive funding to purchase 4 self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) packs with 30-minute tanks and full-face masks. The SCBA packs will allow the firefighters to work in conditions not suitable for normal breathing.



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Area Agency On Aging

Contact: Wanda Taft

### Southern Georgia AAA Participates in Senior Week at the Capitol

The 2010 Senior Week at the Capitol was held February 23-25 in Atlanta. This year's theme of "Healthy People Cost Less: Be There 4 Seniors" was heavily promoted throughout Georgia, and the event drew attendees from across the state. A total of 418 people were in attendance at this year's event, many of whom wore bright green "Be There 4 Seniors" buttons.

A group from Savannah and Brunswick was joined by seniors from Bacon and Charlton Counties who held fundraisers to pay for their trip to Atlanta. These seniors were escorted by Monica Couch, Coastal Georgia AAA, Scott Courson, Southern Georgia AAA, Chris Williams, Bacon County Senior Center Site Manager, and Betty Jean Johns, Charlton County Senior Center Site Manager.

Even though the General Assembly was on a two-week break during this year's Senior Week, legislators present for budget hearings and committee meetings made every effort to meet with

advocates for senior services and with the seniors themselves. Representative Tommy Smith invited seniors from Bacon County to join him in his office for a personal discussion about seniors' needs. Representative Majority Leader Jerry Keen met with a group of seniors in House chambers, while Senate Appropriations Chairman Jack Hill, Senate President Pro Tempore Tommie Williams, and Representative Penny Houston, who is House Appropriations Human Resources Subcommittee Chair, answered questions from seniors in the South Rotunda. In recent weeks, Representative Houston has proved that she is a true champion of senior services by questioning proposed budget cuts that may harm older adults in Georgia.



Representative Penny Houston addresses a group of seniors during the 2010 Senior Week at the Capitol in Atlanta.

Attendees also received updates and information from several agency representatives including Kim Raymond with the Senior Citizens Advocacy Project; Georgia Council on Aging (GCoA) staff members Kathryn Fowler, Abby Cox and Eric Ryan; and Coalition of Advocates for Georgia's Elderly (CO-AGE) Chair Melba Paulk-Veazey.

Loan Services

Contact: Michelle Frey

### Loan Program Assists Blakely Feed and Seed

Blakely Feed and Seed is a family owned business that has been in operation in Early County since 2001. The store offers typical farming supplies as well as footwear, yard and garden decorations, and hunting supplies. The proprietors, Jennifer and Harriss Brown, lease their current location in the downtown area of Blakely. The couple is now ready to expand their business into a new location they will own.

The SBA 504 loan will finance the purchase of the property, construction of a new metal building, purchase of furniture, fixtures, professional fees, and interim interest. Blakely Feed and Seed's new address will be 159 North Main Street, Blakely, Georgia 39823.

The SBA 504 loan program is an excellent fit for this project as it allows for real estate financing and is especially designed for owner-occupied existing businesses. The SBA will provide 40% of the project for a term of 20 years at below market interest rates and in second lien position behind The Bank of Early. The bank will provide 50% of the project costs and the borrowers will inject 10%. Three jobs will be retained and two created.

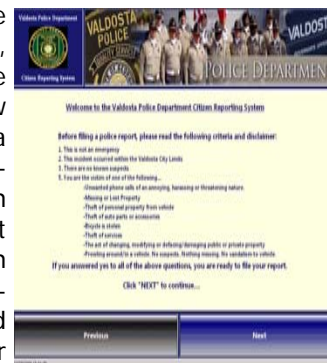
Mr. Clink Alexander of the Bank of Early is the Brown's hometown banker.

Information Technology Services

Contact: Vance Roberts

### IT Develops Software To Assist Valdosta Police Department With Reports

Using a Kiosk style computer and a software developed by the SGRC-IT department, the Valdosta Police Department can now accept reports from a citizen without an officer's presence. Certain crimes that do not necessarily require an officer can be completed and submitted to the department for review if necessary. The goal of this project is to lighten the load of the officers and allow them to focus on reports and incidents that require their presence. A future version will extend this from the Kiosk to the internet and allow citizens to enter these reports online from the City of Valdosta website. Similar applications in other agencies have reduced an officer's call volume as much as 20%.



Geographic Information Systems

Contact: Chris Strom

### GIS Delivers Web-Based Cemetery Map And Database To City Of Valdosta



Every now and then, we are asked to participate in a project that reminds us of the real value of the tools we provide. Not just to our local governments but to the citizens as well. Our VALOR (Valdosta-Lowndes-Regional) GIS program recently had the pleasure to deliver a web-based cemetery map and database to the City of Valdosta that served as one of those reminders that the work we do makes a positive difference to so many people.

Thanks to a historic preservation grant obtained by the City, the historic section (section "C") of the Sunset Hills Cemetery in Valdosta was mapped entirely with GPS and then input into a geographic information system by our staff. Finally, that information was merged with other grave plot locations that SGRC already maintained across the extent of the cemetery. Though that is a

really simplified explanation of the technical effort, the end product is an amazing tool for those looking for the graves of their ancestors and for cemetery managers.

The website at [www.valorgis.com/sunset](http://www.valorgis.com/sunset) features several tools for site visitors to locate the grave site of deceased. They can

search by name, date range of death, or by military service. From the returned results of the searches, the user can select and zoom to any of those matching their criteria. In the historic section, users can even see photographs of the grave markers and the headstones. The images accompanying this article illustrate some of the information associated with every grave in the cemetery.

Section	C302
Block	2
Lot	010
Space	03
Marker Type	LEDGER STONE
First Name	MARY
Middle Name	E SMITH
Last Name	FORCE
Date of Birth	1010
Date of Death	1087
Relationship	FAIR
Condition	LEGIBLE
Engraving Condition	
Full Name	FORCE, MARY ANN SMITH
Note	
Plot Owner	
Funeral Home	DIED NOV. 7, 1887 WFE
Marker Text	
Photo	See Photo



GIS has long been recognized for helping to make better decisions but it's also a tool for the preservation of location information that will be prized by generations to come. If you would like to know how GIS can help you manage your information better, give us a call.

Community & Economic Development

Contact: Sherry Davidson

### Alapahoochee & Satilla Watersheds EPA 319 Projects

The Seven Rivers RC&D Council is proud to announce that their 2008 EPA Section 319 proposals for both the Alapahoo-

chee and Satilla River Watersheds have been recommended for funding by GA EPD. Section 319 addresses the need for greater federal leadership to help focus state and local nonpoint source efforts. Under Section 319, states, territories, and tribes receive grant money that supports a wide variety of activities including technical assistance, financial assistance, educational outreach, BMP implementation projects.

A total of \$400,000 in Section 319 funding

will support projects in these watersheds. Producers and local governments will provide the remaining 40 percent of BMP construction costs for a total of \$1,000,000. Key partners in this effort will include the Lowndes, Echols, Bacon, Pierce, and Wayne Counties' Soil Conservation Districts, Seven Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Council, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. For more information on this project, please contact Angela Wall or Rich Batten at 229.333.5277.

Workforce Investment

Contact: Marcia Gaskins/Cindy Eblin

### Southeast Georgia Workforce Investment Board Awarded Contracts For Occupational Skills Training

The Southeast Georgia Workforce Investment Board recently awarded contracts for occupational skills training for adults and dislocated workers. These services are funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and will be provided between January 2010 and June 2010.

Okefenokee Technical College will provide training in the areas of certified nursing assistants and programmable logic controllers (PLC) for approximately fifty individuals. The training is for individuals that reside in the counties of Atkinson, Bacon, Berrien, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Pierce, and Ware, or who have lost employment in one of these counties. Due to unprecedented plant closures and layoffs, the unemployment rate in these coun-

ties has exceeded both state and national unemployment rates.

The class size training will enable these individuals to obtain new skills in these occupations, which should serve to alleviate the employment situation in the area. For information, please contact Roberta Lovett of the Workforce Development Division, SGRC Waycross Office, at 912 285-6097.

In addition, the Youth Council and the Workforce Investment Board approved services for approximately 40 youth in Bacon and Ware Counties. High school seniors in these counties that are at-risk of not graduating will receive assistance with credit recovery, tutoring, flexible school hours and other services deemed appropriate by the program coordinators. For information, please contact Ginger Peagler of the Workforce Development, SGRC Waycross Office, at 912-285-6097.

