

Upcoming Events

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

Wallace State Career Fair
DATE: November 14
LOCATION: Hanceville, AL

Lawrence County Health Fair
DATE: November 19
LOCATION: Moulton, AL

CSPC Meeting
DATE: November 21
LOCATION: Decatur, AL

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Annual AARC Conference



The Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC) recently hosted its Annual Training Conference, bringing together regional councils from across the state to engage in dynamic discussions and foster collaboration. Held over four days, the conference provided a rewarding experience for attendees and focused on various topics such as Alabama’s economic development, aging practices, and professional well-being.

Regional councils are crucial in connecting local governments

with state and federal resources. They serve as platforms for municipalities and counties to collaborate on regional initiatives, addressing challenges that transcend city or county borders. These councils provide expertise in areas such as economic development, transportation, aging services, workforce development, and community planning. By pooling resources and expertise, regional councils help local governments make informed decisions that support growth and sustainability.

With Alabama experiencing significant economic growth, particularly in the manufacturing and technology sectors, regional councils are working to ensure that local communities are prepared to meet the workforce needs of new and expanding industries. Discussions centered on workforce training programs, economic incentives, and strategies for attracting businesses to rural areas.

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First Solar Inauguration

Last month, NARCOG staff had the distinct honor of attending the inauguration of the new \$1.1 billion First Solar manufacturing facility in Lawrence County. This groundbreaking project represents a transformative milestone for the region’s economic development, as it is expected to generate over 700 new jobs.

NARCOG is proud to have

played a key role in supporting the Lawrence County Commission and the Industrial Development Board by helping secure \$2.5 million in grant funding. These funds will be vital for infrastructure improvements, ensuring the success of this landmark project and bolstering long-term growth for the community.



Robby Cantrell | Executive Director

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Holiday Drive - We Need YOUR Help

NARCOG is once again collecting new blankets for our Annual Holiday Drive, a crucial initiative that is dedicated to supporting our Medicaid Waiver clients. These individuals, including low-income seniors, disabled adults, and a small number of children with disabilities, often face challenging circumstances. For many, this blanket may be their only gift during the holiday season. Your support is vital in making this gesture of warmth and care possible.

At NARCOG, we are committed to ensuring that our clients feel remembered and valued during the holidays. This simple gift of a blanket can provide both physi-

cal comfort and a reminder that they are not alone.

We are inviting community members and local businesses to support this vital cause. If you can contribute, new blankets can be dropped off at the NARCOG Main Office at 216 Jackson Street SE, Decatur, AL 35601. Donations are accepted Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 4 PM. For those unable to donate in person, monetary contributions are also welcome and can be made securely through our website at <https://www.narcog.org/impact/impact-giving>.

Your generosity directly impacts the lives of those in need, spreading warmth and joy to in-

dividuals who might otherwise go without this holiday season. We deeply appreciate your support and thank you for helping us brighten the holidays for our clients, who deserve kindness and care.



October Anniversaries

Renae Reynolds
Alabama Cares Coordinator
2 year of service

Jerry Monroe
Transit Driver
3 year of service

Mac McEntire
Transit Driver
8 year of service

Jackie Turney
Transit Driver
8 year of service

Howard Williams
Transit Driver
8 year of service

Julie Campbell
Transit Driver
8 year of service

Donald Davis
Transit Driver
8 year of service

Jerry Barnette
Transit Driver
8 year of service

Sharon Steele
Transit Driver
8 year of service

NARCOG Upcoming Events and Meetings

The North Alabama community is buzzing with events this fall, offering great opportunities for learning, networking, and supporting local initiatives.

On November 14th, NARCOG will participate in the Wallace State 8th Grade Career Fair. This exciting event will bring together 8th-grade students across North Alabama to explore career options and gain insight into various industries. Students will be able to engage with government, healthcare, engineering, agriculture, and more professionals. The goal is to inspire these young minds by exposing them to the many career pathways available

as they prepare for high school and beyond.

In addition to industry professionals, local colleges and technical schools will be present to provide information about educational opportunities that align with students' career interests. This event is a fantastic chance for current college students and industry professionals to invest in our region's future workforce.

The Lawrence County Health Fair will be held on November 19th at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Moulton. It is an excellent resource for community members to learn more about their health and access

valuable services. This free event will feature health screenings, educational booths, and presentations from local healthcare providers. Attendees can also visit booths offering information about mental health resources, nutrition, and wellness programs in the area. This is a perfect opportunity to take advantage of free healthcare services and gain insight into healthier living.

The next Community Service Planning Committee (CSPC) meeting will be held on Thursday, November 21st, the last meeting of 2024. The CSPC meeting is a fantastic networking opportunity for

local non-profits, government organizations, churches, and other community-focused groups. Attending organizations will be able to present updates on their services and initiatives while learning from others in the region. Whether your focus is on education, health, social services, or community outreach, this meeting is an excellent platform to share ideas and connect with others dedicated to improving life in North Alabama. If you are interested in participating, please contact Kylie Bolyard at kbolyard@narcog.org.

New Hires



Loretta Earwood
Accounting Coordinator



Tiffany Prince
Ombudsman



Carlie Morrison
Case Manager Supervisor



Brittnee Twyman
Case Manager



Endless Opportunities Career Expo

The 2024 Endless Opportunities hands-on career expo was a tremendous success, drawing over 1,600 eighth graders to Ingalls Harbor Pavilion on October 17-18. Students from North Alabama attended the event, which showcased a wide range of career opportunities.

The Decatur-Morgan County Chamber hosted the expo, which featured more than 50 companies and industries. Additionally, representatives from Calhoun Community College, the Alabama Robotics Technology Park, and Go Build Alabama were present to highlight their

fields. The event offered students immersive experiences designed to introduce them to local career paths and inspire the future workforce with firsthand insights into various professions.

Engaging, educational activities were a highlight of the event. Students participated in a drunk driving simulation with the Morgan County Sheriff's Office, learning about the dangers of impaired driving. At the Cooks Pest Control booth, students learned about Madagascar hissing cockroaches and even had the chance to hold one.

NARCOG was proud to attend

and showcase our services, engage with students, and share career opportunities within aging services, public transportation, and economic development.

The success of the 2024 Endless Opportunities career expo highlights our commitment to preparing and empowering the next generation of professionals. NARCOG looks forward to continuing to attend this event and helping bridge the gap between education and career opportunities for the youth in our community.

FROM PAGE 1: AARC Conference

As the population ages, councils have been working closely with the Alabama Department of Senior Services to ensure older adults have access to the care and resources they need. The conference highlighted innovative programs to support the aging population, including home and community-based services, nutrition programs, and initiatives to combat social isolation

among seniors.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the conference was the opportunity for regional council staff and local government representatives to network and share their experiences. The sessions fostered a collaborative spirit, with participants brainstorming solutions to shared challenges and learning from each other's successes.

In summary, the conference was a rewarding experience for all involved. It provided valuable insights and sparked discussions that will lead to tangible benefits for communities across the state. Regional councils' dedication to serving Alabama's local governments and residents remains as strong as ever, and their work will continue to impact the state's future.



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