

# In the REGION

## SGRC Staff Members Attend the Georgia Association of Regional Commission's (GARC) Economic Development Conference

On May 7-9, SGRC staff members traveled to Buford, Georgia, to attend the annual Economic Development Conference held by the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions.

Each year, Economic Development professionals from across the state gather at Lake Lanier Legacy Lodge to learn more about policy and funding opportunities to better serve the State of Georgia. This year's attendees from SGRC were Executive Director Lisa Cribb, Deputy Executive Director of Governmental Services Kimberly Hobbs, Assistant Community and Economic Development Director Tonia Hendricks, and Grants Specialist Lindsay Ray.

During the two-day conference, staff heard from an array of speakers including Georgia Senate Majority Leader Steve Gooch and DCA Commissioner Christopher Nunn. Staff also heard presentations by representatives from EDA, GEFA, EPA, GDOT, USDA, and ACCG. There were

several roundtables and Q&A Sessions where specific policy initiatives, tax credits for economic development, and grant opportunities were discussed.

This year's conference sponsors were Jackson EMC, CERM, Common Wealth Research, and Holiday Designs. The Georgia Association of Regional Commissions will convene again later this year at Saint Simons Island in November.



**GARC President and Middle Georgia RC Executive Director Laura Mathis welcomed everyone to the GARC ED Conference at Lake Lanier Islands.**

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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

## SGRC Staff Members Attend the Georgia Association of Regional Commission's (GARC) Economic Development Conference (continued)



**Honorable Steve Gooch, Senate Majority Leader, addressed current policy issues that are affecting Georgians throughout the State.**



**Georgia DCA Commissioner Christopher Nunn spoke about several economic development projects that are currently underway throughout the state and emerging housing initiatives from the Department of Community Affairs.**



**Geoff Koski, President, KB Advisory Group addressed the various trends in the housing economy.**



**Clint Mueller, Director of Government Relations, ACCG gave updates on local polices.**

# Workforce Development

## WorkSource Southern Georgia Awarded a \$600,000 Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, Training (QUEST) Disaster Recovery Grant

The Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), Office of Workforce Development (OWD) awarded WorkSource Southern Georgia



**Students training in manufacturing jobs.**

a \$600,000 Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, Training (QUEST) Disaster Recovery Grant. The purpose of the grant is to support Area 18/Region 11 workers and employers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, help them recover, and expand the workforce post-pandemic.

“Since the pandemic, Georgia has experienced both unprecedented economic growth and record openings of high-quality skilled jobs,” said TCSG Commissioner Greg Dozier. “This presents a tremendous opportunity for Georgians to not only reenter the workforce but also begin a new career path that they may not have been able to access before.”

Through this grant, WorkSource Southern Georgia was provided funding for skills training in jobs critical to the region’s economy, including advanced manufacturing, transportation, distribution, logistics, information technology, and healthcare.

“For many in Georgia, the pandemic offered the opportunity to begin a new chapter in their lives, and that often means a better job. With this grant, we can ensure that Georgians who were hit hardest by the pandemic, specifically individuals from special populations and marginalized communities, have access to better jobs as well,” said TCSG Deputy Commissioner Karen Kirchler.



**Students training in healthcare jobs.**

To learn more about WorkSource Southern Georgia, including the services for individuals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, visit [www.sgrc.us/workforce.html](http://www.sgrc.us/workforce.html) or contact Amy Jones at [ajones@sgrc.us](mailto:ajones@sgrc.us).

# Planning & Transportation

## SGRC Planning & Transportation Division Shares Information on Hahira Traffic Studies

The City of Hahira partnered with the Valdosta-Lowndes MPO (VLMPO), Transport Studio, and Gresham Smith on the Hahira Traffic Studies, a set of traffic analyses for two areas within the City, an elementary school, and a park. Transport Studio created an interactive web tool, which includes a map social app to gain feedback from the local community. Two public open houses were held at the Hahira Depot and the final project report was presented to the Hahira City Council on *May 5th*. The final report is on the SGRC webpage at [www.sgrc.us/vlmpo.html](http://www.sgrc.us/vlmpo.html).

Some of the central aims of the report include:

- Coordinating public and private investments in infrastructure and open space
- Making walking and biking safe and comfortable for most trips, including a greenway network
- Reducing traffic congestion and delay
- Supporting activity centers at North Lowndes Park and Hahira Elementary School, promoting economic development and quality of life
- Increasing future greenspace by 20% (about 300 acres)
- Creating pocket parks, linear greenspace, and public squares
- Providing a flexible framework for future growth

Planning & Transportation staff are available at 229-333-5277 to answer any questions regarding the Hahira Studies.



**Whitney Shephard presenting the Hahira Studies Final Report to the Hahira City Council**

# Area Agency on Aging

## Christy Joyner Named Dementia Care Specialist

The Southern Georgia Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is pleased to announce that Christy Joyner has been named the Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) for the Southern Georgia AAA region. The mission of the DCS Program is to support people who are living with dementia and their care partners to enable them to enjoy a high quality of life. The DCS will accomplish this by creating community partnerships through outreach, providing memory screenings, and educating and building awareness for families and care partners.

In collaboration with other programs and initiatives, the DCS Program is a critical component of Georgia's efforts to become a dementia capable state. The DCS Program was developed to drive the state to become a leader to support its aging population, specifically individuals with brain change and their care partners. The program is led by a DCS Lead at the Division of Aging Services (DAS) and a DCS staff at each of the twelve AAA's in Georgia. The DCS Lead supports the DCS through programming, skill building, data, and resource development.



**Christy Joyner,  
Dementia Care Specialist (DCS)**

DCS staff in each AAA region will serve as the subject matter expert regarding dementia in the planning and service area. The DCS will drive the effort to make the aging network more dementia capable by supporting the local network of dementia partners and stakeholders as a community catalyst, educator, and collaborator. The DCS will identify gaps in services and drive innovations so that constituents can access memory screenings and people living with dementia and their care partners can access long-term services and support (LTSS).

Laura Smith, Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) Supervisor said, "We are thrilled to have Christy in this role at the AAA. She has a great passion to assist others and she demonstrates a high level of commitment to serving people living with dementia and their caregivers. We are looking forward to the great things she will achieve as the DCS for the Southern Georgia AAA."

For more information about the DCS Program or for dementia education options, contact Christy Joyner at [cjoyner@sgrc.us](mailto:cjoyner@sgrc.us) or via telephone at 912-285-6097.

# Geographic Information Services (GIS)

## SGRC-GIS Encourages Local Governments to Utilize Georgia Department of Transportation's Local Road Activity (LRA) Program

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) works with local governments within the state to gather the most up-to-date and accurate road information possible. Georgia has the 7th largest public roadway network in the nation with approximately 129,000 miles.

GDOT collects this information because it helps them maintain the best road inventory possible so they can in turn provide the best information to both state and federal officials. Also, GDOT is required to maintain a record of all public roads within the state (O.C.G.A. § 32-4-2).

Local governments see direct benefits from reporting road changes. Road mileage ownership is factored into the formula used for the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) program and the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) program (available in participating regions). Both programs provide funding directly to the local governments.

GDOT also uses road data for planning and decision-making, which improves transportation across the state. They also use the information to create accurate Georgia county and city maps. Annually, GDOT reports the road data to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) via the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) Report, which is used by Congress to establish federal transportation funding for all states.

Local governments should notify the GDOT within three (3) months after a road is added or abandoned to/from and provide supporting documentation (O.C.G.A. § 32-4-91 and § 32-4-41). The following types of road changes should be reported: adding new roads, changing ownerships, extending existing roads, abandoning roads, obliterating roads, changing surface types, changing names, adding lanes and when a local road's traffic pattern is changed from a two-way to a one-way road or vice versa.

While most of the types of road changes are self-explanatory, locals often inquire about GDOT's definitions of a road obliteration versus abandonment. Obliteration means the physical pavement or other

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**Notification of Local Road Activity (LRA)**

## SGRC-GIS Encourages Local Governments to Utilize Georgia Department of Transportation's Local Road Activity (LRA) Program (cont.)

surface material was removed from the roadway; the road no longer exists. Abandonment means the local government permanently removes a section or multiple sections of a local road from their public road system. This is an administrative change only; the pavement remains.

GDOT relies upon the knowledge of local people related to changes to their roadway networks in order to better support accurate funding allocation for local governments. With local government assistance, GDOT can also maintain the best road inventory possible, make well-informed decisions, and provide accurate maps and reports.

To report a road change, visit:

<https://www.dot.ga.gov/DriveSmart/Data/Documents/Guides/LocalRoadActivityForm.pdf>

If you have any questions, contact: the Office of Transportation Data at 404.347.0712 or online at [OTDLocalGovtCoor@dot.ga.gov](mailto:OTDLocalGovtCoor@dot.ga.gov).

To view a video tutorial, follow this link <https://tinyurl.com/gdot-lra-video> OR scan this QR code:



## SGRC Small Business Lending Program Assists Bed'r Mattress, Inc. with SBA 504 Loan

Bed'r Mattress has operated successfully in Valdosta since 2001.

For over 20 years, the mission of Bed'r Mattress has been to offer the very best quality products



at affordable prices to meet the budget demands of its customers.

Jay Lewis has managed the Valdosta location with the same goal since 2012. Lewis purchased the business in 2016 with the help of an SBA 7a loan and Commercial Banking Company (CBC). When the opportunity came to purchase the building to expand and better utilize space, he pursued it.

Lewis sought funding to purchase the building and due to a previous relationship with the SGRC and CBC, he sought guidance regarding an SBA 504 loan for the financing. The SBA approved the financing and will provide 40% of the funds at a low, fixed rate for 25 years, and CBC will provide 50% of the funds in participation. Lewis will pay 10% as a down payment. With this project, Bed'r Mattress will create 5 new jobs. The store is located at 1602 Norman Drive in Valdosta.

# Contact the SGRC

## SGRC Council 2023 Meeting Schedule

**June 22, 2023 – 11:00 am**

The Venue in Pearson

~ July- No Meeting ~

**August 24, 2023 – 11:00 am**

SGRC Waycross Office

**September 28, 2023 – 11:00 am**

The Venue in Pearson

~ October- No Meeting ~

\*Area Officials Appreciation Dinner

**October 26, 2023** (subject to change)

~ November- No meeting ~

(combined with December meeting)

**December 7, 2023 – 11:00 am**

SGRC Valdosta Office

(subject to change)



**SOUTHERN GEORGIA  
REGIONAL COMMISSION**

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