

Upcoming Events

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

Plan Hartselle Open House
DATE: March 19
LOCATION: Hartselle, AL

ADSS Public Meeting
DATE: March 20
LOCATION: Cullman, AL

PACT Job Fair
DATE: April 19
LOCATION: Decatur, AL

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Landmark Achievement Announced



NARCOG completed an Inland Port Feasibility Study in 2021, which is located for viewing under the Planning and Economic Development tab at NARCOG.org. NARCOG secured funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission and matched it with a grant from the Alabama’s Mountains, Rivers, and Valleys Resource Conservation and De-

velopment Councils (AMRV-RCD), as well as contributions from regional economic development, partners to hire a consultant to complete a feasibility study related to locating an inland port in North-central Alabama. Improvements to the inland transmodal infrastructure was deemed feasible.

The Alabama Port Authority re-

cently announced the location of a new container transfer facility in North Alabama, in Decatur! The Port Authority plans to repurpose a section of an existing facility owned by CSX Transportation, a key partner in the venture.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Tennessee RiverLine 2024 Cohort

The Tennessee RiverLine announces Lawrence County, Alabama; Calloway County, Kentucky; and Dayton, Tennessee, as the 2024 cohort of the Tennessee RiverTowns Program. Now comprised of 22 enrolled communities, the Tennessee RiverTowns Program has expanded with these new additions, each shaping their local vision for the Tennessee RiverLine.

NARCOG was pleased to assist Lawrence County with the submission of an application to the Tennessee RiverLine for their RiverTown’s Program. Lawrence County was selected, and NARCOG Planning Staff will be close-

ly working with the Local Leadership Team through the multi-year 3-stage program: Celebrate, Connect, and Catalyze.

The Tennessee RiverTowns Program encourages collaboration and innovation among participating Tennessee River communities. The voluntary three-stage program empowers communities of all sizes to establish their local vision for the Tennessee RiverLine, an initiative of the UT Extension with principal partners, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and Tennessee Valley Authority, to connect paddling, hiking, and biking experiences along the Tennessee River’s 652-

mile reach. The partnership between UT Extension and TVA, as manifested through the Tennessee RiverLine, not only celebrates the beauty, diversity, and history of the Tennessee Valley but connects its people and communities.

Tennessee RiverLine staff, alongside each community’s Local Leadership Team, engage area residents and community leadership for invaluable insights and creative contributions that propel the vision forward.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Robby Cantrell | Executive Director

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Assisted Livings Receive Cards

In a heartwarming community initiative, NARCOG collaborated with several organizations to collect nearly 500 Valentine's Day cards for nine local assisted living facilities within our Region. The project aimed to bring joy and warmth to elderly residents during the holiday season.

The handmade cards, filled with

uplifting messages and creative designs, were distributed to the facilities days before Valentine's Day. This collective effort exemplifies the spirit of community and compassion, showcasing the positive impact that can arise when neighbors unite with a shared purpose.

The community's commitment to spreading love serves as an in-

spiring example of the kindness that can flourish when people come together for a common cause. Thank you to 3rd Street Boys and Girls Club, Cullman High School, Hatton Elementary School, Eva Julien, and West Decatur Elementary for taking the time to create such beautiful and thoughtful cards.



February Anniversaries

Katie Hernandez

Case Manager
1 year of service

Laura Saint

Accounting Coordinator
1 year of service

Leslie Price

Case Manager
2 years of service

Warren Taylor

Personal Choices Case Manager
8 years of service

Cynthia Smith

Information and Referral Specialist
12 years of service

FROM PAGE 1: Tennessee RiverLine 2024 Cohort



This collective effort is shaping North America's next great regional trail system, connecting communities based on their unique opportunities, local priorities, and relationship with the Tennessee River.

Enrolled communities take part in a multi-step process for gathering community input, hosting river animation and stewardship events, building local support and interest in the Tennessee RiverLine, and developing conceptual ideas for riverfront infrastructure to provide better access to the river and create new and improved experiences both on and along the river. Supported and guided by the Tennessee RiverLine staff, enrolled communities can benefit from equitable access to the river, enhanced public health, improved river stewardship, and new opportunities for economic impact through the program.

"Since launching in 2021, the Tennessee RiverTowns Program has proven to be an effective and innovative model to expand and

diversify river recreation, inspire resource stewardship, and accelerate investments in new river spaces and experiences that will transform the quality of life in enrolled communities," said Brad Collett, Tennessee RiverLine Executive Director and professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. "We are excited to welcome these new communities to the Tennessee RiverLine initiative and are eager to support their journey to transform their relationship with our treasured Tennessee River."

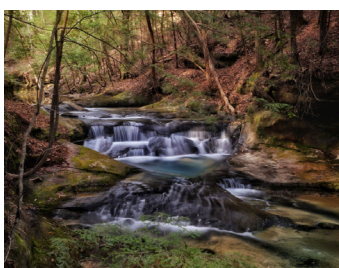
Criteria for selection into the program included a demonstrated understanding of the Tennessee RiverTowns Program's goals, the Tennessee RiverLine vision, its guiding principles, and local partnerships necessary to sustain an applicant's participation in the program. The addition of these communities signifies the growing interest across the Tennessee Valley in enriching the quality of life through outdoor recreation.

"Stewardship of the Tennessee River is successful when communi-

ties come together collaboratively so that collectively we empower each other to accomplish more than we could individually. We know these three new Tennessee RiverTowns Program partnerships will serve to connect even more communities and enrich outdoor recreational opportunities along the Tennessee River," said Michael McCall, Vice President of Environment & Sustainability at TVA.

The Tennessee RiverLine is an initiative of UT Extension, with principal partners UT Knoxville and Tennessee Valley Authority, and aims to create a continuous system of paddling, hiking, and biking experiences along the Tennessee River's 652-mile reach. Through its land-grant mission of research, teaching and extension, the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture touches lives and provides real life solutions to Tennesseans and beyond.

For more information about the Tennessee RiverLine, visit tnriverline.org.



FROM PAGE 1: Container Transfer Facility Announced

Over the past decade, the Mobile container terminal has consistently ranked among the nation's fastest-growing port facilities, significantly contributing to the State of Alabama's economic impact. The terminal has undergone various expansions, including increased acreage, additional cranes and machinery, and expanded dock space.

Despite its growth, the Mobile terminal faces challenges directly

connecting containers to the rest of Alabama due to rail line limitations on double-stacked containers. Recent initiatives, including developing an inland transfer facility in Montgomery, and collaborating with CSX; aim to address this issue. Such facilities specialize in efficiently transferring containers between trains and short-haul trucks.

In various news releases, Alabama Port Authority Director and CEO

John Driscoll expressed excitement about the announcement, emphasizing the dedication to advancing logistics infrastructure in the region. He stated that the expansion signifies confidence in the local economy and aligns with ongoing efforts to meet evolving customer needs while contributing to the growth of the communities served.

In a recent statement, Decatur Mayor Tab Bowling expressed

enthusiasm about the economic potential the North Alabama ICTF brings to Decatur and the broader North Alabama region. He described the project as "a landmark achievement in bolstering the city's economic vitality." NARCOG agrees, and we are excited to see how this investment improves the lives of the citizens of our Region through this critical infrastructure improvement.

Planning Department Events and Deadlines

March 19, 2024
Plan Hartselle Open House

March 27, 2024
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) Public Hearing for Changes to Citizen Participation Plan

March 28, 2024
Singing River Trail Lunch and Learn

Upcoming SMP Fraud Seminar

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program helps Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries prevent, detect, and report healthcare fraud. While this program has around 5,000 volunteers to help, NARCOG has a dedicated coordinator to assist individuals.

SMPs can help you detect and report issues in your Medicare statements, such as receiving charges for something you didn't

get, double billing for services, or charges for services that weren't ordered.

On April 25, the NARCOG SMP Coordinator, Julie Campbell, will be hosting the "Don't Get Showered Down by Fraud" Seminar at the Cullman Senior Center from 11 AM to 1 PM. This is a great opportunity for individuals to learn about financial and healthcare fraud and how to protect yourself

from it. Panelists will include the Cullman County District Attorney and individuals from the Better Business Bureau, Alabama Security Commission, and Senior Medicare Patrol.

Please call Julie Campbell at 256-355-4515, ext. 245, or email jcampbell@narcog.org to RSVP.

Public Meeting Notices

NARCOG would like to bring your attention to two important public meetings that provide an opportunity for community involvement and input.

On March 19, 2024, the City of Hartselle will be hosting the second Plan Hartselle Meeting from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM at the Sparkman Civic Center. This meeting will be held in an open house format, open to the citizens of the City of Hartselle. Your presence is encouraged to share your thoughts and comments on initiatives to improve Hartselle, contributing to the development of a new Comprehensive Plan. City officials, the Plan Hartselle Committee, and the NARCOG Planning and Development team will be there to answer questions you may have.

On March 20, 2024, the Alabama Department of Senior Services will host a Public Meeting regarding the creation of the 2025-2028 State Plan on Aging at the Cull-

man Senior Center from 10 AM to 11:15 AM. They are seeking comments from senior adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, and others interested in people living at home and in their communities for as long as possible. All comments made during the meeting will be kept anonymous.

Participation in these meetings is vital, as it contributes to shaping the future of communities. We appreciate your involvement and look forward to hearing your valuable insights.



Annual NARCOG Luau

It's gearing up to be that time of year again! We are currently planning our Annual Older Americans Month Luau for those 60 and older living in Cullman, Lawrence, or Morgan County.

This event is FREE to participants and will happen rain or shine. This event will have lunch, popcorn, shaved ice, a live DJ, door prizes, and sponsor booths! We ask that you RSVP by May 1 to have an accurate headcount for

lunches to the NARCOG receptionist at 256-355-4515.

We are currently seeking sponsorship for organizations around North Alabama. If you are interested in being a sponsor and participating in the event with a booth, please contact Kylie Bolyard at 256-606-4352 or email kbolyard@narcog.org. Sponsor booth spaces are first come, first served, and filling up fast, so don't wait to call!