

**Upcoming Events**

NARCOG Board Meeting  
**DATE:** March 23 at 10 a.m.  
**LOCATION:** NARCOG Board Room - Decatur, AL

**RPA Calendar**

Economic Development Administration (EDA) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant applications are due March 31

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) meeting, TBA

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**Information ON THE WEB**

www.narcog.org

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

facebook.com/narcogal

**Local EMAs receive life-saving equipment**

Morgan, Lawrence counties use funds for first responders

Fire departments in Lawrence and Morgan counties have new

equipment that potentially could help save the lives of many.

Through COVID relief funds made available in a pair of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) received earlier this year, the Lawrence County Commission and Morgan Coun-

ty Commission each purchased chest compression devices for fire departments.

The chest compression devices were distributed to local fire departments.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**

**Accelerate Business Growth Fund**



The FatBack Pick Project, which is located in Eva, is an Accelerate Business Growth Fund client.

**Growing the local economy**

Accelerate Business Growth Fund helps create, retain jobs

Creating new jobs, and retaining previous positions, are significant aspects of a local economy.

More jobs mean more tax dollars are flowing into the economy, which impacts the quality of life



experienced by everyone.

Through the Accelerate Business

Growth Fund, the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) has helped bolster the Region's economy.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**Hillsboro awarded CDBG grant for drainage**

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) has awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to the Town of Hillsboro to assist the municipality with improvements to its stormwater drainage system.

The CDBG grant, which was prepared and submitted by the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) Regional Planning Agency, awards Hillsboro \$350,000 for a drainage project.

The project will be fully fund-

ed by this CDBG grant.

"We're extremely grateful for the grant funds to assist our town with this project," Hillsboro Mayor Charles Owens said.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**Robby Cantrell | Executive Director**

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# E-Center Pop-up Shop Circuit returning in spring

Local entrepreneurs are getting an opportunity to showcase their wares this spring in the Region's small towns.

The Decatur-Morgan Entrepreneurial Center's (E-Center) Pop-up Shop Circuit is returning with a pair of events scheduled in Cullman County.

The E-Center is holding a Pop-up Shop event on April 9 at the Cullman County Agricultural Center in South Vinemont, in conjunction with the Cullman County Parks and Recreation's Ag Center Yard Sale.

A second Pop-up Shop event is scheduled in May at the Berlin Farmers Market. LifeSouth also is holding a blood drive at the site on the same day.

"Our entrepreneurs are looking forward to getting back out and promoting their businesses," E-Center Director of Operations Donna Whitten said.

The Pop-up Shop Circuit is part of the Project Rebound Initiative, which the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments



(NARCOG) helped the E-Center fund through the assistance of an \$86,880 USDA Rural Business Development Grant.

Through Project Rebound, the E-Center coordinates with rural communities in Cullman and Morgan counties to provide special small business events intended to

promote small business and tourism in rural small towns.

The E-Center held two Pop-up Shop events in the fall.

The first Pop-up Shop event was held in Falkville at Cross-Ties Coffee Company in September, and the second was held in downtown Hanceville in October in conjunc-

tion with the Mud Creek Festival.

Both events drew steady downtown foot traffic, with consumers frequenting the vendors' tents.

"Our first two events were a success," Whitten said. "Hopefully we will continue to grow off what has been established, creating a great opportunity for our entrepreneurs to promote their products in the community."

The Pop-up Shop Circuit is a new concept that was created through a collaborative effort from the E-Center and the NARCOG Regional Planning Agency. Through the USDA grant, the E-Center purchased 10 tents to be used by local small businesses as pop-up shops.

"When we originally applied for this grant, the idea was to not only help local businesses, but also help local economies and tourism in small towns by creating foot traffic," NARCOG Regional Planning Agency Planner Daniel Yurcaba said. "So far, I think we've been successful in what we set out to do, and hopefully this will continue to grow."

## FROM PAGE 1: Accelerate

During the past two years, the Accelerate Business Growth Fund has helped create 119 new jobs in the Region while helping businesses retain 217 positions.

"I love this program!" NARCOG Executive Director Robby Cantrell said. "This program helps businesses grow, not only through job creation, but also through job retention, which creates even more sustainable growth. Many of our clients are

repeat clients."

Accelerate Business Growth Fund loan funds are secured through the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Alabama State Bonds.

During the previous two years, NARCOG has been active in using the Accelerate Business

Growth Fund program to help bolster the Region's economy.

Since January 2020, NARCOG has distributed \$1.9 million through 51 loans, while leveraging an additional \$665,750 through the Accelerate Business Growth Fund.

The funds have helped both pre-existing and new local businesses.

In the past 15 months, Accelerate funds helped six new

businesses open in the Region, which includes a daycare center in Decatur, and a new zipline park in Cullman County that potentially could boost tourism at Smith Lake.

"Our Loan Fund Coordinator, Crystal Julien, does an incredible job working for our current and prospective clients," Cantrell said "She is a true servant. Give her a call and find out for yourself."

## FROM PAGE 1: Hillsboro

"This drainage project is needed, and it will have a positive impact on the residents in our community," Owens added.

The project will impact 92 people and 47 households, with 68 beneficiaries who are low or moderate income (LMI) resi-

dents.

The project will provide drainage improvements in an area located south of the Norfolk Southern Railroad along Oakdale Avenue and other local roads, including Owens Road, Beatrice Boulevard, Marlow Roads and

East Peach Street.

Through this project, the Town of Hillsboro will enlarge the drainage ditches along Oakdale Avenue, Owens Road, Beatrice Boulevard, Horton Road, Church Street, Mallard Creek Road, East Peach Street and Marlow Road;

install piping along Oakdale Avenue east of Marlow Road; replace or install culverts on Owens Road and Church Street, and driveway culverts throughout the project area; and install a box culvert on Oakdale Avenue west of Marlow Street.

# Falkville awarded CDBG grant for drainage project

## Town receives \$450K to address stormwater issues

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) has awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to the Town of Falkville to assist the municipality with improvements to its stormwater drainage system.

The CDBG grant, which was prepared and submitted by the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) Regional Planning Agency, awards Falkville \$350,000 for a \$493,868 drainage project.

The Town of Falkville will provide \$143,885 in local matching funds.

"This stormwater drainage project will greatly assist the efforts currently underway to improve public health, safety and welfare for the citizens of our town," Falkville Mayor Ken Winkles said.

Winkles said the project will impact 93 people and 32 house-



holds in Falkville.

The project will provide drainage improvements in an area bounded by County Road 55 to the north, Pine Street to the south, Patton Street to the west and Douglas Road to the east.

Through this project, the town will line existing ditches with concrete; install a 6-foot wide flat bottom concrete ditch from County Road 55 to an outlet at a proposed stormwater pipe outlet behind Pine Street Baptist

Church; install a 4-foot wide flat bottom ditch from Pine Street Baptist Church to a terminus near the edge of Douglas Road, install ditches along property lines to aid conveyance of stormwater; install a wide flat bottom ditch to a point near the edge of Patton Street; remove existing dilapidated stormwater pipe along McArthur Steet and replace with reinforced concrete arch pipe beginning at the church parking lot and continuing south of the intersection with E Pine Street; and remove and replace a grate inlet at the intersection of McArthur Street and E Pine Street to accommodate large pipe size.

The project is Phase 1 in the Town of Falkville's plan for comprehensive stormwater drainage improvements.

The Town of Falkville received funding for Phase 2 of the project, which addresses stormwater drainage improvements in the residential area south of County Road 55 from downtown to Douglas Road, in September with a \$98,541 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant.

## FROM PAGE 1: Equipment

The CDBG-CV grants were prepared by the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) Regional Planning Agency.

The Morgan County Commission was awarded \$500,000 in grant funds, which were used to purchase 24 chest compression devices and defibrillators, along with pads and battery packs.

The Lawrence County Commission was awarded \$400,000 in grant funds, which was used to purchase 10 chest compression devices and defibrillators, along with pads and battery packs.

With funds from the CDBG-CV grant, the Lawrence County Commission also is purchasing a new mobile vaccination unit for the health department, along with a



Ford F250 truck to use as a tow vehicle for the vaccination unit.

"These CDBG grants were out of a special pot of money specifically tar-

geted for relief and recovery efforts related to the COVID-19 pandemic," NARCOG Regional Planning Agency Director Joey Hester said. "This new

equipment will help first responders in the Region, and hopefully help save lives."

Gabe Tucker, a firefighter with Hartselle Fire and Rescue, said the equipment will have a positive impact.

"These devices free up a pair of hands, which allows first responders to further attend to the individual who is receiving CPR, such as accessing veins with IVs, or whatever the patient needs," Tucker said. "The devices also keep perfect timing (with chest compressions). It's amazing equipment that really can be a game-changer for first responders on a scene.

"We do our best to ensure patients get the best care that we can provide, and this equipment definitely will help."