

Upcoming Events

<https://www.narcog.org/news-meetings-events/meetings-events>

Morgan County Picnic

DATE: May 7

LOCATION: Decatur, AL

CAPNA Health Fair

DATE: May 8

LOCATION: Decatur, AL

Annual OAM Luau

DATE: May 14

LOCATION: Decatur, AL

Agency Contacts

Robby Cantrell
Executive Director
rcantrell@narcog.org

Kim Dove
Director of Administration
kdove@narcog.org

Justin Graves
Director of Aging
jgraves@narcog.org

Joey Hester
Director of Planning
jhester@narcog.org

Crystal Julien
Director of Finance
cjulien@narcog.org

Falguni Patel
Director of Transportation
fpatel@narcog.org

ON THE WEB
www.narcog.org

SOCIAL MEDIA
Facebook:
facebook.com/narcogal
LinkedIn:
linkedin.com/company/narcogal/

Thank You to Our Administrative Professionals



Last week, NARCOG celebrated Administrative Professionals Day by recognizing the incredible individuals who keep the organization running smoothly behind the scenes. Their hard work, organization, and dedication are vital to our success and the communities we serve.

We honor Cathleen McCulloch,

Jeffrey Adams, Denise Balentine, Sandra Coleman, Mallory Powell, Jean Mabry, Kristy Parkerson, Teresa Daniels, Linda Jones, and Sheree Tanksley for their outstanding contributions.

Each plays an essential role in supporting daily operations, assisting with special projects, and pro-

viding invaluable assistance across every department. Their attention to detail, positive attitudes, and unwavering commitment make a difference at NARCOG.

We are grateful for their efforts and proud to celebrate their important role in helping NARCOG fulfill its mission every day.

Lending a Hand: Donating Care Bags

NARCOG is proud to support the impactful work of Hands Across Decatur, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty in our community. Recently, our SenioRx Coordinator, Stephanie King, assembled and donated handy care bags filled with essential items to aid those in need. Each bag included a cooler bag, mini first aid kit, pack of tissues, flashlight, lip balm, hand sanitizer, sunglasses, and a pen—thoughtfully curated to provide comfort and utility to individuals facing challenging circumstances.

Hands Across Decatur, founded in 2018 and led by Executive Director Sue Terrell, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Its mission is to em-

power and motivate the homeless and near-homeless by providing free access to support services to foster self-sufficiency. These services encompass life skills training, basic computer skills, GED preparation, reading and math advancement, job placement assistance, clothing distribution, hot meals, travel bags, showers, medical care, day shelter, and other necessities for those in crisis.

Hands Across Decatur relies heavily on donations to continue its vital work. They constantly need items such as non-perishable food, toiletries, clothing, and other essentials to support the unhoused community. If you're interested in contributing, consider reviewing their needs list and donating items

or funds to assist in their mission.

NARCOG remains committed to supporting organizations like Hands Across Decatur that strive to make a tangible difference in the lives of our community members. Together, we can help provide a path to self-sufficiency for those in need.



Robby Cantrell | Executive Director

North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments | PO Box C • 216 Jackson St. SE • Decatur, AL 35602

256-355-4515 | rcantrell@narcog.org



Expansion Underway at Lawrence Co. Career Tech Center

On April 17, 2025, NARCOG's Planning and Development staff proudly participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the Lawrence County Career Technical Center (LCCTC) Expansion Project in Moulton, Alabama. This significant milestone marks the beginning of a transformative initiative aimed at enhancing educational opportunities and workforce development in the region.

The expansion project, partially funded by a \$1 million Appala-

chian Regional Commission (ARC) SAAW grant secured with NARCOG's assistance, will introduce a new wing featuring a modern entrance, additional classrooms, and state-of-the-art labs dedicated to welding, industrial maintenance, and advanced manufacturing programs. These facilities are designed to provide students with hands-on experience and training in high-demand technical fields, directly aligning with the evolving needs of local industries.

NARCOG is currently administering the ARC grant, ensuring that the project progresses smoothly and meets its objectives. The expansion is expected to significantly impact the lives of Lawrence County students by equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in today's competitive job market.

The groundbreaking ceremony was attended by local officials, educators, and community members, all celebrating the

collaborative effort to invest in the county's future. This project exemplifies the power of partnerships between regional councils, educational institutions, and federal agencies in driving economic growth and improving quality of life.

We look forward to the completion of the LCCTC expansion and its positive impact on our community for generations to come.

Staying Safe: Fraud Awareness Summit for Seniors

On Friday, April 11, 2025, NARCOG hosted a highly informative Fraud Summit at the Moulton Senior Center, aiming to equip older adults with essential tools and knowledge to protect themselves from financial scams. Held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., the event attracted a diverse group eager to learn about the latest fraud schemes and how to stay vigilant.

The summit featured expert speakers, including Karen Reeves, President and CEO of the Better Business Bureau of North Alabama, who shared practical tips on recognizing and avoiding common scams targeting seniors. Nick Vonderau from the Alabama Securities Commission provided valuable insights into safeguarding personal financial assets and preventing investment fraud.

Attendees walked away with a

better understanding of how to protect themselves from scams such as identity theft, phishing, and fraudulent investment opportunities. The event was a great success, highlighting the importance of continued education and vigilance in protecting our senior community.

NARCOG extends a heartfelt thank you to Robbi Ligon and the Moulton Senior Center for generously allowing us to use their space and for their ongoing support of our mission to serve seniors. The success of this year's Fraud Summit emphasizes the importance of offering resources and education to help older adults navigate the challenges of the digital age.



April Anniversaries

Deann Saint

Information and Referral
Specialist
6 years of service



New Hires



Brook Okasia
Case Manager

Planning Department Events and Deadlines

May 2, 2025 - May 3, 2025

Strawberry Festival (Lawrence County Tennessee RiverLine Community Engagement Event) in Moulton, AL

May 15, 2025

Alabama Association of Regional Council (AARC) Planning Task Force Meeting in Birmingham, AL

May 30, 2025

ALDOT Transportation Alternatives Program Grant Deadline

June 3, 2025

Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Grant Deadline

June 5, 2025

Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Public Involvement and Rural Planning Organization Committee Meeting in Cullman

June 11, 2025

Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Public Involvement and Rural Planning Organization Committee Meeting in Hartselle

June 11, 2025

Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan Public Involvement and Rural Planning Organization Committee Meeting in Moulton

July 23, 2025

Community Development Block Grant Deadline

July 27, 2025 - July 30, 2025

Economic Development Association of Alabama (EDAA) Summer Conference in Point Clear, AL

July 30, 2025 - August 1, 2025

Alabama Transportation Planners Association (ATPA) Conference in Florence, AL



Community, Compassion, and Couture

NARCOG was thrilled to attend the Pilot Club of Cullman's 30th Annual Fashion Show and Luncheon—a vibrant, joy-filled celebration of community spirit and style! Held at The Venue at Cotton Creek, this milestone event brought together friends, neighbors, and supporters for an afternoon of fashion, laughter, and heartfelt purpose.

The runway was full of energy as local models—including educators, students, community leaders, and first responders—showed off fabulous looks from favorite area boutiques like Mr. Hicks Menswear,

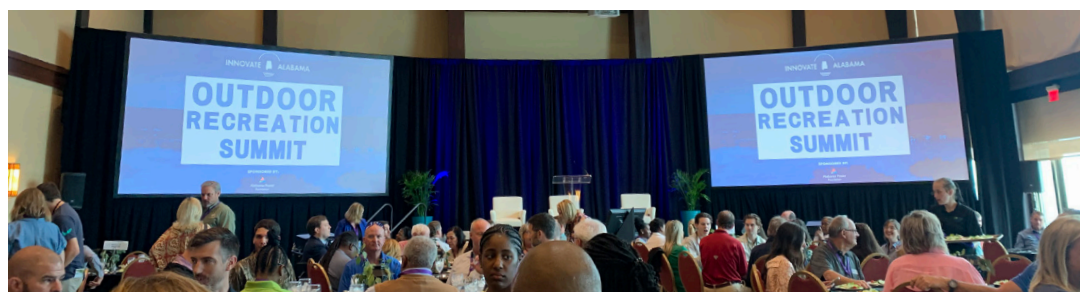
Better Than Before, and The Copper Cricket. With music playing, cameras flashing, and the crowd cheering, the show felt more like a celebration than a fundraiser.

Guests enjoyed a delicious lunch and had the chance to shop local vendor booths, take part in raffles, and connect with fellow community members—all in support of the Pilot Club's mission. The atmosphere was full of smiles, spontaneous applause, and genuine excitement from beginning to end.

Fundraising proceeds from the event go toward the Pilot Club's

incredible programs such as the Pilot Light Home, Project Lifesaver, BrainMinders, and the Field of Miracles—each making a real impact in the lives of individuals and families throughout the region.

We're always looking for ways to lift up and support the amazing work of other partner organizations in our area, and the Pilot Club of Cullman continues to set the bar with events like this. NARCOG was honored to be there and can't wait to support again next year!



Innovate Alabama Outdoor Recreation Summit

NARCOG planning staff attended the Innovate Alabama Outdoor Recreation Summit at Lake Guntersville State Park on April 21-22. This two-day summit focused on how outdoor recreation can drive economic growth and enhance the quality of life in communities.

Throughout the event, attendees participated in concurrent sessions tailored to three key tracks: community practitioners, aspiring

outdoor entrepreneurs, and students exploring hands-on outdoor careers. Day two of the summit kicked off with a keynote presentation on the expanding outdoor recreation economy, followed by various sessions that provided valuable insights for communities, entrepreneurs, and students. Topics covered included trail system planning, funding strategies, and even hands-on kayaking experiences.

The summit highlighted the growing importance of outdoor recreation as both an economic driver and a means to improve community well-being. NARCOG looks forward to assisting local leaders and communities in planning outdoor recreation projects and exploring funding opportunities that will benefit both the region's economy and quality of life.

NARCOG Attends State of the City with Mayor Bowling

NARCOG was pleased to attend the 2025 State of the City event, hosted by the Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce on April 17 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Decatur Riverfront. Around 300 attendees gathered to hear Mayor Tab Bowling reflect on his eight and a half years of service to the City of Decatur.

Moderated by Wade Weaver, General Manager of Adams Bev-

erages and Chair of the Chamber's Public Policy Committee, the conversation highlighted key accomplishments that have shaped Decatur's recent growth. Mayor Bowling shared notable milestones, including a 65% increase in the city's budget since 2016 and the completion of several downtown developments such as the Fairfield by Marriott, the Decatur Municipal Parking Deck,

and the Alabama Center for the Arts Residence Hall. He also spoke about the recent groundbreaking of the \$55 million recreation center at Wilson Morgan Park.

NARCOG appreciated the opportunity to be part of this event and to hear firsthand the progress and plans shaping the future of Decatur.



Our Annual Older Americans Month Luau is Almost Here!



We're excited to announce that our Annual Older Americans Month Luau is happening on Tuesday, May 14, 2025, from 9:30 AM to 12 PM at Ingalls Harbor Pavilion in Decatur, Alabama!

This lively and festive event is free to attend and open to all adults 60 years and older living in Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan Counties.

Justin Graves, Director of Aging at NARCOG, shared, "We look forward to hosting these events every year! These days are designed for fellowship and fun while making sure our attendees have a great time."

Guests can expect a morning

full of games, sponsor vendors, tasty treats from Oliwia's Shaved Ice, live music by The Cadillacs, fun SWAG items, door prizes, lunch, and opportunities to connect and celebrate with others in the community.

NARCOG would like to thank our sponsors for helping make this event possible: Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cullman Regional Hospital, Redstone Federal Credit Union, Decatur-Morgan Hospital, North Alabama AHEC, Monarch Place, Peoples Bank of Alabama, CAP-NA Senior Companion Program, Simpra Advantage, Checklist Cornerie Services, VIVA Health, Oak

Street Health, Hospice of the Valley, Aveanna, City Center Village, Brookdale Cedar Springs, Westminster of Decatur, VENZA Care, Cook Museum, Clearview Cancer Institute, and Hospice of North Alabama. We would also like to thank Pepsi for their canned soft drinks donations for the participants to enjoy at the event.

We can't wait to see everyone come together to celebrate Older Americans Month in tropical style—don't forget your leis and aloha spirit!

Those 60 years and older can pre-register at their local senior center.



The North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments, or NARCOG, is your local elected officials and community leaders working together to make your community a better place to live, work, play, and do business. The compassionate team at NARCOG is continuously searching for new ways to positively impact the quality of life for individuals and the vibrancy and livability of communities with the three-county region of Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan Counties.

AGING SERVICES

The Area Agency on Aging is part of a nationwide network of aging services under the direction of the U.S. Administration for Community Living and is funded through the Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS). This partnership with ADSS, working under the authority of the Older Americans Act, is to plan and carry out a comprehensive, coordinated service delivery system to address the needs of people over 60, or persons with disabilities of any age, and help them maintain their independence. Services include:

- In-Home Services
- Prescription Drug Coverage
- Caregiver Support
- Long-Term Care Advocacy
- Senior Legal Assistance
- Senior Employment (55+)
- Food Assistance
- Nutrition Options
- Health Promotion Activities
- Wellness Programs
- Medicare and Medicaid Counseling
- Hospital-to-Home Transitions
- Referral Help and Support Services (any age)
- Fraud Prevention
- Home and Community Based Services

IMPACT GIVING

The NARCOG Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that assists older adults or disabled clients to meet the unmet needs of other programs or services. 100% of the funds or items donated are used for client assistance. The Foundation can help retrofit homes, including wheelchair ramps, steps, handrails, grab bars, purchase AC and heat resources, and provide batteries for a power scooter with monetary donations. Several different types of donations are accepted, including:

- Monetary donations
- Cleaning Supplies
- Personal Hygiene Items
- Canned or Shelf-Stable Food
- Kleenex
- Bath Tissue
- Incontinence Supplies
- Mobility Aids
- Adult Diapers
- Group and Individual Volunteering

PLANNING SERVICES

The NARCOG Planning Department provides community and economic development planning services for our member governments and municipalities. These services support developmental efforts in our three-county region. Services include:

- Comprehensive Planning
- Downtown, Corridor, and Trails Planning
- Grant Technical Assistance and Preparation
- Grant Administration
- Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
- Rural Planning Organizations (RPO) - Rural Transportation Planning
- Zoning Ordinances and Maps
- Subdivision Regulations

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The NARCOG Transit Agency operates an urban public transportation system within the Decatur Urban Area. The purpose of this service is to provide mobility opportunities to individuals of all ages and abilities in collaboration with the City of Decatur and the Federal Transit Administration.

- Call 256-580-2088 to schedule a ride at least 24 hours in advance
- Wheelchair-accessible vehicles are available
- Each one-way ride costs \$2
- Connect Cards (prepaid punch cards) can be purchased at the main office or on a transit vehicle for \$20
- Ride Operations are Monday through Friday from 7 AM to 5 PM
- Ride Scheduling is Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 4 PM

BUSINESS LOAN FINANCING

The NARCOG Accelerate Business Growth Fund is a local lending resource to support business start-ups, or expansions that result in job creation, leverage private sector investment, and reduce unemployment in Cullman, Lawrence, or Morgan Counties.

- Traditional or Microloan Funding Options
- Competitive Interest Rates
- Business financing used to purchase or renovate real estate, machinery, equipment, inventory, or working capital
- Business loan requirements must be met for consideration
- Loan amounts from \$10,000 to \$250,000