

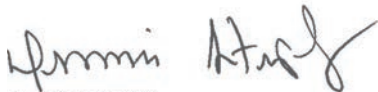
2019 ANNUAL REPORT

West Alabama
Regional Commission

WVA RRC


FROM OUR DIRECTOR

The West Alabama Regional Commission has experienced growth and success each year since its inception in February 1966. The Board of Directors has played a major role in bringing about this success. On behalf of the Regional Commission staff, I would like to thank this year's Board for its hard work and dedication. To them, we are indebted for our success in providing services to our local governments and providing a good quality of life to our citizens in the seven counties we serve. Our job is not complete. It is an on-going process, and the staff, with the Board's leadership, will continue to meet the challenges of the future. We look forward to serving our member governments and the citizens of West Alabama.



Executive Director
Dennis Stripling





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.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

- WARC's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) assisted a total of **8,330 people** in FY2019 through our various programs.
- The Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) made a total of **65,114 contacts**, by phone or in-person, which include consumers, caregivers, professionals, and information & referral clients.
- During FY2019, the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) assisted a total of **3,595 clients** locally with navigating Medicare. During the annual open enrollment period, Oct. 15 - Dec. 7, trained SHIP counselors assisted **1,683** of those clients saving them a combined total of **\$1,181,586.30**.
- Through the Medicaid Waiver programs, AAA was able to help **929 clients** in FY2019.
- **820 people** were reached through education efforts made by the Alabama Cares program which provides training, assistance and resources to caregivers.
- The SenioRx Program helped **418 clients** to access free, or low cost prescription medications for an annual estimated savings total of **\$899,169.11**.
- The Alabama Senior Nutrition Program, administered through our 22 Senior Activity Centers, provided a total of **221,223 wholesome meals** to both home bound and congregate clients.



Integrated Care Network

The 2019 fiscal year witnessed the beginning of Alabama's move into managed care with the implementation of the Integrated Care Network for long term services and supports. The Alabama Medicaid Agency entered into an agreement with Alabama Select Network, LLC to administer the network in Alabama. Through this arrangement, the 13 Area Agencies on Aging in the State were contracted with for the provision of Case Management services to those individuals formerly served through the Home and Community Based Services Waiver (HCBS) previously operated in the State.

Through this new arrangement, AAA's are reimbursed a per member/per month rate for services provided to their clients. West Alabama has witnessed a most successful implementation in the region. Not only have the staff worked to keep their costs low, but an all time high number of clients were enrolled during the 2019 fiscal year. There were 929 individuals served throughout the year. This number exceeded our actual annual allotment. This was accomplished because of other regions in the State not reaching their allotted number.

Moving into FY2020, the Alabama Medicaid Agency has provided a technical amendment to their Waiver document at the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that will allow a "one out, one in" program design. This design will allow us to refill our terminated slots throughout the year instead of having to wait until the beginning of the new fiscal year to refill. This change will help us maintain a more even work flow throughout the year and serve even more clients.

Through the success of the Integrated Care Network implementation in West Alabama, more services will become available to existing and future clients. By providing supplies, devices and services not routinely covered by Medicaid, clients will be able to maintain their independence even longer.

Senior Resource Directory

The 2019-2020 West Alabama Senior Resource Directory was published during FY2019. This edition includes more than 100 pages of valuable information regarding everything from active living to community resources to financial and legal services. Due to previous demands for the directory, this publication was increased to 25,000 copies this cycle.

Matter of Balance

The Area Agency on Aging partnered with the Triple L (Live Long and Like it!) club from First Baptists Church of Tuscaloosa to offer Matter of Balance classes throughout the 2019 fiscal year. Several members of the group successfully completed the Lay Leader training and conducted the classes at their church. The group held five eight-week sessions and trained 68 older adults on how to prevent falls in their homes and as they go about their everyday activities. This partnership was nominated for the 2019 Positive Images in Aging Award from the Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging. In September, representatives of the group traveled to Nashville, Tennessee to receive their award.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The WARC Community & Economic Development Department assisted local municipalities in the West Alabama region to receive and carry out grants totaling **\$3,010,864**. The department has submitted additional requests during FY19 totaling \$930,031 that are under review and pending approval.
- FY2019 impacts include **222 new jobs** to be created from economic development projects; and an additional **15 new and 10 retained jobs** generated from WARC's Revolving Loan Fund program.
- **6,667 people in the region** will benefit from community development grants assisted by WARC in 2019.





Community Progress

The Town of West Blocton was awarded a total of \$1,715,351 to provide sewer improvements to serve a new battery plant for Mercedes Benz U. S. International at the Scott G. Davis Industrial Park in Bibb County. Funds were approved from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for \$1,200,745 and an additional \$514,606 was awarded from the ADECA's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. WARC staff prepared the applications and is administering the grants. The project will improve sewer pump stations in the West Blocton and Woodstock sewer systems. The plant will create 173 new jobs.

Sulligent's largest manufacturer Hyster-Yale is now operating as Bolzoni Auramo after acquiring the company and expanding its production capacity into a second building to add 49 jobs. With WARC assistance, the City of Sulligent secured CDBG funds in the amount of \$350,000 to compliment an earlier project and will provide improvements to the site and building. WARC staff is administering the grant.

The Town of Akron will undertake substantial improvements to its sewer system. Funds totaling \$421,833 from the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), ADECA CDBG and the Tombigbee Resource and Conservation District will address upgrades at the wastewater treatment facility, rehabilitate two pump stations, and provide a back-up pump for emergencies. WARC prepared the necessary applications and are administering the projects.

The Town of Carrollton received ADECA CDBG assistance of \$350,000 to construct a wetland cell at their sewer lagoon. The project will build on earlier work to dredge the lagoons to improve treatment capability. WARC has assisted with both grants.

The Town of Gordo was awarded Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) funds in the amount of \$173,680 to install a grit removal system at the wastewater treatment plant. The grant was prepared by WARC.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Tuscaloosa Area 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

- In Tuscaloosa, the LRTP is developed every five years; the next update will be in 2024

Fiscal Years 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- The TIP is developed every four years; the next update will be in 2023

West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan 2019

- The West Alabama Transit Committee consists of 32 public transit providers and purchasers, 28 private transportation providers, and other interested people
- 7,666 households in west Alabama do not have a car (2013-2015 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimate)

Public Involvement for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

- 24 legal ads were published in 12 west Alabama newspapers for the STIP public meetings
- 19 newspaper articles were published in west Alabama newspapers regarding the STIP public meetings

More on Our Website

- The 2045 LRTP, 2020-2023 TIP, and an interactive map of the projects can be found on the WARC website at: www.warc.info/mpo-documents
- The WARC public involvement report for the STIP is on the WARC website at: www.warc.info/rpo-documents



Tuscaloosa Area 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

In August 2019, the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) adopted its 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). This marks the sixth LRTP developed by WARC since 1994. Preparing the plans in-house saved the local governments tens of thousands of dollars. The WARC staff achieves this with the help of the members of the MPO's Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee, Technical Coordinating Committee, and Policy Committee.

The purpose of the LRTP is to identify current transportation needs, forecast future transportation needs, and establish strategies and projects that address these needs. The LRTP includes over 563 million dollars of road, bridge, and mass transit projects. Recommended improvements involve adding new lanes, managing the transportation system, and maintenance of the current facilities.

Fiscal Years 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

In a rare occurrence, the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) had to develop and adopt their short-range plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), in the same year as their long-range transportation plan. In general, the TIP takes projects from the long-range plan and schedules the various phases over a four-year period. There are four basic phases for a road project: engineering, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, and construction.

Just like the long-range plan, the selected projects are restricted to a constrained financial plan. The FY2020-2023 TIP includes 85 project phases that will cost 275 million dollars. The MPO worked with the local Tuscaloosa governments, the Tuscaloosa County Parking and Transit Authority, and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) to prepare the TIP.

West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan 2019

For the sixth time in 13 years, the Tuscaloosa Area MPO and West Alabama RPO worked together to develop the West Alabama Coordinated Public Transit Plan. The plan covers all seven of the counties in west Alabama. The MPO and RPO relied on the efforts of the West Alabama Transit Committee to complete the plan.

The purpose of the plan is to determine transit gaps and coordination opportunities among publicly funded, human services transportation programs in West Alabama and to develop strategies to address the identified gaps and coordination issues. For each county and the region, the plan summarizes current resources, identifies needs and barriers, and recommends strategies. Having the plan in place allows the local transit agencies to apply for Federal Transit Administration grants that will provide transportation services to local residents.

Public Involvement for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

In a first, the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) relied on the Alabama RPOs to provide public involvement for the 2020-2023 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Past public involvement efforts relied on a handful of meetings held at ALDOT Region offices. Participation at these meetings was limited to a few local residents and ALDOT employees. Working with the Alabama RPOs led to a large increase in participation.

The West Alabama RPO held eight public meetings for the STIP in all seven WARC counties. In total, 81 people attended the meetings (56 local residents, 15 ALDOT staff, and 10 WARC staff). During the last STIP process in west Alabama, only 36 people attended the meetings (18 local residents, 17 ALDOT staff, and 1 WARC staff).

WARC Board of Directors, 2019-2020

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Arthur Crawford
Vice-Chairman

Dennis Stripling
Secretary

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Sammy Holdsambeck
County Commission

Bobbie White
Mayor of Brent

Fayette County

Mike Freeman
County Commission

Ray Nelson
Mayor of Fayette

Greene County

Raymond Steele
Mayor of Eutaw

Hale County

Arthur Crawford
**County Commission Chair &
Probate Judge**

Tony Lester
Mayor of Moundville

Lamar County

Stanley Allred
Mayor of Millport

Pickens County

Bennie Harton
Mayor of Reform

Craig Patterson
Mayor of Gordo

Tuscaloosa County

Donna Aaron
Mayor of Northport

Stan Acker
County Commission

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Tuscaloosa City Council

Lee Busby
Tuscaloosa City Council

Raevan Howard
Tuscaloosa City Council

Alton C. Hyche
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Walt Maddox
Mayor of Tuscaloosa

Brenda Morrison
Mayor of Vance

Reginald Murray
County Commission

Mark C. Nelson
County Commission

Phyllis W. Odom
Tuscaloosa City Council

Edwin (Eddie) Pugh
Tuscaloosa City Council

Rob Robertson
**County Commission Chair &
Probate Judge**

Jerry Tingle
County Commission

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Glen Crawford
Mayor of Vernon

Allen J. Dunavant
Mayor of Glen Allen

Mike Fields
**Shelton State Community
College**

Marva Gipson
Mayor of Aliceville

Jimmy Madison
Mayor of Berry

Ronny Rhodes
Craftex Protective Coatings

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

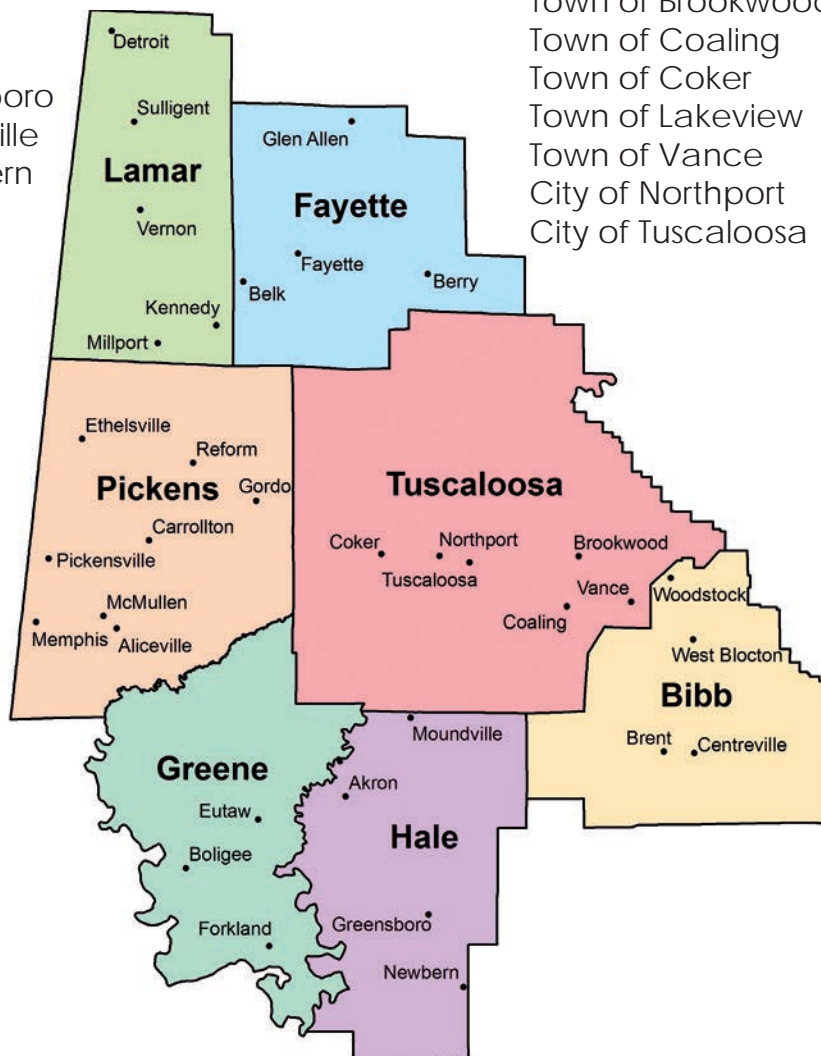
Town of Detroit
Town of Kennedy
Town of Millport
City of Sulligent
City of Vernon

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
Town of Lakeview
Town of Vance
City of Northport
City of Tuscaloosa



Also in FY 2019...

WARC held seven meetings for the Census Bureau's Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP) and submitted changes for three West Alabama counties.



WARC actively served on an **Alabama Counts! Census 2020** committee.

Kenneth Boswell, Director of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, visited several municipalities in West Alabama



in September with Dennis Stripling, WARC Executive Director, and Cory Johnson, Community & Economic Development Director, to view and discuss local community and economic development projects. The communities included Carrollton, Eutaw, Greensboro, Millport and Moundville.



The West Alabama Area Agency on Aging has been partnering with First Baptist Church of Tuscaloosa to present Matter of Balance, an Evidence Based Health Promotions class. First Baptist Church of Tuscaloosa won the Positive Images in Aging Award



at this year's Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging (SE4A) Conference in September. Additionally, West Alabama Area Agency on Aging and Spire Inc. received the Corporate Partnership Award at SE4A. Spire has been a sponsor of Senior Appreciation Day for over 30 years.



Over 1,000 people attended the annual Senior Appreciation day in May. The day included live entertainment, games, exhibitors and lunch.



Members of the Tuscaloosa Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and the West Alabama Rural Planning Organization were invited to tour the West Alabama Traffic Management Center and the new Tuscaloosa County Emergency Operations Center.



Improving the Quality of Life in West Alabama

West Alabama Regional Commission

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