

**Upcoming Events**

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

CSPC Meeting

**DATE:** January 23

**LOCATION:** Decatur, AL

Hartselle Career Fair

**DATE:** January 30

**LOCATION:** Hartselle, AL

Lawrence County Job Fair

**DATE:** April 29

**LOCATION:** Moulton, AL

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**ON THE WEB**

[www.narcog.org](http://www.narcog.org)

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# BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE 2022-2027

COMPREHENSIVE  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY



## 2024 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

### CEDS Annual Performance Report

The NARCOG Board of Directors adopted our Region's 2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – Annual Performance Report on December 4th. The Planning and Development Team prepared the annual performance report with input from the CEDS Strategy Committee. NARCOG is designated by the Economic De-

velopment Administration (EDA) as the Economic Development District (EDD) for our three-county region. As the designated EDD, NARCOG is required to update the CEDS every five years and provide subsequent Annual Reports. In 2022, the NARCOG Board approved our "Update" of the CEDS for the Region. The Annual Reports are annexed to the

original plan and are intended to provide project updates, performance measurements, and current economic conditions based upon various sources of data and input. You can view the 2024 CEDS APR on our website under the Planning and Economic Development page.

### NARCOG Christmas Movie Day

NARCOG recently hosted a festive Christmas Movie Day at the historic Princess Theatre in Decatur, creating an opportunity for community members to come together, relax, and embrace the joy of the holiday season. The event was tailored for older adults aged 60 and above and individuals with disabilities of any age, ensuring an inclusive and welcoming experience for all.

The day featured a screening of the beloved holiday classic "How the Grinch Stole Christmas." An impressive 230 people attended, including guests from senior centers, assisted living facilities, and other partnering organizations. Popcorn and soda were served, adding to the movie theatre experience and enhancing the sense of fun and togetherness.



The day featured a screening of

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# Congratulations Graduate!



We are thrilled to celebrate Lesley Mason, one of our outstanding Case Managers, for earning her Master of Social Work degree from the University of North Alabama! This remarkable achievement is a testament to her hard work, dedication, and passion for making a difference in the lives of others.

As a Case Manager, she consistently goes above and beyond to support those in need, and this advanced degree further highlights

her commitment to serving our community with excellence and compassion.

We are so proud of her accomplishments and cannot wait to see the continued positive impact she will make in her role and beyond.

Congratulations, Lesley, on this well-deserved milestone!

## December Anniversaries

**Frances Palmer**  
Case Manager  
2 years of service

**Nicole Compagner**  
Case Manager  
2 years of service

**Neal Nash**  
Case Manager  
8 years of service

# Senior Christmas Parties

The Morgan County Commission on Aging held its first Annual Christmas Party on December 6th, bringing together seniors from all eight senior centers to celebrate the holiday season in style. The event was filled with festive cheer, featuring music, games, door prizes, and a delicious lunch. Each attendee received a goodie bag and an activity sheet at their seat, adding a thoughtful touch to the day. Even the Grinch stopped by,

much to the delight of everyone present!

On December 18th, the Cullman Commission on Aging hosted its Annual Christmas Party at Wallace State in Hanceville, drawing over 800 seniors across Cullman County. Stone Bridge Farms provided a mouthwatering lunch while volunteers from various organizations pitched in to serve plates and ensure everyone had a great time. The festivities included the giveaway of

numerous door prizes, with one lucky attendee taking home a \$1,000 check!

NARCOG was honored to help with both events and had so much fun being part of these special celebrations. Seeing the joy on the faces of so many seniors and the spirit of the community coming together reminded us of the true meaning of the holiday season. We are already looking forward to next year's celebrations!



# \$1.2M EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant Submitted

NARCOG and PPM Consultants collaborated to prepare and submit a \$1.2M EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition grant on November 14th. This is a 100% grant with no local match required. The primary purpose of the EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition grant is to help return idle and

abandoned commercial and industrial sites to reuse. Potential buyers or developers are often concerned about environmental impacts on suspected brownfield sites (soil and groundwater contamination, asbestos, lead paint, etc.), and these grant funds can help remove these barriers to

redevelopment. The grant would pay for Phase 1 & 2 environmental site assessments, public outreach, cleanup planning, and other activities related to economic development and reuse of brownfield sites. This would be an economic development tool for any of our communities

to take advantage of. Notification of Awards from the EPA is anticipated in late Spring 2025. If awarded, the grant funds can be used on any site in any NARCOG county or community for a 4-year period.



## Grant Submitted for Decatur’s Rhodes Ferry Park

NARCOG, the City of Decatur, and collaborating partners worked to prepare and submit a nearly \$20M EPA Community Change grant for Decatur’s Rhodes Ferry Park on November 21st. This is a 100% grant with no local match required. The Rhodes Ferry Park Reimagined Project would leverage nature-based solutions to reduce pollution, enhance urban cooling, improve air and water quality, and foster a healthier, more livable environ-

ment in Decatur, an EPA-designated disadvantaged community. The reimagined 7.5 acres of Rhodes Ferry Park would include a wide range of amenities, including an accessible cruise landing and boat dock ramp, terraced seating, an adaptive kayak launch, and renovated dock, relocated gazebo, new pavilions, enhanced riparian buffer, splash pad, restrooms, playgrounds, climbing wall, vending area, bike share station, tree bosque plaza, shade

pavilion, event lawn, interpretive signage, and a “DECATUR ALABAMA” art installation. The City of Decatur is a member of the Tennessee RiverLine “RiverTown” Program, and the 2022-2023 Community Planning Initiative (CPI) is the origin of the design concept for Rhodes Ferry, which is the basis for this design concept. An important component of the project is community engagement, outreach, and educational programs designed around the park’s

cultural, historical, and natural environment elements, focusing on disadvantaged communities. AMRV RC&D, NARCOG, and collaborating partners, including Decatur Downtown Redevelopment Authority, Decatur Morgan County Tourism, Tennessee RiverLine, North Alabama Trails and Recreation, Muscle Shoals Natural Heritage Area, Cook Museum of Natural Science, CEOTA, Singing River Trail, and others will lead this effort.

## Community Service Planning Committee

The Community Service Planning Committee (CSPC) plays a vital role in helping the community stay informed about events, programs, and initiatives that bring value to the community. By working closely with local partners and stakeholders, the committee helps identify community needs and develop solutions that

foster connection, accessibility, and inclusivity for residents of all ages and abilities. The meetings are open to other government organizations, churches, non-profits, etc.

The CSPC meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday of every other month starting in January except for November. They will

discuss upcoming initiatives and review community feedback to strengthen engagement and address the community’s evolving needs.

For more information, please get in touch with Kylie Bolyard at 256-606-4352 or kbolyard@narcog.org. Meetings will be held from 9 AM to 10 AM at the NAR-

COG Main Office, 216 Jackson St SE, Decatur, AL 35601. Find the meeting dates below:

- January 23, 2025
- March 27, 2025
- May 22, 2025
- July 24, 2025
- September 25, 2025
- November 20, 2025

## FROM PAGE 1: NARCOG Christmas Movie Day



Kylie Bolyard, NARCOG Outreach Coordinator, reflected on the event’s success, sharing, “The movie day was a blast! Seeing so many people come out, smile, and enjoy themselves warmed my heart. There was much laughter during the movie, and even simple things like sharing popcorn and chatting before the film started, making the day feel extra special. Events like these give people a chance to step away

from their day-to-day routines, connect with others, and just have a little fun. We’re already excited to plan more activities like this for next year!”

By organizing events like Christmas Movie Day, NARCOG continues supporting meaningful opportunities for connection and engagement, ensuring everyone feels valued and included during this special time of year.



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