

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

JUNE - JULY 2023

CURRENT PROJECTS & UPDATES

Several of our member governments have new and ongoing planning and construction projects occurring currently. Below is a list of the projects and the status of each.

- 1) City of Citronelle Zoning Ordinance-ongoing
- 2) Atmore Industrial Access Road project-underway
- 3) Brewton-Provalus water line project-continuing
- 4) Brewton-New water well at Brewton Hospital- underway
- 5) Dauphin Island proposed zoning ordinance draft-ongoing
- 6) City of Semmes- Comprehensive Plan project-ongoing

COMPLETED PROJECTS

The City of Atmore was awarded \$2 million dollars in grant funds from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) to construct a new rail spur in Atmore's Industrial Park. The new rail spur connects the main CSX line to Coastal Growers, the new peanut processing facility. The project was a success and was completed ahead of schedule. The new rail infrastructure will provide direct access from Coastal Growers to the Port of Mobile, expanding their market territory and opening up new opportunities for the industry as well as the City of Atmore.



MEETINGS, TRAININGS & CONFERENCES

SARPC Planners have recently attended several trainings, meetings, workshops, and conferences to learn new ways to better serve our member governments. Below is a list of some of the events as well as upcoming events. Please contact any of the planners in our Community Development Department if you would like more information.

- **2023 Alabama Association of RC&D Councils Annual Conference**

SARPC Planners attended the RC&D's annual conference held at The Lodge at Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores on April 30- May 3rd.

Nicole and Cade learned more about the RC&D program and the funding they provide for community development projects as well as conservation and natural resource protection projects. They provide a great funding opportunity for our communities that fills many needs. Their grants range from \$5,000 to \$15,000. The RC&D has nine councils that serve the entire state, while the Gulf Coast Region specifically serves Baldwin, Mobile, and Escambia Counties and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. They specialize in grants that support environmental, conservation, and community development projects. Their mission is to promote, protect and develop natural resources to secure social and economic benefits for people in the Gulf Coast Area. Their annual grant cycle is currently open and accepting applications through June 30th. If you are interested in applying for their grant funds, please let our Community Development Department know and we can put you in touch with their office and help you apply for the funding. Or reach out directly to the Gulf Coast Council's office in Atmore at (251) 368-1606 or online at: <https://www.gulfcoast-rcd.org/>.

Last year, the RC&D funded 47 different projects in SARPC's Region. Below is a list of the number of projects in each county. See their website for more information on these projects.

- Baldwin: 13 projects
- Escambia: 11 projects
- Mobile: 12 projects
- Poarch: 11 projects



- **Alabama Local Government Showcase**

Monday, June 5 to Wednesday, June 7, 2023

Wind Creek Hotel & Casino, 303 Poarch Rd, Atmore, AL 36502

The Alabama Local Government Showcase will be held at Wind Creek Hotel and Casino on June 5-7th. The event is sponsored by Tuskegee University and will bring together local government officials from across the state to highlight successes in local governance and partnerships. It will include informative sessions, helpful workshops, insightful roundtables, strategic networking, and offer profitable relationship building opportunities.

SARPC Planners are participating in the "Escambia County Development Roundtable" session which will take place on Tuesday, June 6, 2023. The Executive Roundtable discussion, titled: Challenges & Opportunities for AL Local Government will feature Executives from ADECA, EDAA, and the AARCDC, ACCA, ALM, & ACCMA associations.

Executives from our state government, state authorities, and local government associations will be empaneled to discuss the challenges and opportunities that face our county and municipal governments. Of particular focus will be the issues surrounding infrastructure funding, workforce development, transportation, health, and risk management. Roundtable Panelists include:

Kenneth Boswell, Director Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA)
Jim Searcy, Executive Director Economic Development Association of Alabama (EDAA)
Conner, Executive Director Alabama Association of RC&D Councils (AARCDC)
Martin Stokes, Public Relations Manager Association of County Commissioners of Alabama (ACCA)
Baker Allen, Director of Policy and Research Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM)
Ken Grimes, Jr., Past President Alabama City / County Management Association (ACCMA)

Other events will include:

- Informative Sessions will feature local government leaders sharing their experiences with governance in areas such as risk management, transportation, and building partnerships.
- Helpful Workshops will feature State, Regional, and Federal Officials who will present at workshops to share the available resources to assist local government to build their critical and human infrastructure.
- Insightful Roundtables will feature roundtable discussions from State and local government and association leaders who will share recommended strategies for local government officials to navigate the challenges and opportunities that they face.
- Strategic Networking will connect with local government officials from across Alabama as well as State, Regional, and Federal officials and representatives from companies that serve local government.
- Profitable Relationships will provide multiple opportunities to position your organization in front of local government officials, share your story and product or service, enhance your brand, and build beneficial relationships.

More information and registration can be found at: <https://www.algshowcase.com>



- **EDAA Summer Conference**

The Economic Development Association of Alabama (EDAA) is a membership-based organization focused on promoting economic growth in Alabama. SARPC Planner's will be attending their Summer Conference on July 30 – August 2, 2023 at the Grand Hotel in Point Clear. Much of the information learned at the EDAA conference will be applied to SARPC's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that we publish every five years.

- **PLAN Meeting-Plan Lower Alabama Now**-Planning staff attends the monthly PLAN meetings to network and learn planning practices from local community stakeholders and professionals throughout Baldwin and Mobile Counties. Through these workshops, SARPC Planners have learned valuable planning practices and information that we pass on to our member governments to help them improve their communities. Topics learned and shared include wetland protection and example ordinances, short-term vacation rentals, site plan and subdivision plat reviews, RV Park standards, exempt subdivisions, food truck ordinances, and much more!

OPEN GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Several funding agencies have recently announced new funding opportunities this spring. SARPC's Planners know how to apply for these funds and are here to assist you with the application process.

- **Gulf Coast RC&D**

See information above.

- **DRA Grant Opportunity/SEDAP and CIF Programs** (Escambia County only)-Grant cycle opened in March for critical infrastructure projects and business and workforce development projects. The deadline to apply is June 25, 2023. Visit: <https://dra.gov/> for more information.

DRA Strategic Planning Program (Escambia County only)- This program offers funding for planning projects in Escambia County. This grant has a continuous, revolving cycle, so there is no deadline. Funds can be used to cover, but not limited to the following types of plans:

- Comprehensive Economic Development Plans
- Master Plans
- Capital Improvement Plans
- Workforce Development Plans
- Preliminary Engineering Reports
- Transportation Plans
- Broadband Deployment Plans
- Utility Rate Studies
- Feasibility Studies

For more information, call or email one of our planning staff or visit the DRA at: www.DRA.gov.

- **ADECA CDBG Funding**- ADECA's annual Community Development Block Grant funding cycle is currently open and accepting applications through July 24, 2023. A link to ADECA's memo regarding the grant is at: <https://adeca.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/PY2023-CDBG-Grant-Application-Workshop-and-Grant-Submission-Deadline-Memo.pdf>

The program is available to all non-entitlement communities (those not receiving direct funds from HUD) that meet applicable thresholds. All projects must meet one of the three national objectives:

- Benefit at least 51% low- and moderate-income persons
- Aid in the prevention or clearance of slum and blight
- Meet an urgent need

Types of Program Funds include:

- Competitive Fund
- Community Enhancement Fund
- Planning Fund
- Economic Development Fund

ADECA annually awards CDBG money for the Large City, Small City and County categories.

Competitive categories are:

- Small City Fund (3,000 or less population)
- Large City Fund (>3,000 population)
- County Fund

The Small City and County funds both have ceilings of \$350,000. The Large City fund has a ceiling of \$450,000.

Typical Activities are:

- Water and sewer extensions and rehabilitation
- Housing rehabilitation
- Neighborhood & downtown revitalization
- Street and drainage improvements

- **ADECA Community Enhancement Fund:** This fund is available to all eligible communities to use for projects that address quality of life issues. Application deadline is announced during the annual workshop in the first quarter of the year.

Grant Ceiling: \$250,000

Typical activities

- Fire protection
- Senior citizens centers
- Community centers
- Boys & girls clubs
- Recreational facilities, etc.

- **ADECA Planning Fund:** CED administers a small Planning Fund that allows communities to develop communitywide comprehensive plans and downtown revitalization plans.
- **ADECA Economic Development Fund (ED):** The ED Infrastructure Fund is available to all eligible communities for projects supporting the creation or retention of jobs. Applicants for ED assistance should have a commitment from the business to create or retain 15 or more jobs. The business should fall within the SIC codes 20-39 or provide a significant economic benefit. Projects must not include intrastate

relocation. The program is available on a continuous funding cycle. A 20 percent local match is required, and construction cannot begin prior to grant award or release of environmental conditions.

Grant Ceiling: \$200,000 (can be waived)

Typical activities: water, sewer, or road improvements; rail spurs, docks, etc.

- Economic Development Incubator (\$250,000)
- Economic Development Float Loans (\$10 million)

For more information, visit: <https://adeca.alabama.gov/strategic-plans-and-action-plans/>.

- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA):**

EDA Publishes Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Notice of Funding Opportunity.

EDA has published a new Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (PWEAA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The FY23 PWEAA NOFO outlines application submission requirements and review procedures for applications received under EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) programs.

The Public Works program provides resources to meet the construction and/or infrastructure design needs of communities to enable them to become more economically competitive.

Supported activities under EDA's EAA program include construction and non-construction such as construction or upgrading of public infrastructure, sectoral partnerships for workforce training, design and engineering, technical assistance, economic recovery strategies, and capitalization or re-capitalization of Revolving Loan Funds (RLF).

There are no application submission deadlines and applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis.

The NOFO is posted under the "Related Documents" tab on grants.gov at:

https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=346815&utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=.

- **Additionally, the EDA currently has three other funding opportunities open that include:**
FY2023 Disaster Supplemental Funding, which will support regions impacted by Hurricanes Ian and Fiona, wildfires, flooding, and other Presidentially declared major natural disasters;
- the FY23 STEM Talent Challenge that makes \$4.5 million available to eligible entities to create and implement STEM talent development strategies to complement their region's innovation economy; and
- the new Tech Hubs Program, which is designed to invest directly in high-potential U.S. regions to enable them to become globally competitive in industries of the future.

EDA Publishes Webinar Recordings for Recent Notice of Funding Opportunities

The EDA has released webinar recordings to provide more information on three recently published Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs): the Tech Hubs program, the FY23 Disaster Supplemental, and the University Center program. For more information on the grant programs and to register for the webinars, visit:

https://www.eda.gov/news/media/video/3556/?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=



Smart Growth America Announces Community Connectors Grant Program

Smart Growth America's new Community Connectors grant program will help advance locally-driven projects to reconnect communities separated or harmed by divisive transportation infrastructure and access available federal and state funds to support these projects. Fifteen teams (e.g., public agencies partnered with nonprofits or other community organizations) from communities with populations of 50,000-500,000 will receive a capacity-building grant of up to \$130,000 in addition to tailored training. Learn more here.

New USDA Rural Energy Programs

On Tuesday, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the availability of nearly \$11 billion in grants and loan opportunities to help rural energy and utility providers bring affordable clean energy to communities. Funding will be available through two new programs under the Inflation Reduction Act: the Empowering Rural America (New ERA) program and the Powering Affordable Clean Energy (PACE) program. USDA will accept Letters of Interest from June 30 to September 29 for the PACE program and from July 31 to August 31 for the New ERA program. To view the live announcement click [here](#) and to view the press release click [here](#).

SARPC Planners are here to help you understand and apply for any of these grant programs.

Let us know if we can help you!

Please contact any of the staff members of SARPC's Community Development Department if you have questions about any of our projects, funding opportunities, assistance with grant applications and management, mapping needs, training events, or other planning services.

- Nicole Taylor ntaylor@sarpc.org (251) 706-4659
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