

Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission



Mission Statement

To Improve the Quality of Life for the Citizens of
Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Geneva, Henry
and Houston Counties.

Edited by: Brittany McCree, Office Manager
bmccree@searpdc.org

Fall 2024 Newsletter

Community and Economic Development

CDBG Grants Awarded

The State of Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs recently announced Community Development Block Grant awards for 7 communities in southeast Alabama. These grants will provide much needed improvements for the citizens of southeast Alabama. The SEARP&DC Community and Economic Development Department worked with the following local governments on preparation of the grant applications and will be administering the projects on behalf of our local governments.

**[Click here to read each Awarded
Grant](#)**

Community and Economic Development

Town of Midland City Continues Housing Rehabilitation

The Town of Midland City continues helping low- and moderate-income homeowners make much needed repairs to their homes. Midland City received a Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$350,000 to make repairs such as electrical issues, roof replacement, window replacement, handicap accessible needs, and HVAC systems from homeowners. So far eleven homes have been rehabbed totaling over \$232,000 in improvements for low to moderate income persons. This grant so far has improved the lives of many in Midland City.

[To view pictures from the Housing Rehabilitation, click here.](#)

Title V Senior Employment Program

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a vital initiative aimed at providing job training and employment opportunities for low-income, unemployed seniors age 55 and older. Sponsored by the Department of Labor, SCSEP helps participants gain valuable work experience through community service activities at non-profit and public facilities, such as schools, libraries, and senior centers. Despite its importance, six out of the seven counties under our jurisdiction are currently under-enrolled. This under-enrollment poses significant challenges, as it limits the program's ability to reach and assist eligible seniors who could greatly benefit from its services. To correct this, the Department of Labor has granted extra funding to help seniors gain computer skills so they can be successful in their search for employment. Our office was one of the pilot offices. The program has been so successful they are now on Cohort 5 and they just announced that the Department of Labor has agreed to fund it for another year.

Here are the current enrollment statistics for the SCSEP program in our region:



Head Start and Early Childhood Development

SEARP&DC's Head Start Education Program hit the ground running for the school year 2024-2025. We completed our annual week of Pre-Service training at our Andalusia Head Start Center and Enterprise High School. We would like to thank Andalusia for hosting and a big thank you to Enterprise High School for allowing us to spend the week with them.

[To continue reading and see pictures click here.](#)



Employee Spotlight



Meet Tina Stewart, a beacon of enthusiasm and ray of sunshine! With over 20 years of experience devoted to serving children, she is an invaluable asset to our Andalusia Head Start Center.

[Click here to learn more about Tina!](#)

SEARP&DC 2024 Annual Regional Meeting



SEARP&DC held its Annual Regional Meeting on September 12, 2024 at the Enterprise Civic Center. SEARP&DC staff and Board Members were joined by approximately 150 regional local government leaders, and many other state and federal partners to celebrate our regional cooperative spirit and the successes gained in Southeast Alabama.

Dr. Neil E. Lamb, Ph.D., President of HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology, graciously spoke about HudsonAlpha's mission and how their research improves health outcomes, increases economic development opportunities, and provides educational outreach. Dr. Lamb also highlighted the creation of HudsonAlpha Wiregrass and the new partnerships being created to spur additional research, economic development, and educational investments in Southeast Alabama.

Everyone enjoyed the catered lunch provided by Ketchem's Restaurant and Catering of Hartford. We are especially thankful to Mayor William Cooper and the City of Enterprise for hosting us and our gracious sponsors that help make the event a wonderful success!

Wiregrass Transit Dothan



Wiregrass Transit in Dothan has been actively engaged in community outreach, participating in several events to promote our services and enhance local mobility. Recently, we took part in an event at the First United Methodist Church, hosted by SARCOA Area Agency on Aging, where we provided valuable information about our services offered and coverage areas.

Additionally, we participated in another community gathering at the Dothan Housing and Enrichment Center, where residents received essential information and resources on how to schedule our services.

In an effort to foster community engagement, we were delighted to transport residents from Wesley Manor Nursing Home to enjoy a day of fun at the National Peanut Festival for Senior Day. We also facilitated transportation for local daycare groups to Aplin Farms, creating enjoyable outings for families and seniors alike.

Every month, we partner with local charities, hospitals, and doctor's offices that purchase voucher books from Wiregrass Transit. This initiative aims to assist those in need within our community, ensuring everyone has access to safe, dependable, and affordable transportation options. Wiregrass Transit remains committed to enhancing the quality of life for individuals in our community by providing reliable transport solutions tailored to their needs.

Wiregrass Transit Enterprise



As of October 2024, Wiregrass Transit Enterprise completed their first year of service to the Enterprise community. During this time, they have been able to provide just over 7,000 rides to medical appointments, to employment, and other locations throughout the city. The service they provide enables the passengers to remain independent while having safe, reliable transportation.

Wiregrass Transit Enterprise recently participated in the Enterprise Housing Authority's Fall Festival and provided the residents with information regarding our service. This was a great opportunity to reach out to those who may have some transportation challenges and let them know how we can help. During this event two lucky residents each received a \$10 book of Transportation Vouchers and other goodies from SEARP&DC as a door prize.

SEARP&DC Project Recognition Tour

SEARP&DC staff and area local officials hosted Project Recognition Tours on November 13 and November 18 to highlight several recently completed or ongoing projects assisted with grant or loan investments for federal and state officials in portions of the Region. The objective of the tours was to highlight the benefits of federal and state grant and loan funds in positively impacting Southeast Alabama communities and businesses.

[Project Recognition Tour Photos!](#)

SEARP&DC Board of Directors
Executive Committee *
As of 12/17/2024

Barbour:

Jack Tibbs Jr.,
Jason Davis
Thomas E. Crossley*
Frances Shipman
Rachel Smith
Marrilu Salmon

Coffee:

Gladys Yelverton
Rod Morgan (First Vice Chair)*
Tom Maddox
Johnathan Lockett

Covington:

Michael Smith
Charlotte Hunt
Sammy Glover*
Patricia Gunter
Joe Richburg
Zollie Hudson

Dale:

Steve McKinnon
Mark Blankenship (Chairman)*
Jayme Stayton
Frankie Wilson
Leah Harlow*
Derek Dickens

Geneva:

William Birdsong
Toby Seay*
Rob Hinson (Second Vice Chair)*
David Hayes
Paul Rose
Kelli Brannon

Henry:

Henry Grimsley
David Money*
Jimmy Money
Emmanuel Bankston
John Glover

Houston:

David Crutchfield
Lori Wilcoxon*
Matt Parker (Secretary/Treasurer)*
Brandon Shoupe
Kimberly Trotter
Michael Smith

Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

**462 North Oates Street / PO Box 1406
Dothan, AL. 36302**

334-794-4093

Be sure to follow us on our social media platforms!

