



WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN WEST ALABAMA



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WEST ALABAMA AT LARGE

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WEST ALABAMA REGIONAL COMMISSION

The West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC) is one of the 12 regional councils in the State of Alabama. The councils serve local governments and citizens by coordinating region-wide projects and services, promoting cooperation among the local governments and carrying out state and federal programs on a regional basis. The West Alabama area is designated Planning District 2, or Region 2.

The WARC covers Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens and Tuscaloosa Counties. The commission is governed by an executive committee and a board of directors, made up of representatives from each of these seven counties and 35 municipalities, who annually elect a chairman and a vice-chairman. The board is composed of citizens and policy-making elected officials from the member governments. It is with the board's participation the WARC staff are enabled to carry out WARC's mission of improving the quality of life in West Alabama.

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MEMBERSHIP

BIBB COUNTY

City of Brent
City of Centreville
Town of West Blocton
Town of Woodstock

FAYETTE COUNTY

Town of Belk
Town of Berry
City of Fayette
Town of Glen Allen

GREENE COUNTY

Town of Boligee
City of Eutaw
Town of Forkland
Town of Union

HALE COUNTY

Town of Akron
City of Greensboro
City of Moundville
Town of Newbern

LAMAR COUNTY

Town of Detroit
Town of Kennedy
Town of Millport
City of Sulligent
City of Vernon

PICKENS COUNTY

City of Aliceville
Town of Carrollton
Town of Ethelsville
Town of Gordo
Town of McMullen
Town of Memphis
Town of Pickensville
Town of Reform

TUSCALOOSA COUNTY

Town of Brookwood
Town of Coaling
Town of Coker
City of Northport
City of Tuscaloosa
Town of Vance



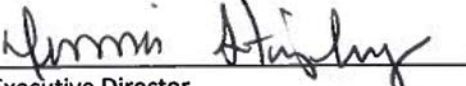
I started my time as Executive Director at West Alabama Regional Commission during the second half of Fiscal Year 2018. These past few months have given me a chance to see first hand the hard work that WARC contributes to the West Alabama region. I've travelled to each of our seven counties attending city council and county commission meetings getting to know the faces and places we impact.

Our Area Agency on Aging continues to offer a variety of important resources to the elderly and disabled population, as well as their loved ones and caregivers. The work done by our Aging department helps community members enjoy life with dignity and independence, the goal being to remain in the comfort of their own home.

Members of the West Alabama Community, as well as member governments, continue to enlist our staff in the Community and Economic Development department for assistance with grant writing as well as the Revolving Loan Fund. The department assisted with grants for local municipalities that totalled over \$1 million in awarded and received funds during FY 2018.

Transportation Planning is using modernized digital mapping to continue updating Tuscaloosa County transit maps. Additionally, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Rural Planning Organization (RPO) continue to work on, and encourage public involvement in their planning process.

Moving forward into 2019, myself and the staff at WARC are proud to carry on our tradition of bringing quality service to the members of the West Alabama Community.


Executive Director

WARC AT WORK IN OUR COMMUNITIES

There are **304,211** people
in West Alabama

(Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens & Tuscaloosa Counties)



Area Agency on Aging

- Counseled 4,281 Medicare clients resulting in a savings to individuals of nearly 2 Million Dollars during FY 2018.
- 120,953 meals delivered to participants on the Homebound Meals Program.
- 125,260 meals served to Senior Activity Center patrons.
- 2,534 individuals screened and assisted through one-on-one counseling of available support and services.
- 23,429 People reached through general information and referrals.
- 40,658 Total reached through public information efforts such as our Senior Resource Directories and outreach.

Community & Economic Development

- The WARC Community & Economic Development Department assisted local municipalities in the West Alabama region to submit and administer grants totalling \$1,242,040 awarded in FY 2018.
- 62 jobs were created through projects the WARC Community & Economic Development Department assisted with during FY 2018.
- **20,156 people benefitted** from grant funded projects during FY 2018.

Transportation Planning

- The WARC Transportation Department used GPS equipment to map 37 new or re-located bus stops for the Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority in 2018. The Transit Authority added a **new route and modified two** other routes in 2018.
- The WARC Transportation Department used a GIS to map bus route additions and changes for the Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority in 2018. The maps are displayed on the Transit Authority's website and in their lobby.



AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Dementia Friendly Initiative Reaches West Alabama

This past spring, the West Alabama Area Agency on Aging was awarded a 2018 Dementia Friendly Community mini-grant from the Central Alabama Aging Consortium (CAAC) under CAAC's Dementia Friendly Alabama Initiative. Funding from the grant was used by our agency for outreach in our seven county West Alabama region as well as Dementia Friendly training for law enforcement and first responders, the purchase of Dementia Friendly Toolkits and Project Life Connect red envelopes created by the Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A), copies of the book "The 36 Hour Day" written by Nancy L. Mace, MA and Peter V. Rabins, MD,

MPH, which will be distributed to caregivers in West Alabama, and to print Dementia Friendly resource packets designed by the West Alabama Area Agency on Aging.

Our agency continues to work with the West Alabama community offering "Train the Trainer" sessions to help spread the Dementia Friendly

Initiative across our region. There are over 91,000 people in Alabama, age 65 and older, who have Alzheimer's Disease. Dementia friendliness is much more than just being kind to those impacted with dementia. It involves every part of the community working together to create a dementia friendly culture, helping those affected with dementia feel respected, supported and included in every day community life. This Initiative is vital in bringing information and understanding about Dementia to the West Alabama region.



Nikki Poe, Aging Services Coordinator at the West Alabama Area Agency on Aging, speaks during Dementia Friendly Training.



Lt. Eric Kirsch, of the University of Alabama Police Department, participates in an Aging Sensitivity exercise during Dementia Friendly Training.

ADRC Success Stories

WARC's certified Aging and Disability Resource Counselors assist, on average, over 26 people a day with finding available support and services for each client's situation. Below are just a few examples of how powerful the ADRC program is in our community.

"A client came to an appointment wanting to see if she could find a cheaper insurance. She had a double, above the knee amputation and is wheelchair bound, cannot drive, lives alone. I found the best Medicare option for her, she was already receiving extra help through Medicaid. During the appointment, we discovered she should be able to qualify for food stamps, so I assisted with the application. I explained E&D Waiver, Home bound meals, and other programs I thought she could benefit from, but she was very determined to remain independent. She stated she was able to prepare her own meals and sweep and mop her floors by herself. She was educated on all programs offered if she needs help in the future. I was very impressed and deeply touched by this client for not letting anything hinder her and for wanting to do more. May we all try to find the positive in each situation!"

"I Received a call from a gentleman stating he and his wife were separating and he wanted to see what he could qualify for. I assisted with his Medicare Saving Program application, as well as food stamps application. We discussed in home services, but he was not in need at this time. I also referred him to FOCUS regarding his transportation needs. The client become emotional and was very thankful for the help!"

"A client called in regarding medication assistance in 2016. The client was in the process of applying for disability. I completed a SenioRx referral and the client was approved to receive services. The client was awarded disability and came to the office for Medicare counseling in 2018. I gave them Medicare options, an MSP application and food stamps application, both of which the client was later approved for."

4,281

Number of clients throughout West Alabama assisted during FY 2018 by SHIP

\$1,826,027.55

Total saved by Medicare clients in West Alabama during FY 2018

2,534

Individuals screened and assisted through one-on-one counseling of available support and services

14,102

People reached through general information and referrals

40,658

Total reached through public information efforts such as our Senior Resource Directories and outreach

For additional information about any of the services the West Alabama Area Agency on Aging provides, please visit us online at www.westalabamaaging.org and pickup a copy of the 2019-2020 Senior Resource Directory.



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Progress

The Community and Economic Development Department is proud to partner with local counties and municipalities in the West Alabama region to obtain funds for projects that stimulate economic development in the region and improve the area's quality of life. Below are the projects awarded in FY 2018.

- The City of Aliceville was awarded \$206,272 by ADECA's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The town enlisted the help of WARC to both submit and administer the grant. The award went towards a fire truck for the city.



Aliceville Mayor Marva Gipson, third from left, Aliceville Volunteer Fire Department Chief Willie Dixon, fourth from left, Aliceville City Clerk Dineki McCaa, far right, and local volunteer firefighters stand beside the fire truck.



Johnny Harris, Field Technical Representative for Firestone Building Products, inspects the repaired roof at Hyter-Yale Group, Inc.

- Hyster-Yale Group, Inc., located in Sulligent, completed repair to a roof on a neighboring building, allowing the business to increase its operations to that second location. Hyster-Yale requested assistance from WARC which resulted in \$100,000 CDBG funds to go towards the project which, upon completion, opened up 19 additional jobs in the Sulligent community.



Local leadership, Mayor Raymond Steele, along with WARC staff at the awards ceremony held in Montgomery.

- The City of Eutaw was awarded grant funds from the ADECA CDBG Program, in the amount of \$400,000, and the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) States' Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP) totalling \$327,425. The city partnered with WARC for assistance submitting and administering the grants. Funding will be used to extend sewer access to the future site of the Loves Travel Stop at exit 40 on I-20/59. A ground breaking ceremony was held at the site with Gov. Kay Ivey and other officials in attendance.



State and local leadership breaks ground at the site of the Loves Travel Stop in Eutaw.

Community & Economic Development Resources

- **Community Profiles:** Community Profiles present economic and workforce data for each county and municipality in the West Alabama region. Data is arranged into a set of two sheets for each community that provide the most current Census data from the five-year American Community Survey (ACS) and other sources compiled by WARC.
- **Grant & Loan Guide:** The guide provides information on the most commonly used grant and loan programs for community and economic development activities. The guide focuses on programs available to counties and municipalities and provides federal and state contacts, program details, grant cycles, and eligibility funding level information.
- **West Alabama Mining & Manufacturing Directory:** This directory provides listings of companies in Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens and Tuscaloosa counties within 2017 NAICS sectors 21 (Mining) and 31-33 (Manufacturing). The document includes listings by raw material and finished product.

All of the above, and additional resources, can be accessed at www.warc.info/planning-development

\$1,242,040

Awarded and received in grants

20,156

People impacted by grant funded projects



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Tuscaloosa Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) 2018 Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

Having an open planning process is important to the Tuscaloosa MPO. For over 40 years, the MPO has actively encouraged public involvement in their work. The MPO originally operated under a public involvement policy, but in 2005 the MPO adopted a more detailed plan. The plan was revised in 2018 to include the federally-required planning agency consultation program.

The plan describes numerous strategies the MPO uses to involve the public in the transportation planning process. As called for in the plan, the MPO staff evaluates the planning process every year by checking the adopted performances measures. The evaluation becomes part of the annual Record of Public Involvement (RPI). The RPI, also a plan requirement, documents all public involvement activities of the MPO. Since 2013, the plan has included the MPO Title VI program and Limited English Proficiency Plan.



Members of the MPO citizens committee look over a map together during a recent meeting.

Get Involved with the Tuscaloosa MPO:

- The MPO mails or emails over 230 news releases for every set of MPO committee meetings.
- The MPO citizens committee consists of 24 local residents and meets six times a year.
- All MPO committee meetings are open to the public.
- An MPO training session is held every March and is open to the public.
- MPO meeting dates and documents can be found on the WARC website at www.warc.info/mpo-home

Federal Highway Administration Employee Visits Transportation Planning Department for On-the-Job Training

During August 2018, Vontra Giles from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) spent two weeks with the Transportation Planning Department for an on-the-job training assignment. Ms. Giles was recently transferred to the Alabama Division of FHWA. At her new position, she will be responsible for monitoring and assisting the 14 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and 12 Rural Planning Organizations (RPO) in Alabama.

The training assignment gave Ms. Giles a better understanding of the work required to manage a MPO and RPO planning process. From traffic modeling procedures to the use of GPS equipment, she experienced a wide range of planning tasks. The WARC staff enjoyed the opportunity to show off their work and getting to know Ms. Giles.



Vontra Giles, from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), learns from Zane Davis, Transportation Planner II at WARC, during an on-the-job training assignment.



Mapping created by the Transportation and Planning Department at WARC is seen in the lobby of the Tuscaloosa Transit Authority.

Digital Mapping

- The WARC Transportation Department used GPS equipment to map 37 new or re-located bus stops for the Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority in 2018. The data was used for a mobility app that allows passengers to track vehicle locations in real-time. The Transit Authority added a new route and modified two other routes in 2018.
- The WARC Transportation Department used a GIS to map bus route additions and changes for the Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority in 2018. The maps are displayed on the Transit Authority's website and in their lobby.

IN MEMORIAM

The Robert B. Lake Board Room was dedicated November 1, 2018 in honor and memory of Bob Lake who served as executive director of WARC from 1996 until 2017. A ceremony was held with members of the WARC Board of Directors in attendance as well as WARC staff and members of Mr. Lake's family. A plaque naming the Board Room and a portrait of Mr. Lake were unveiled.



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