



Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

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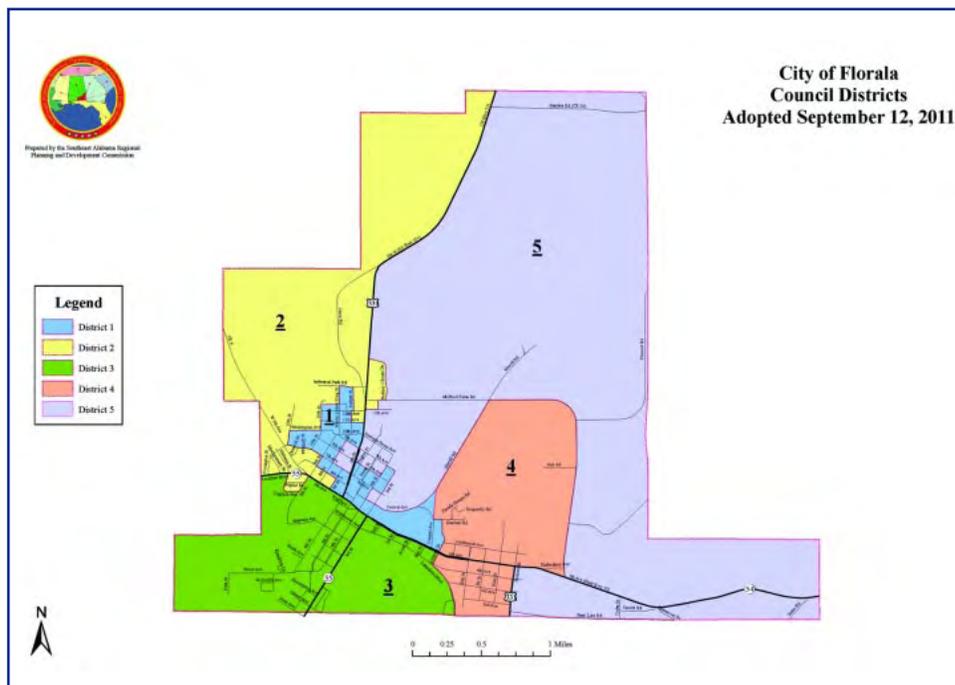
SEARP&DC Planning Staff Coordinates Review of Redistricting Process after 2010 Census for Regional Government Entities

Governmental entities varying from Congress to school systems review the demographic composition of their districts after the release of each decennial census. The districts are reviewed to assess the appropriateness of the updated population figures with required objectives for fair voting districts. SEARP&DC, led by Community Development Director Scott Farmer, assisted several local governments in Southeast Alabama with the redistricting process for their single-member districts in the wake of the 2010 U.S. Census and in advance of 2012 elections. Mr.

Farmer asserted the following, "I believe the redistricting process functioned very smoothly, as all of the local governments we worked with were very helpful in this process".

SEARP&DC utilized GIS software for analysis and development of updated district plans. We began the district plan analysis through comparing the 2010 U.S. Census population with the existing districts in order to assess if the district populations

remained within the accepted population deviation. The most important component of redistricting is "one person - one vote", which was prevalently instituted after the Baker v. Carr 1962 Supreme Court decision



that disallowed districts with substantially varying populations. Subsequent court cases have allowed local government redistricting plans to have a deviation of up to ten percent (10%) between the highest and lowest populated districts. If the existing district plan for the local government had all of the districts within that deviation, SEARP&DC recommended the local government could maintain the same plan, barring other mitigating circumstances.

If any district's 2010 U.S. Census population was outside of the target deviation, Mr. Farmer recommended the local government continue the redistricting process through developing new district plans. This was achieved by shifting district boundaries, prioritizing the use of identifiable boundaries such as streets or creeks. Once a proposed redistricting plan was developed, it went through a public participation process and was adopted by the local government according to statutory guidance in the Code of

Alabama.

Local governments also must be cognizant of the Voting Rights Act, especially Sections 2 and 5, that provides for protection of minority voters. Section 2 prevents marginalization of minority voting rights by preventing dilution through spreading concentrations of minority voters into several districts or concentrating most minority voters into one district rather than

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SEARP&DC Welcomes New Board Members



Mr. Kenneth Mount

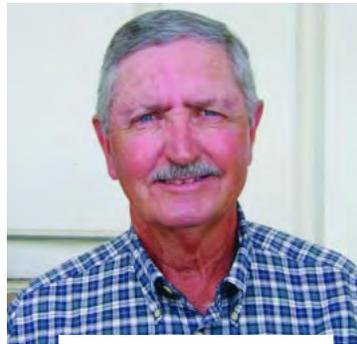
A native of Brantley, AL, Kenneth Mount spent 37 years as an Agriscience teacher with 31 of those years at Andalusia High School. Mr. Mount is a member of the Andalusia City Council and has held membership in the Covington County Cattlemen’s Association, the Southeast Alabama Gas District Board of Directors, and is a member and elder of First Presbyterian Church of Andalusia. Mr. Mount received a bachelor’s degree from Auburn University and master’s degree from AUM. Mr. Mount has two children and four grandchildren.

Mr. Thomas Crossley is a long-time city councilman from Louisville, AL. Mr. Crossley recently retired after 30 years as an educator in Barbour County, most recently as Principal of Clayton High School. He received a bachelor’s and master’s degree from Alabama State University and is a veteran of the US Army. Mr. Crossley was appointed to serve as Presiding Elder of the Tuskegee District of the AME Church where he has pastored for more than 20 years.



Mr. Thomas Crossley

Mr. Butch Glover was appointed to the SEARP&DC Board, representing Henry County, by the Henry County Commission. Mr. Glover is married to Sandra Spivey Glover and they have two children and four grandchildren. Mr. Glover has a background in private business and consulting, having retired from Chevron Oil Co. and Davis Oil Co. He formerly owned and operated Headland Oil Co. Mr. Glover lives in rural Henry County and is also engaged in cattle and hay production.



Mr Butch Glover

Floralia Receives Recreational Trails Program Grant

The City of Floralia was awarded a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) to extend a walking trail around Lake Jackson approximately 1,000 feet south to connect to a walking trail at the Florida State Line. SEARP&DC assisted the City with the successful grant application. \$28,280 was awarded and construction should commence in the next few weeks.



L-R: Councilman Marvin Williford, Mayor Robert Williamson, Scott Farmer, SEARP&DC

Howell's Supermarket Opens in Samson With Revolving Loan Fund & Intermediary Relending Program Loan Assistance

Howell's Supermarket, a new full line grocery supermarket, recently opened along Highway 52 in Samson thanks to Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) and Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) economic

made the decision to make a significant investment in this community in southwestern Geneva County. Keith Howell also owns and operates a grocery store in Enterprise and has ownership interests in grocery stores in

Dothan and Blakely, Georgia. He began working in the grocery industry for Fleming Foods in Geneva in the late 1970's. Since the opening, business has taken off even better than expected. "I have been very humbled



Keith Howell in front of his new store in Samson.

development financing assistance arranged through SEARP&DC. Keith Howell, Owner, has been involved in the retail grocery industry for over 33 years. When he realized there was an opportunity to establish a new grocery store in Samson, where he lives, he and wife Janet

by the support from the Samson community and surrounding area that we have received since opening" stated Mr. Howell.

"Approximately 25% to 30% of my business also comes from the edge of Florida. I never anticipated how well the store would do. We have been really blessed".

SEARP&DC's two economic development loan funds, the RLF and IRP programs, both provided partial financing along with Mr. Howell's equity into the total project cost that exceeded \$850,000. Howell's Supermarket has created over 40 new jobs in Samson and Geneva County. "We were proud to have been of assistance to Keith and Janet Howell in the establishment of this modern full line new grocery store. This type of project is an example of what we like to invest our loan funds in, one that creates new jobs, leverages private investment and provides needed services for regional citizens and communities like Samson", said Thomas B. Solomon, SEARP&DC Executive Director. "The overall loan process in making this project possible was relatively easy and I really appreciated the assistance from SEARP&DC and their economic development loan programs", added Mr. Howell.



Emily Waters
Economic Development Director

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Redistricting Continued from page 1

creating two minority districts. Section 5 requires many jurisdictions in the United States, including nearly all in Alabama, to submit voting changes to the Department of Justice or to the United States District Court in Washington, DC. This practice is to ensure that voting changes do not weaken minority voting rights, which is known as retrogression. Any voting changes must be "pre-cleared" (or not opposed) by the Department of Justice after adoption by the local government, but before being utilized in an election.

Most local governments also incorporate other objectives for redistricting

plans. Commonly used objectives are for districts to be compact and contiguous. Most communities also incorporated guidance to Mr. Farmer that incumbents remain in the same district, if possible, to prevent two incumbents from competing against one another.

Floralia Mayor Robert Williamson stated he was "well pleased with the efforts of SEARP&DC in the redistricting process". He added "SEARP&DC's analysis demonstrated that the population of our Council districts was too deviated and the demographics of our majority-minority Council district had shifted, which we were not aware of. The process was

well worth the investment".

In addition to Florala, SEARP&DC provided full redistricting services to Abbeville, Elba, Geneva, Geneva County Board of Education, Headland, Henry County, and Henry County Board of Education. SEARP&DC also provided partial services to several other regional communities.



Scott Farmer, Community Development Director

Scott can be reached at 334-794-4093 ext. 1412 or sfarmer@searpcdc.org

Barbour County Commission is Recipient of \$234,576 CDBG Grant for New Fire Truck

The Barbour County Commission was awarded a FY 2011 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of \$234,576.00 to assist the Green's Crossroads Volunteer Fire Department (GCRVFD) in the acquisition of a new fire truck (pumper). The new fire fighting vehicle is being built by the low bidder for the project, Deep South Fire Trucks, Inc. in Seminary, MS and is expected to be delivered in late August and placed into service.

The project will provide enhanced fire suppression response and capability for 197 households and over 440 residents living within the 50 square mile GCRVFD fire service area in northern Barbour County. The project will also provide enhanced mutual aid fire suppression assistance capability from the GCRVFD to the U.S. Army Fort Rucker helicopter stage field in northern Barbour County as well as to the nearby Towns of Louisville and Clayton Fire Departments when requested.

Barbour County Commission Chairman Earl Gilmore stated, "We are most appreciative to the Southeast Alabama

Regional Planning and Development Commission for securing this grant. It will provide for better fire protection for our residents in northern portions of the County". Mike Stell, GCRVFD Fire Chief said, "This new truck means an awful lot to our area in terms of protecting lives and property. It will give us a reliable vehicle to replace our existing truck that required a lot of maintenance to keep in service. We really needed this new fire apparatus and are grateful to get it. We also thank SEARP&DC for all of their help in making it possible".



L-R: Commissioners Henry Franklin, Fred Cooper, Tom Solomon, SEARP&DC, Commissioners Trip Horne, Earl Gilmore, Frank Straughn, Pat Ivey and Pete McKnight, Ella Carraway (President) and JoAnn Currie (Secretary) of the Green's Crossroads Volunteer Fire Department

The total cost of the new fire truck is \$265,000 with the GCRVFD providing the balance of the cost through local funds raised by the Fire Department.

The Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission has provided grant development assistance in all of the projects to the Barbour County Commission and the GCRVFD and extends our congratulations on this grant award providing funding for such a beneficial project serving the citizens of Barbour County.



Joe Harmon with David Hicks & Associates, Mayor Tyrus Waters and Buddy Wilson of the City of Level Plains, and Rachel Armstrong, SEARP& DC

The City of Level Plains recently received a \$240,239 Community Development Block Grant from the State of Alabama for new water lines to provide fire protection and better water quality for citizens along A - H Streets. The City will contribute \$26,693 in matching funds. The project will benefit 258 people, of which 97.49% are of low and moderate income status. The citizens in this area were relying on 20-30 year old water lines. The project will be bid by the first of August.



Rachel Armstrong, SEARP&DC, Mayor Ryan Blalock, Tod Simmons representing American Machine & Manufacturing, and Pam Ward, Abbeville City Clerk

The City of Abbeville recently received a \$100,000 Economic Development Community Development Block Grant from the State of Alabama for extension of sewer lines to serve American Machine and Manufacturing, Inc. The company will create 10 new jobs. The City and Water and Sewer Board will contribute \$30,827.52 in matching funds. The project has been bid and awarded. Construction will begin soon.

\$250,000 CDBG Grant Awarded to the Town of Columbia for New Senior Citizens Center

A new Senior Citizen Center is on the horizon for the Town of Columbia thanks to a \$250,000 State of Alabama Community Development Block Grant awarded by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). The Town of Columbia is also providing local matching funds in addition to the CDBG grant for construction costs. The total construction cost is \$324,824.

Construction of the new center is underway now on South Main Street and according to Columbia Mayor Sandra Lovett, "We could not be more thrilled to receive this grant funding that will finally provide our community with a safe and adequate senior facility for our senior citizens in Columbia". "Columbia seniors have been utilizing the former Town Hall as a temporary senior meeting place for over a year now, due to the severe structural storm damage sustained at the old Columbia Nutrition Center that served as our center for many years",

said Mayor Lovett. "Now the Town of Columbia, through this grant project, will have a first class facility for

and SEARP&DC for seeking and acquiring a grant for our new senior center building. This will give our seniors a much needed place where they can gather and take part in the activities we offer to enrich and improve their lives. The new facility is going to be awesome!" The new Senior Center will contain over 3200 square feet of space and will include a large activity room, safe room, kitchen, restrooms, storage, office and parking area. The Houston County Commission



L-R: Maudie Blackshear, Columbia Water Clerk, Cecelia White, Senior Center Director, Councilman Bobby Clemmons, Councilwoman Addie Buze, Maybelle Stewart, Evelyn Jowers, George Trivett, Mayor Sandra Lovett, Dora Trivett, Margaret Grey.

our seniors and on behalf of the entire Columbia Town Council are so proud to see it finally become a reality".

The new senior center will serve approximately 80 seniors in Columbia and will continue to provide many beneficial services including: nutrition, exercise, social networking, health, education, special programs and other activities. Columbia Senior Center Director, Ms. Cecelia White, added, "We are so grateful to the Town of Columbia

provided the site preparation and parking lot assistance labor. The architectural design and construction oversight is being provided by Polyengineering, Inc. Lewis and Associates of Dothan was the low construction bidder. The new facility is expected to be ready for use by the end of 2012.

SEARP&DC provided the project development guidance, wrote the high scoring grant application and is providing grant administrative services to the Town of Columbia.



Joe Harmon of David Hicks & Associates, Jerry James and Mayor Wess Etheredge of the City of Daleville and Rachel Armstrong, SEARP&DC

The City of Daleville recently received a \$250,000 Community Development Block Grant from the State of Alabama for street improvements. The streets are Baxter Street, Pridmore Street, Donell Circle, A.M. Windham Drive, a section of Old Newton Road, Fannie Morris Drive, Chinook Drive, Caribou Street, and Valley Drive. The project will benefit 367 citizens, of which 91.64% are of low and moderate income status. The City is contributing \$35,654 in matching funds.



**Rachel Armstrong
Economic Development
Specialist II**

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According to the Improving School Readiness Act our Head Start program is required to have school readiness goals that are aligned with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (HSCDELDF), which are also consistent with other state and local requirements for school readiness. In order to coordinate our school readiness goals, our Head Start service managers met with local school officials and kinder-

garden teachers. It is expected that periodic communication and additional meetings with these school officials and teachers will be required in carrying out our school readiness goals. The focus on school readiness is nothing new to Head Start, as there have been other similar program initiatives. The major difference this time will be inclusion of the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Initiative into the school readiness goals.

It has long been known that parent and family engagement is crucial for children's learning and development, and that strong community resources help families raise their children in a supportive environment. Our Head Start program has worked with families in various ways toward increasing parent involvement. While Head Start provides a curriculum approach to organized learning, we recognize that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children. We therefore must conclude that continued success in school must include active parent involvement in

Head Start: Parent Involvement Plays Key Role in School Readiness



Florala Mayor Robert Williamson reads to Head Start students on Literacy Day

their children's learning process. From the inception of Head Start in 1965 this remains the greatest challenge for Head Start programs. One such approach to parent involvement is encouragement and support for an ongoing parent - child reading program.

Kiwanis International's Read Around the World program has long recognized the importance of reading to children. Kiwanis Club members volunteer their time to read to our Head Start children. Through their reading and donation of books to the children, they create an interest in reading. Head Start must perpetuate that interest by including parent involvement throughout the entire school readiness spectrum. In terms of creating a learn-

ing environment, nothing could be more important than parents reading to their children. Reading is beneficial even at the earliest ages as it creates the foundation for language skills.

There have been serious questions regarding the lasting benefits of Head Start in children in their later school years. Many Head Start children come to us from disadvantaged circumstances and bring with them behavior issues. We also seek to serve within our available resources children with disabilities. In any case, during their time in Head Start we seek to accomplish all school readiness goals. However, as our Head Start children transition to public school their continued success will be largely dependent upon parent involvement in their education. Parents must continue to be the first and most important advocate and teacher of their children. As such, school directed parent educational activities will always be important to



A classroom reading volunteer reads to Head Start students in Headland.

continued learning. Such activities in both Head Start and public schools are critical to the child's academic success and ultimately the completion of their education.



Ron Holliman,
Head Start Program Director

Ron can be reached at 334-794-4093 ext.1404 or rholliman@searpcd.org

Senior Aides Provide Valuable Assistance to Other Seniors

According to Ms. Margaret Chancey, "Ms. Shirley Jones is the best thing that ever happened to me". Ms. Jones, working under the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in partnership with the Dale County In-Home Service Program makes it possible for Ms. Chancey to live independently in her home rather than move to a nursing home. After suffering a stroke in 1996, Ms. Chancey requires assistance with light housekeeping, which Ms. Jones provides two days per week. "The program has been a great help to me and Ms. Jones is good company" stated Ms, Chancey.

of nutritious meals to senior citizens on a daily basis . She is now in her second assignment with the Dale County In-Home Service Program where she assists the elderly with shopping, light housekeeping and

of these seniors, the companionship alone is a benefit, as many live alone and are unable to drive or get out on a regular basis. According to Martha Anderson, Director of Home and Community Services with the Southern Alabama Regional Council on Aging, "The demand for (elderly and Medicaid Waiver) services far outweighs the funding for available services throughout the seven county region. There is a long waiting list for all programs."



Senior Aide Shirley Jones and Ms Margaret Chancey

To Senior Aide Shirley Jones, the opportunity to help senior citizens like Ms. Chancey is second nature as she simply loves helping people, regardless of age. After working 23 years in the manufacturing industry, Ms. Jones was laid off when the plant where she was employed closed. She took courses at Wallace Community College for about two years but was unable to find employment. She states she saw a poster for the Senior Employment Program at the Courthouse in Ozark and decided to check it out. She enrolled in the program and was assigned to the South Dale Senior Center in Midland City, Alabama where she assisted with the serving

other tasks they are unable to do for themselves. When asked her thoughts on SCSEP, Ms. Jones stated "I think it is amazing. Not only is it rewarding work, but it provides extra income. "

SCSEP is administered by SEARP&DC through grants received from the Alabama Department of Senior Services and Senior Service America, Inc. Through SCSEP and partner agencies like the Dale County In-Home Service Program, older workers are providing needed services to senior citizens across the nation. For some

Project Director Barbara Knight states, "SCSEP is a win-win situation for all concerned. Program participants are afforded opportunities to work, gain valuable skills and give back to their communities. At the same time, our host agencies and communities benefit from the skills and life experiences these individuals have to offer. We are grateful to our local officials and host agency supervisors for their support of this program. These individuals see the benefits of SCSEP and are willing to give older workers the opportunity to prove that they still have a lot to offer in today's workforce."



Barbara Knight, Program Director

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334 794-4093 ext. 1422
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bknight@searpc.org



SEARP&DC Welcomes New IT Administrator



We are pleased to welcome Mr. Abiezer Soto as our new Information Technology Administrator. Mr. Soto received an Associates Degree in Electronics Technology from New England Institute of Technology at Palm Beach, FL in 1999. He holds certifications from: CompTIA (A+, Network +) and Cisco (Cisco Certified Network Associate). He came to SEARPC from Geo Group, Inc. in Moore Haven Florida where he served as Manager of

Information Systems for a Privately run Correctional Facility. He has over 12 years of hands on computer troubleshooting experience with an emphasis on network administration during the last six years. His past experience covers a wide array of fields: Electronic Communications, Electronics Repair, Information Technology Administration as well as teaching adults pc support services. He currently resides in Dothan with his wife Saimara and 8-year-old son, Abisai.

Wiregrass Transit Authority

On June 29, 2012 the House and Senate passed the reauthorization bill for the nation's surface transportation and President Obama signed it into law. The new legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), authorizes the nation's surface transportation programs through 2014, and increases investment across all major programs and funding streams.

Going against the current political trend, this legislation appears to have been accomplished on a broadly bipartisan basis. There appears to be an increase in investment (available funding) for most programs. For those transit programs that concern us most in this region, we appear to be in fairly good shape. The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program has ceased to exist as a standalone program and has been subsumed into the urban (5307) and rural (5311) transit programs.

As is the case with most legislation, we won't fully know how this impacts us until actual implementing guidance is published by the US Department of Transportation. As these implementation guidelines become available, we will do our best to keep everyone advised. It appears, however, that little will change in our region with the exception of the JARC program. Should you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact John Sorrell and we will make every effort to get your questions answered.

A summary of the conference report can be found at the following web site:
<http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/HR4348crJES.pdf>

The actual conference report can be found at this web site:
<http://docs.house.gov/bills-112/20120625/CRPT-112hrpt-HR4348.pdf>



John Sorrell
WTA Manager

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SEARP&DC Welcomes New Human Resources Technician

We are pleased to welcome Carla McClinton as our new HR Technician. Carla is a 2004 graduate of Auburn University where she received a BA in Public Relations and Marketing. Prior to her arrival in the Dothan area, she worked as the Human Resources Recruiter for PCH Hotels and Resorts, the Resort Collection on the RTJ Golf Trail, in Mobile, AL. She is a member of the Wiregrass Human Resource Managers Association (WHRMA) and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). A native of Magnolia Springs, AL, Carla currently resides in Enterprise with her husband Jason and 1-year-old son, Owen.

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