

# In the REGION

## U.S. Department of Commerce Invests \$2.6 Million For Infrastructure Upgrades to Service Local Businesses in Douglas

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo recently announced the Department's Economic Development Administration (EDA) is awarding a \$2.6 million grant to the City of Douglas for natural gas, water, and sewer system upgrades needed to support business growth at the Barrington Agri-Business Park. This grant is funded by the American Rescue Plan.

This project will help to better serve existing industries, enabling business expansion and job growth. The EDA investment will be matched with \$638,298 in local funds and is expected to create 64 jobs and generate \$45 million in private investment, according to grantee estimates.

"President Biden is committed to harnessing the full power of the federal government to ensure our nation not only recovers from this pandemic but builds a better America for the future," said Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo.

"This EDA investment will provide for necessary infrastructure upgrades to support job creation and business development in Douglas."

The Economic Development Administration plays an important role in supporting community-led economic development strategies designed to boost coronavirus recovery and response efforts," said Assistant Secretary of Commerce for



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*The Southern Georgia Regional Commission proudly serves Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware Counties.*

# Community and Economic Development

## U.S. Department of Commerce Invests \$2.6 Million For Infrastructure Upgrades to Service Local Businesses in Douglas (cont.)

Economic Development Alejandra Y. Castillo. “We are excited to support business growth at the Barrington Agri-Business Park to help create jobs for the people of Douglas and the surrounding region.”

“I am laser-focused on creating jobs, supporting local businesses and securing federal resources for our state that keep our economy moving forward, so I’m thrilled to see these investments flow to Douglas’ Barrington Agri-Business Park,” said Senator Raphael Warnock. “I’ll keep working to strengthen these and other critical investments in Georgia’s infrastructure that help keep our economy strong.”

“We are very pleased with the announcement that Douglas will receive the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development grant. The significance of this grant proves that our federal government leaders are committed to investing in cities,” says Mayor Tony Paulk. “Receiving this grant demonstrates that our leaders have prioritized supporting cities to encourage business and industry recruitment that creates jobs and improves our local economy. Economic development is key to ensuring growth in our city and we appreciate the magnitude of this support from our federal leaders and the Southern Georgia Regional Commission.”

This project was made possible by the regional planning efforts led by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC). EDA funds SGRC to bring together the public and private sectors to create an economic development roadmap to strengthen the regional economy, support private capital investment, and create jobs. SGRC Community and Economic Development staff will administer the project.

“The EDA Grant will be instrumental in assisting our commitment to plans for future growth in Douglas and Coffee County, Georgia,” says Charlie Davis, Douglas City Manager. “Being the recipient of a grant of this magnitude will enable the city to expand infrastructure that will strengthen economic development and produce multiple jobs for our region. The impact of this grant will be felt by our community for years to come and we are very happy to receive it.”



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# Community and Economic Development

## U.S. Department of Commerce Invests \$2.6 Million For Infrastructure Upgrades to Service Local Businesses in Douglas (cont.)

This project is funded under EDA's American Rescue Plan Economic Adjustment Assistance program, which makes \$500 million in Economic Adjustment Assistance grants available to American communities. The Economic Adjustment Assistance program is EDA's most flexible program, and grants made under this program will help hundreds of communities across the nation plan, build, innovate, and put people back to work through construction or non-construction projects designed to meet local needs. Effective May 26, 2022, EDA has officially closed all of its American Rescue Plan programs for applications. The \$3 billion program funding will be awarded on a rolling basis through September 30, 2022.

About the U.S. Economic Development Administration ([www.eda.gov](http://www.eda.gov)): The U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) mission is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting competitiveness and preparing the nation's regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. An agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, EDA invests in economically distressed communities to create jobs for U.S. workers, promote American innovation, and accelerate long-term sustainable economic growth.



# Planning & Transportation

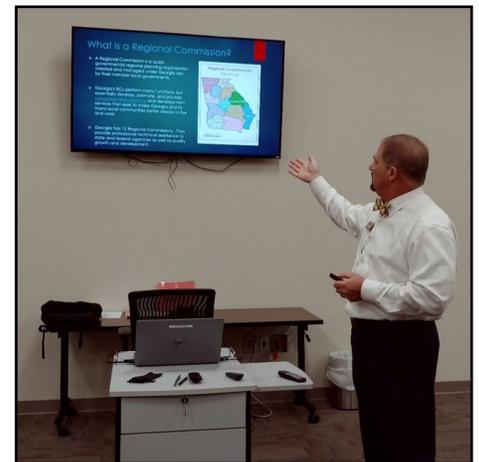
## Tift County and the Cities of Omega and Ty Ty Hold Pre-Update Meeting

Last month, Planning and Transportation Division staff hosted a Comprehensive Plan Pre-update Workshop for Tift County and the cities of Omega and Ty Ty. The Pre-update Workshop was developed by the SGRC Planning and Transportation Division staff to introduce and engage county and city staff early in the process of updating local comprehensive plans.

Pre-update workshops seek to introduce the SGRC's role and services, including an explanation of the process and timeline. The goal is for local government staff to be informed of the process and prepared to lead discussions and answer questions from the public participants when the formal process begins.

The presentation was given by James Horton and Elizabeth Backe, members of the SGRC Planning and Transportation Division. The workshop was held at the Tift County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) beginning at 10:30 am with a lunch break at noon. Lunch was provided by the SGRC from 3 Beards BBQ Catering.

Future Pre-update Workshops are planned for Coffee and Irwin Counties with their respective cities. For additional information, contact the SGRC Planning and Transportation staff at (229)333-5277.



**SGRC employee James Horton is shown above defining and describing Regional Commissions to meeting participants.**



**Tift County and the Cities of Omega and Ty Ty Pre-update Workshop participants**

# Small Business Lending

## SGRC Small Business Lending Program Assists The Q Deli Bar LLC with RLF Loan

The Q Deli Bar LLC is a local bar and deli located at 1577 Baytree Rd. in Valdosta, and it has been in operation for many years. The Q Deli Bar LLC's primary goal is to provide an atmosphere where customers can enjoy an evening of relaxation and fun, along with food and spirits. The menu consists of a small variety of appetizers and sandwiches ranging from roast beef, Philly cheese steak, Cuban's and more. The Q, as it is called locally, also provides entertainment such as live music, karaoke, dancing, and games. The Q has also become a popular rental venue for birthday parties, receptions, anniversaries, retirement events, and much more.



**The Q Deli Bar LLC , Valdosta**

Austin and Taylor Fiveash are the current owners of The Q Deli Bar LLC. Austin always had aspirations of owning his own

business and he said, "When the Q Deli and Bar went up for sale, I took the opportunity to live the dream." Austin and his wife Taylor have extensive management and budgeting experience in various backgrounds. Both have spent years managing staff as well as evaluating and preparing budgets to ensure fiscal responsibility.

The Fiveashes sought funding to enable them to purchase the business (change in ownership) along with furniture and fixtures for operations. The SGRC Lending Division was approached by the Fiveashes with financing of the loan after being recommended by a local business. SGRC's Revolving Loan Fund provided 100% of the loan at a below market fixed interest rate for a longer term than is conventionally offered.

For more information on SGRC Lending and the programs offered, contact Lance Wilcher at (229) 333-5277 or [lwilcher@sgrc.us](mailto:lwilcher@sgrc.us).

# Area Agency on Aging



**Shawn Taylor, Lead Aging Program Manager for the SGRC-AAA, is pictured sixth from the left at the 2022 GGS Officer and Board Member Installation Ceremony at Callaway Gardens.**

## Shawn Taylor Becomes Georgia Gerontology Society Board Member

The Georgia Gerontology Society (GGS) is a statewide multidisciplinary professional network that educates, serves, and advocates for older adults and their families. Since 1955, GGS has been a tradition for professionals as a membership organization of people with a common interest in the field of aging. GGS is the largest state organization of multidisciplinary professionals in the field of aging. Through collaborations, GGS gives voice and guidance to aging issues at the state and national level. By providing quality education and training opportunities, GGS enhances professional and personal development. GGS also supports students pursuing careers in gerontology through networking, mentoring, and scholarships.

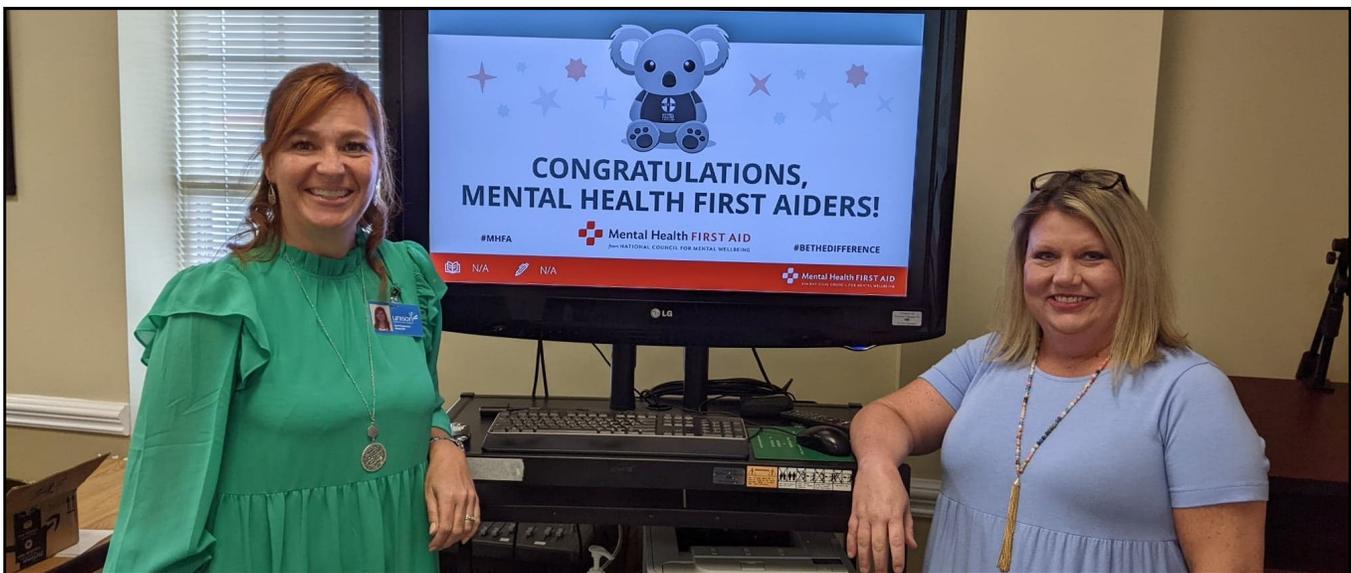
The GGS has a Board of Directors which directs the business of the organization. The GGS Board of Directors is elected by the membership and is comprised of the officers, past president, sections and chapter representatives (if applicable), and members at large. On Tuesday, August 9, Shawn Taylor, Lead Aging Program Manager for the SGRC-AAA Division, was installed as a member of the Board of Directors for the Georgia Gerontology Society (GGS).

Southern Georgia Regional Commission's Area Agency on Aging Division Director Scott Courson said, "We are incredibly pleased to have Shawn Taylor serving on the Board of Directors for the GGS. She will do an outstanding job and represent the interests and needs of elderly citizens in Georgia very well. She will also provide thoughtful insight and make positive contributions in her role on the GGS Board of Directors." Congratulations, Shawn!

# Area Agency on Aging

## Aging Staff and Aging Contractors Certified in Mental Health First Aid

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's (SGRC) Area Agency on Aging would like to thank the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Instructors of Unison Behavioral Health for providing MHFA Training to its staff and aging services contractors on July 20 at the SGRC office in Waycross. For more information on Behavioral Health Services in Ware, Atkinson, Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, and Pierce Counties, contact Unison at 1-800-342-8168. Find Unison on the web at: <https://unisonbehavioralhealth.com/>.



MHFA Instructors April Roberson and Lesley White are pictured above.



**SGRC-AAA staff and Aging Services contractors are seen above participating in Adult MHFA which is a skills-based training course that teaches participants to identify, understand, and respond to mental health and substance use challenges.**

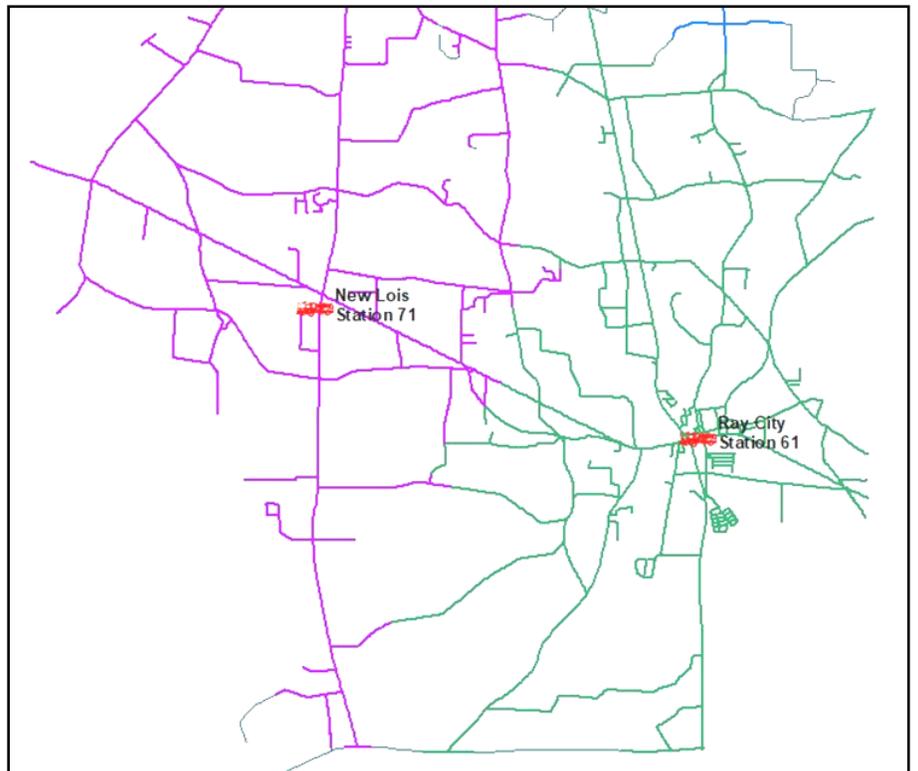
# Geographic Information Services (GIS)

## SGRC-GIS Division Using GIS to Lower Property Insurance Costs for Local Counties

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) assigns a rating to every community in the United States regarding the community's Fire and Emergency readiness. This rating is then used to determine insurance rates for the community. A lower rating for Fire and Emergency readiness will result in lower costs for property insurance. One way for a community to affect an ISO rating is to evaluate and adjust the response distances for Fire and Emergency services workers.

For years, the SGRC-GIS Division has worked directly with many counties in the region to decrease property insurance costs by lowering ISO ratings. The first step was to evaluate Fire and Emergency services response distances. For each of the communities highlighted in this article, GIS staff placed fire department locations on a map and next ran a model to map the 5-mile drive distances. This allowed a visual assessment of the current coverage for the community. The next step was to evaluate the impacted population to determine how many property owners would benefit from lower insurance rates. GIS staff used the created drive distances & census data to generate those statistics. The final step was to place proposed fire stations and run the model to evaluate coverage & affected population. The results of data collected will allow communities to plan for future improvements as well as submit findings to ISO evaluators.

For questions about any of these projects or information on how the SGRC-GIS Division may be of assistance, contact Rachel Strom, SGRC-GIS Division Director at [rstrom@sgrc.us](mailto:rstrom@sgrc.us).

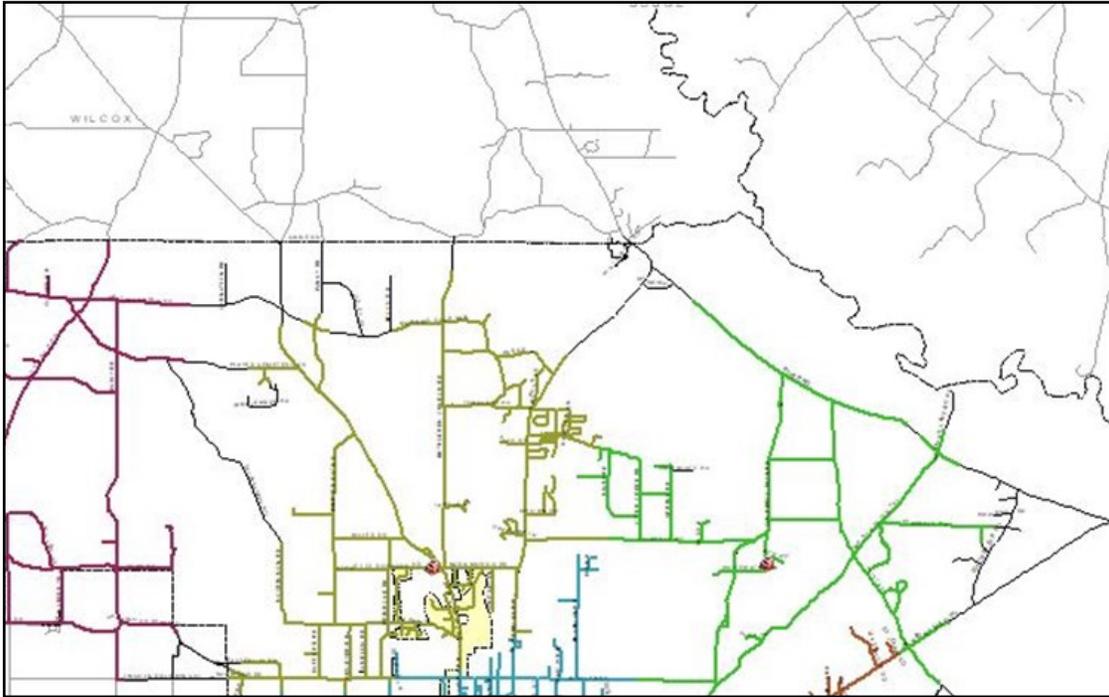


**Five Mile Drive Distances from respective Berrien County Fire Stations shown above by purple, green, and blue markings on road map.**

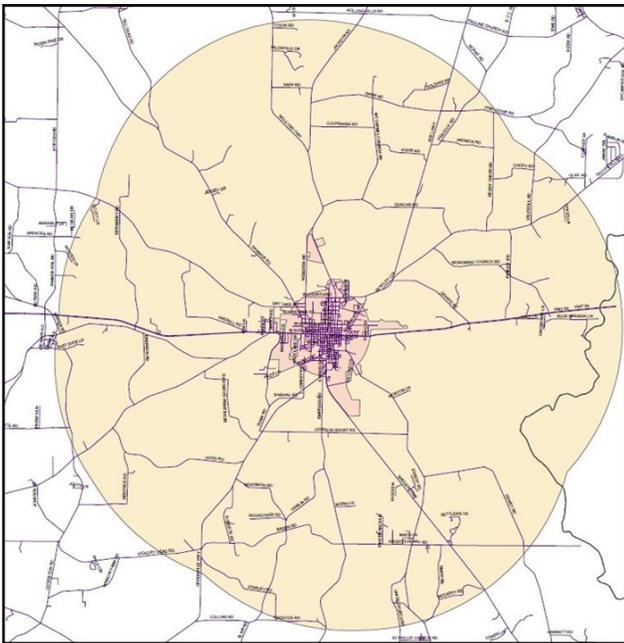
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# Geographic Information Services (GIS)

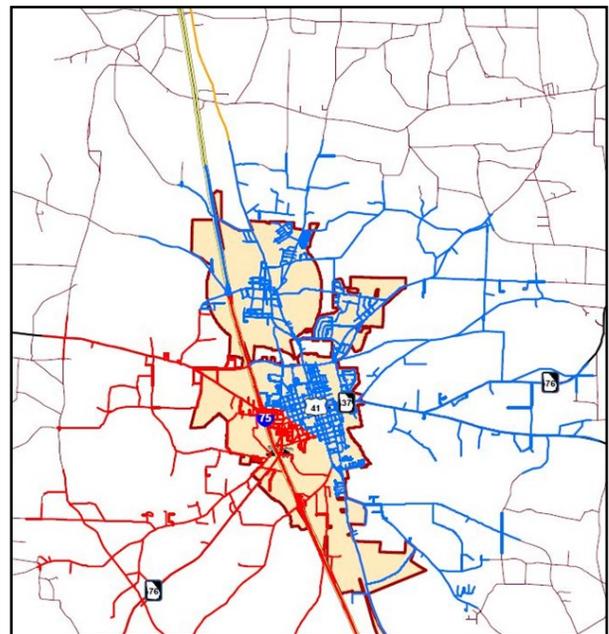
## SGRC-GIS Division Using GIS to Lower Property Insurance Costs for Local Counties (continued)



**Five Mile Distances from respective Ben Hill County Fire Stations shown above by purple, olive, green, aqua, and brown markings on road map.**



**Five Mile Buffer Around Quitman shown above by tan circle on map.**

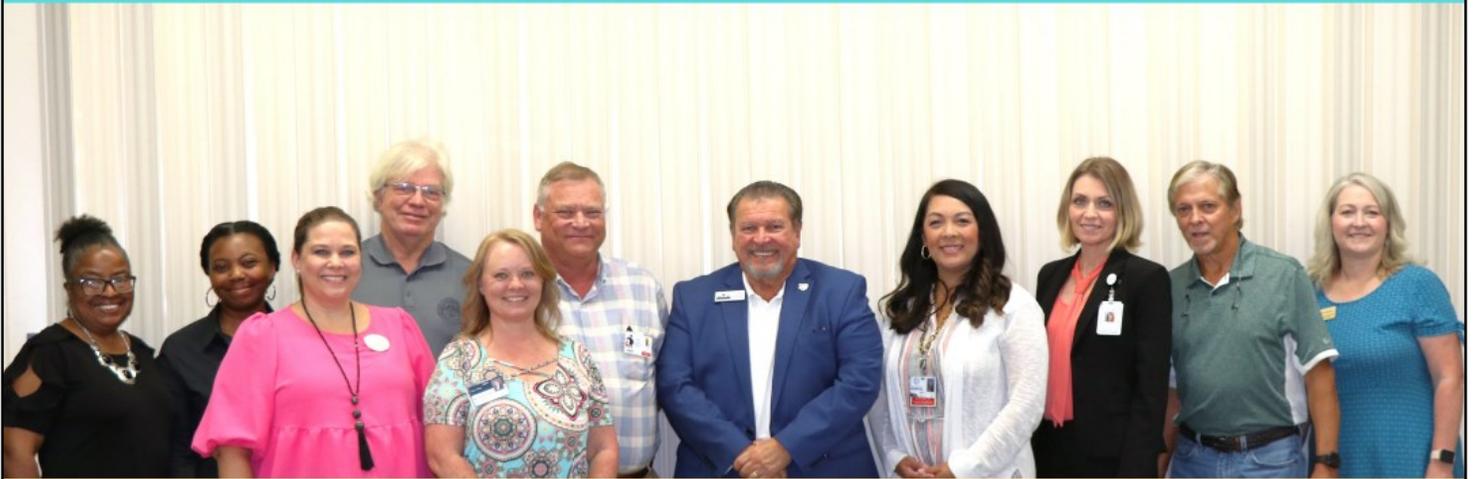


**Five Mile Drive Distances from respective Adel Fire Stations shown above by red and blue markings on road map.**

# Workforce Development

## South Georgia Healthcare Group Holds Meeting

ON TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2022, THE SOUTH GEORGIA HEALTHCARE GROUP (SGHG) HELD AN IN-PERSON MEETING TO DISCUSS GOALS FOR THE NEW PROGRAM YEAR. SOUTH GEORGIA MEDICAL CENTER (SGMC) IN VALDOSTA HOSTED THE MEETING AND PROVIDED A WONDERFUL MEAL FOR ATTENDEES. THIS GROUP WORKS TO COLLABORATE ON RESOURCES FOR TRAINING, EXPAND HEALTHCARE EDUCATION, AND BRING REGIONAL AWARENESS TO THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY FOR THE 18 COUNTY SERVICE AREA OF REGION 11.



(Left to Right): Shirley Ingram, Latasha Marshall, Kelly Peacock, Dr. Doug Patten, Amy Jones, Greg Hendley, Chuck Roberts, Angela Ammons, Ashley Ramadka, Jerry Chapman, Sandra Martin



# Transportation

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# Contact the SGRC

## SGRC Council 2022 Meeting Schedule Meeting Locations TBD

September 22, 2022 – 11:00 am

No Meeting - October

Area Officials Appreciation Dinner -  
(Date TBD)

November – No meeting (combined with  
December meeting)

December 8, 2022 – 11:00 am  
(subject to change)



**SOUTHERN GEORGIA  
REGIONAL COMMISSION**

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**[https://www.facebook.com/  
SouthernGeorgiaRC](https://www.facebook.com/SouthernGeorgiaRC)**

## Congratulations, Mayor Smith!



Tifton Mayor Julie Smith, pictured on the left, was recently installed as president of GMA's Board of Directors during the Annual Convention in Savannah.