

Upcoming Events

Fraud Prevention Seminar
DATE: April 14 at 11 a.m.
LOCATION: Freight House in Hartselle, AL

Older Americans Month Luau
DATE: May 10 at 9:30 a.m.
LOCATION: Ingalls Harbor Pavilion, Decatur, AL

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Serving the Community

Even when on the clock, driving a bus for the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) Regional Transit Agency, Jerry Barnette still looks for ways to help serve his community.

While driving his NARCOG Transit route in March, Barnette noticed that a passenger had a wheelchair ramp at her home that needed repairs. When Barnette returned to NARCOG later that afternoon, he immediately inquired with the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) if there were funds available to assist with repairs.

Utilizing Title III-B grant funds, available through the Older Americans Act, NARCOG helped fund the repair of the wheelchair ramp with the assistance of Decatur First Baptist Church.

"With our Title III-B funds, NARCOG can help pay for small projects that are labeled as a 'Chore,'" Area Agency on Aging Direc-

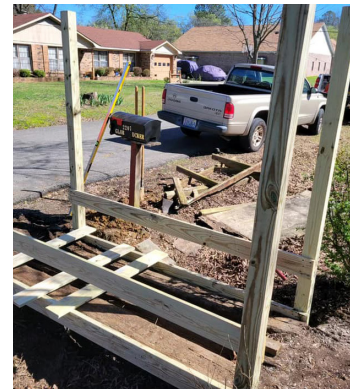
tor Justin Graves said. "Helping build a wheelchair ramp falls under that 'Chore' category.

"Our agency also is grateful for employees like Jerry. He identified that a client had a need and went the extra mile to make sure she received assistance."

Older adults in Cullman, Lawrence and Morgan counties who need assistance with small projects that could help improve their quality of life should contact the NARCOG Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) to see if they qualify.

"For this fiscal year, we have Title III-B funds set aside solely for projects that qualify as a 'Chore' under the Older Americans Act," Graves said. "Last year, our AAA spent \$15,000 through this program, building 11 wheelchair ramps for older adults in the Region.

"These projects really do make a positive impact on the lives of older adults in our community."



Crafts, Learning, and Dementia

Alabama Cares, part of the National Family Caregiver Support Program, supports family caregivers by providing them with information, assistance, and resources to help them

care for their aging loved ones and themselves. March has been busy for the NARCOG Alabama Cares Coordinator, Dana Dobson. On top of her normal day-to-day activities, Dobson

held two successful events this month: Memory Café and a Virtual Dementia Tour at Decatur High School.

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Robby Cantrell | Executive Director

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NARCOG Continues to Grow

NARCOG has been growing non-stop in the new year. Several departments have received new employees to help keep up with the demand for our services. NARCOG has supported nine new hires and one position change since January.

In Transportation, the Transit Office welcomed a new part-time Driver, Jackie Turney, and an Administrative Assistant, Lori Garcia. The Transit Office is searching for more drivers to keep up with the need for public transportation in Decatur.

In Planning and Economic Development, the team welcomed a part-time Administrative Assistant, Tina Atkins. With more and more projects being handled by the Planning Department, Atkins is essential to keep things running smoothly. Atkins

oversees bookkeeping, filing, billing, assisting with planning studies, and more.

In Finance, Laura Saint was announced as the new Accounting Coordinator. Saint provides administrative support to the Finance Department by performing tasks such as payroll, expense reimbursements, tax deposits, preparing financial reports, and more. Saint is essential to the everyday operations of NARCOG.

In Aging, the Medicaid Waiver team has grown drastically. The team has welcomed five new Case Managers: Frances Palmer, Nicole Compagner, Katie Hernandez, Lesley Mason, and Jennifer Jones. Medicaid Waiver now serves 600 residents within Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan County! Just

three years ago, the Medicaid Waiver team served only 325 residents, which is almost an 85% increase in clients. The Aging Department also supported a position change for Melanie Brown. Brown was a Case Manager for the Medicaid Waiver team for over a year and recently has been announced as the Regional Ombudsman. Brown now supports 22 nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the Region by advocating for the residents of the nursing facilities.

Kim Dove, Director of Administration, is "overjoyed to welcome these team members, and cannot wait to watch them thrive in their new roles while they positively impact the community."



Melanie Brown, Ombudsman



Lori Garcia, Program Admin



Laura Saint, Accounting Coordinator



Katie Hernandez, Case Manager



Jackie Turney, Part-Time Driver



Jennifer Jones, Case Manager



Nicole Compagner, Case Manager



Frances Palmer, Case Manager



Lesley Mason, Case Manager



Tina Atkins, Program Admin

FROM PAGE 1: Crafts, Learning, and Dementia

The Dementia Friendly Alabama (DFA) Memory Café is a relaxed social gathering open to anyone affected by memory loss or related cognitive changes. The DFA Memory Café is designed to make people with dementia feel comfortable and successful.

For caregivers and care partners,

the Café is a much-needed break; and a chance to have fun together without focusing on the disease. The most recent Café activities included Garden Bingo and pottery painting for participants to enjoy.

Several Decatur High School students were able to participate in the Virtual Dementia Tour (VDT).

VDT is described as "your window into their world." Participants wear patented devices that alter their senses, and trained facilitators guide them while they try to complete typical everyday tasks.

The tour allows participants to experience the physical and mental challenges that people with

dementia may face. VDT has been implemented by over 2,000 facilities and shared by millions of people worldwide. This dementia simulation is evidence-based, with proven results and outcomes.

For more information, contact Dana Dobson at 256-355-4515.

Trail Meeting and an Upcoming Grant Project

The NARCOG Planning and Economic Development department assisted the Decatur Morgan Entrepreneurial Center with an application for a USDA Rural Business Development Grant for \$105,990 for "Pop Up 2.0, Coaching, and Education for Rural Entrepreneurs".

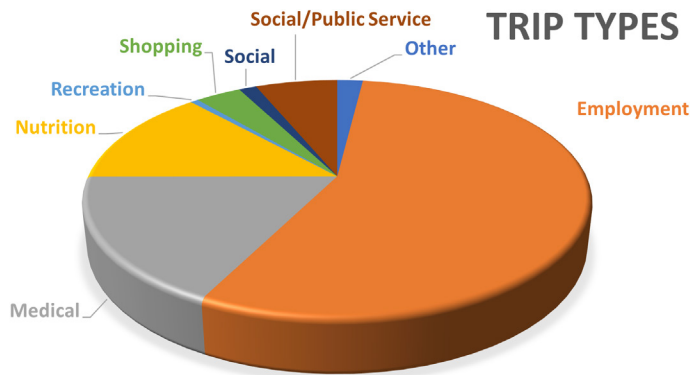
This proposed project aims to bring comprehensive, wraparound entrepreneurial services to our partner communities by delivering coaching and education for existing entrepreneurs, helping them create and retain jobs in a challenging time which now includes inflation as a relevant factor. The outside Pop-Up event will support existing businesses, both those already op-

erating in these communities and those that are brought in.

On Tuesday, March 21st, the second Lawrence County Master Trail Plan meeting was held at the Courtland Community Center and had a great turnout with a lot of feedback and participation. The keynote speaker was Jared Carter with the North Alabama Trails and Recreation (NATR) organization. Carter gave an informative speech for the Trail Plan stakeholders in attendance about resources and support for trail planning and implementation. The Planning Team received many comments on the Trail Plan maps and the vision statement for the Plan.



Transportation Survey and Meeting



NARCOG Transit strives to provide reliable transportation in the Decatur urban area. It's understood that reliable and safe transportation is essential for individuals to stay independent and healthy in their community. NARCOG Transit is continuously looking for new ways to improve transportation for our community and recently conducted a Public Interest Survey to better understand the needs of the public. The survey revealed that more people are interested to use public transit service three or more times

a week for work and school. If convenient public transit service were available near their home. As shown in the chart, more than 50% of all trips scheduled by NARCOG transit are carrying people to and from work regularly. NARCOG Transit has organized a meeting on Thursday, April 13th, 2023, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM at the Turner-Surles Community Center. Please join us to continue these conversations, provide your feedback, and get updates on the study findings to improve the service for this community.

Don't Be Fooled By Fraud Seminar

Senior Medicare Patrols (SMPs) help Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers report and protect from Medicare errors, fraud, and abuse.

The NARCOG SMP Coordinator, Julie Campbell, is hosting an upcoming Fraud Prevention Seminar. This event will occur on Friday, April 14, at the Freight House in Hartselle from 11 AM – 1 PM.

Seminar panelists will provide

important information on financial and healthcare fraud and how to best prevent it from happening. Panelists will include representatives from Alabama Securities Commission, Alabama Senior Medicare Patrol, and North Alabama Better Business Bureau.

This event is free to the public with limited seating. Lunch is provided by Freight House and will include a roll, mashed potatoes,

green beans, and hamburger steak or poulet chicken. To RSVP, call Julie Campbell at 256-355-4515, scan the QR code, or follow the link <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fraud-prevention-seminar-tickets-595841537077>.

Registration for this event will close on April 13 by end of business day at 4:30 PM.

