GIS DAY

For the 4th year in a row our GIS staff, along with the city of Americus/Sumter county GIS, celebrated the International GIS day on November the 16th. Scholars at Furlow Charter School geared up for International GIS Day by gathering information to build a school campus map. Mrs. Beverly Butcher and Mrs. Mariyana Kostov visited 5th graders with their handheld GPS devices to collect data around the school campus. Two groups from each class split up to navigate along the front entrance, playgrounds, gardens, and pick-up lines. Each scholar was able to manipulate the device in order to collect data on a point, line, or polygon. Powerlines, storm drains, manholes, road signs, curbs, and other such objects and positions were well documented. The information was uploaded into the GIS system and combined into one school map.

The school campus map was presented to Mrs. Duff, principle of Furlow Charter School.
From the Executive Director’s Desk...

Patti

Staff Spotlight

Elizabeth Young is the new Screener for the River Valley Area Agency on Aging. Elizabeth grew up in Columbus, GA and now resides in Phenix City, AL. She graduated from Auburn University in 2003 with a degree in Human Development and Family Studies. After graduating, Elizabeth briefly worked for the Early Head Start Program in Hurtsboro, AL. She then worked in the child welfare field at Russell County DHR for almost 10 years. Elizabeth has been married to her husband, John, for 12 years and they have a 10 year old daughter, Libby. Her family enjoys camping and finding new adventures wherever they go.

Welcome Tenisha Tookes to WIOA Program!

Tenisha is the new WIOA Program Specialist. Tenisha assists Janice West in the WIOA program by providing information about WIOA services and case management for participants in ITA program, monitoring providers, maintaining records, performing data entry, and more. Tenisha was born and raised in Americus, GA and has a degree in Recreation Education from Georgia Southwestern State University. She worked for Middle Flint Behavioral Healthcare as a Case Manager and for Southwest GA Chapter of the American Red Cross as the Health and Safety Coordinator. She is the proud mother of Otis J. Tookes III age 17 and O’Jayla T. Tookes age 11. Tenisha enjoys reading, painting, watching TV, going to the beach and spending time with family and friends. Tenisha is great at multi-tasking and organizing; these are great assets to WIOA!
Khalila Slaughter, came into The PAXEN Learning Center program seeking to finish what she had started in education. While in High school, Khalila’s father developed renal failure. This led to frequent visits to the hospital. Khalila found herself as his primary caregiver, having to look after him and assist him with his needs.

This turn of events led to Khalila missing a number of days in school. Khalila states that while other friends were hanging out and enjoying their friends on the weekend, she was at home having to care for her father. Khalila cites this time in her life as one that was extremely “challenging”.

Although Khalila’s attendance was inconsistent in high school, she proved to be a good student. However, she ultimately decided to withdraw from high school.

Khalila heard about the Paxen GED Plus program from a friend and decided to earn her GED with the Paxen project. She admits the accelerated GED Prep course offered by Paxen was challenging and high paced; however, she was able to successfully achieve her GED.

Today, Khalila is currently enrolled at South Georgia Technical College in the Nursing program and she works full time as a CNA for Magnolia Manor in Marion County.

Khalila cites her biggest lesson learned as, “Never stopping in pursuit of something that you truly desire”. An education is extremely valuable. Khalila states that she found a positive environment in the Paxen project and that she had a great experience with staff and that everyone was extremely helpful.
River Valley AAA Provides Assistive Technology Information

The River Valley Area Agency on Aging (AAA) has been providing Options Counseling for the residents within its 16 county area for many years. A recent partnership with Tools For Life, Georgia’s Assistive Technology Act Program, added a new option for those living in the AAA’s service area trying to maintain their independence. Assistive technology is any device that helps someone to accomplish a task; it can range from basic (such as a cane or walker) to advanced (such as software that assists with speaking or medication management). The River Valley AAA has been able to provide information on different types of assistive technology through presentations and over-the-phone interactions. The River Valley AAA currently has a “toolkit” of various items that are used to increase awareness of assistive technology, and is able to offer information on how and where the items can be purchased. For more information on these and other services offered, please visit rivervalleyrcaaa.org or contact the Aging and Disability Resource Connection at 1-800-615-4379.

CO-AGE Advocates for Georgia’s Seniors

The River Valley Regional Commission’s Area Agency on Aging is a member of the Coalition of Advocates for Georgia’s Elderly (CO-AGE). This group voted to determine the 2017 Issues and Priorities for the Georgia General Assembly. After receiving hundreds of votes statewide by democratic process, CO-AGE has chosen, in addition to their perennial budget request of funding for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), another important budget request of Funding for Transportation Services and two strong legislative issues: Family Care Act and Oral Health Care for Seniors. The Abuser Registry to Prevent Abuse is a carryover issue from 2016. If you are interested in getting more information about these issues, please check out the CO-AGE website at http://www.gcoa.org/coage/.

As part of the Co-Age advocacy campaign, there are two (2) events held at the Capitol in Atlanta. The first one is the Be There for Seniors event on January 19. At this event, seniors come in from all over the state to let legislators know about these priorities. The second event is Senior Week at the Capitol.

Seniors from all over the state will be at the capitol to share information with their Senators and Representatives about the issues important to seniors. Seniors from the River Valley region will be attending on February 15. If you would like to attend either or both of these events, please contact Katie Howard at 706/256-2928 or khoward@rivervalleyrcaaa.org.
South Georgia Technical College (SGTC) kicked off the holiday season by hosting a “Light Up Your Future” event using Christmas Lights to illuminate the various programs and opportunities offered by the college. This was a fun and creative event that gave the community the opportunity to come out and meet visit the campus, meet the instructors and staff and hear about all the great things happening at South Georgia Technical College.

Santa was onsite for photos with children and Christmas music was provided by local WISK-FM radio station and several chorus groups and jazz bands. Various programs departments showcased their creativity by decorating equipment and training materials unique to their areas. Culinary Arts displayed gingerbread houses decorated by the their students, nursing and medical assisting program used colorful lights to decorate medical equipment, Commercial Truck Driving lighted up the SGTC 18 Wheel rigs, electronics program decorated Christmas tree and had guest guess the number of lights on tree. The WIOA program enrolls participant is many programs at the South Georgia Technical College. The Commercial Truck Driving and Nursing are two popular programs for WIOA participants. Dr. John Watford and the SGTC staff created a wonderful festive community event.

THANK YOU SGTC FOR HOSTING THIS WONDERFUL KICK OFF TO THE HOLIDAY SEASON!

Pictured above: SGTC Commercial Truck Driving program lighted up an 18 wheeler rig with holiday lights

Pictured above: Medical Assisting and Nursing programs strung lights on various medical equipment
WORKFORCE STATE DIRECTOR VISITS WIOA PROGRAM SERVICES

On October 5, 2016 the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Program services was visited by the state director, Menelik Alleyne. Mr. Alleyne spent a whole day in Americus visiting sites and learning about River Valley Regional Commission WIOA services. He was able to visit PAXEN Learning Center on Tripp Street. Mr. Alleyne talked to youth participants training for their GED. He encouraged youths to do their best. The state director was also able to visit with SGTC staff and get a first-hand look at the Economic Development project of the road work being done on South GA Tech Parkway through the TIA project. Menelik Alleyne was impressed and had some very good things to say about our region and all that is going on the area.
RIVER VALLEY RECEIVES $1.5 MILLION IN CDBG AWARDS

Three communities in the River Valley Region received Community Development Block Grant funding from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), which administers the program on behalf of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Seventy-nine Georgia communities received CDBG funding last year.

The RVRC assisted the following cities and county with their CDBG applications:
- City of Marshallville, $500,000 for sewer, street and drainage improvements
- City of Vienna, $500,000 for street, drainage and water improvements
- Unified Government of Webster County, $500,000 for street and drainage improvements.

RVRC staff attended the DCA’s CDBG Applicants’ Workshop from December 7th to December 9th to gear up for the 2017 CDBG competition. During the workshop, it was reported that DCA has increased the maximum CDBG award amount limits for FY 2017 to $750,000 for single-activity projects and to $1 million for multi-activity projects. In 2016, more than $26 million was available for the annual Community Development Block Grant competition. The CDBG competition is open to Non-Entitlement small cities. The grant awards fund infrastructure projects which benefit low to moderate income persons.

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Please take Pictures of Potential CDBG Projects

See Something, Say Something.
CDBG Project funding is always competitive, and pictures certainly help tell the story. Good pictures of problems make all the difference in whether a project is funded or not. Please remind your front line staff, whether they be emergency services or public works, to take photos of the problems to help document issues.
We all carry cell phones and cameras now. Please encourage your community to use them to document issues.

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We sincerely hope you all have a Merry Christmas and that the coming New Year will be filled with happiness and prosperity for all. Your interest and support of the River Valley Regional Commission is very much appreciated.
September 23-25 | 2016
Register online at
www.findyourparkride.org

**Ride Options:**

**Cyclists**
- $75 - Camping, meals, train ticket, T-shirt
- $60 - Meals, train ticket, T-shirt (lodging on your own)

**Friend of Cyclists (not cycling)**
- $50 - Camping, meals, train ticket, T-shirt
- $30 - Meals, train ticket (lodging on your own)

Support and Gear Vehicle
Rest Stops with Drinks and Snacks
Access to National and State Parks