

Upcoming Events

Board Meeting

DATE: February 22 at 10 a.m.

LOCATION: NARCOG Board Room - Decatur

2023 Legislative Reception

DATE: March 14 at 5:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Montgomery, AL

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NARCOG Attends Career Fairs

Students explore career opportunities in local government.

North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) has been spending time with schools showcasing the variety of career paths NARCOG offers.

NARCOG had the opportunity to participate in the 2023 Hartselle City Schools: Finding Your Future Career Fair on January 30. This career fair partnered with the Hartselle Area Chamber of Commerce and had over 2,000 individuals attend, including both students and parents.

Roughly 50 booths were set up in the cafeteria and the gym featuring various businesses

around North Alabama as well as Hartselle High School Academic Programs. Students and parents could see what NARCOG offers, including career options, salaries, benefits, and educational requirements.

In addition, NARCOG was able to attend the Decatur-Morgan Chamber of Commerce Career Fair. At this all-day event, over 50 companies participated at Ingalls Harbor Pavilion, showcasing a multitude of career paths. A total of 16 schools and roughly 750 students in attendance.

As always, the Robotic Pets, a program that provides robotic

pets to individuals with dementia, was a huge hit with the students. With all of the opportunities NARCOG offers, there is a large variety of career paths for the upcoming young workforce to explore.

NARCOG currently has over 30 different career paths in various departments, including Aging, Social Work, Transportation, Planning and Economic Development, Administration, and Finance. As NARCOG continues to grow, new jobs will be created to continue to serve the community.



Robby Cantrell | Executive Director

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Older Americans Month Luau

Calling all seniors in Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan counties! May is known as Older Americans Month, which celebrates older adults and gives them a chance to share their stories of aging. This year, the Administration for Community Living has named this year's Older Americans Month theme as Aging Unbound.

NARCOG is currently planning the Older Americans Month Celebration Luau on May 10th at Ingalls Harbor Pavilion in Decatur, Alabama, from 9:30 AM to 1 PM.

This celebration is free to seniors! The Older Americans Month Luau will include lunch, games, dancing, a live DJ, and door prizes. All seniors in Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan counties are welcome to come in and enjoy the fun. This event

is indoors and will take place rain or shine.

Organizations are needed to sponsor the event. Sponsors can have a table if they like; however, space is limited and will be given out on a first-come, first-serve basis. If a sponsor would like a table, NARCOG asks them to provide a game, craft, or activity to help entertain the seniors and to bring a door prize worth \$25 or more to give away at the end of the celebration. The sponsorship deadline is March 15th.

Organizations interested in sponsoring or any individuals with questions or concerns should contact the NARCOG Outreach Coordinator, Kylie Bolyard, at kbolyard@narcog.org or (256) 355-4515.

Regional Planning Agency Update

The NARCOG Regional Planning Agency (RPA) has been extremely busy and growing again.

To help the RPA team keep up with their busy schedule, Tina Atkins was hired as a part-time administrative assistant. Ms. Atkins has been helping set meetings, file data, and assist with general organization. She is an essential part of the RPA team to ensure things continue to run smoothly as they take on more work.

Most recently, the RPA has submitted five Rebuild Alabama Act (RAA) applications for 2023. The RAA Annual Grant Program is an Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) funds projects that improve classified roads or bridges open to public traffic.

In Cullman County, grant ap-

plications were submitted for the Town of Colony, the Town of Berlin, the Town of Fairview, and the Town of Garden City. In Lawrence County, a grant application was submitted for the Town of Hillsboro.

These towns are all seeking assistance with roadway rehabilitation through this funding opportunity. In all, roughly \$1.2 million in funds are being applied for this fiscal year through ALDOT's Rebuild Alabama Act Grant.

In early February, the RPA team checked in on the progress of a trail rehabilitation project that was funded in 2021. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs awarded two Regional Trail Program (RTP) grants to the Cullman Coun-

ty Commission amounting to nearly \$525,000 in grant funds was awarded, and the Cullman County Commission will provide over \$315,000 in matching funds.

The first RTP grant will be used to replace bridges on the trail, fix roadways, install new reflective signage and solar panel lighting to allow for trail usage at night. The second RTP grant was used to purchase an excavator and a four-wheel drive backhoe for trail reconstruction.

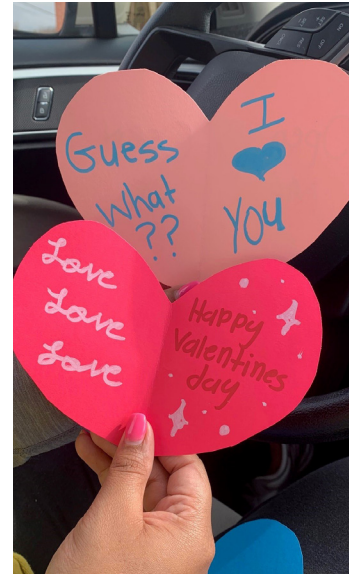
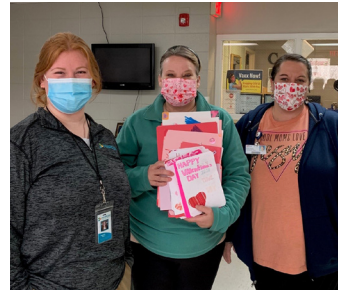
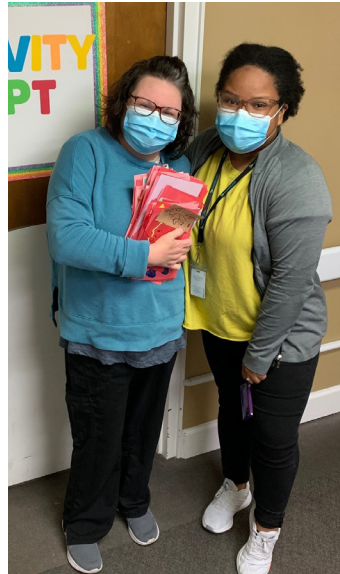
Signs are currently being installed, and bridge construction will be underway soon. Trail rehabilitation is also in the works with the new equipment.



Youths Make Valentine's Day Cards for Nursing Homes

Love is in full swing this February. NARCOG partnered with multiple different youth organizations and schools around Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan Counties to make Valentine's Day cards for nursing home residents in our Region.

NARCOG would like to thank Cullman High School, West Decatur Elementary, Benjamin Davis Elementary, the Mental Health Center of North Alabama, 3rd Street Boys & Girls Club, Oak Street Boys & Girls Club, Decatur High School, and Hatton Elementary. With the support of these groups, NARCOG was able to collect over 1,200 handmade Valentine's Day cards!



Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program



The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) applications are officially live! SFMNP is a program that allows qualifying seniors a way to purchase fresh produce from their local farmer's markets. Seniors can purchase fresh fruit, vegetables, cut herbs, and locally harvested honey.

The SFMNP provides a one-time benefit of 30 dollars that can be used over multiple visits until the balance equals zero. The 30-dollar voucher can only be used at farmers markets and

does not include commercial grocery stores. Seniors are asked to have their card from last year when reapplying, if possible. This program is considered first come, first serve, and applications will be closed when funds have been distributed completely.

Please call the NARCOG Aging and Disability Resource Center at (256) 355-4515 for assistance in applying.

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program Requirements

60 years of age or older

- \$2,096 mo. - Household of 1
- \$2,823 mo. - Household of 2
- \$3,551 mo. - Household of 3
- \$4,279 mo. - Household of 4
- \$5,006 mo. - Household of 5
- \$5,734 mo. - Household of 6
- \$6,462 mo. - Household of 7
- \$7,189 mo. - Household of 8

February Heart Health Event

February is famously known as American Heart Month, a time when individuals can reflect and act on their cardiovascular health.

NARCOG SHIP/SMP Coordinator, Julie Campbell, and the Alabama Cares Coordinator, Dana Dobson, are hosting an upcoming Heart Health Event.

This event will be held at the NARCOG Main Office on February 15th from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Heart health is serious; however, this event will be all about fun.

Shanetria Orr and Della Taylor from the Alabama Cooperative Extension System will teach guests how to prepare and cook a heart-healthy meal, including

a taste sampler. Stephanie King, NARCOG SenioRx Coordinator, will lead Bingocize, a fun combination of Bingo and fall prevention exercises. Lastly, Tricia Pruitt, the Regional Vice President at Better Business Bureau of North Alabama, will lead a short and sweet presentation on the Sweetheart Scam and how to

protect oneself from scams.

This event is free to guest who RSVP. Lunch will be provided for the guests and prizes will be provided for Bingocize winners.