To begin with, I would like to express appreciation to the entire River Valley Council for allowing me to serve another term as Chair of the Council and for their sincere interest and support of the River Valley Regional Commission and its mission of serving local governments. Our staff has been extremely busy this past year providing services to the cities and counties throughout the region.

In April of 2016 the RVRC staff wrote thirteen Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications for cities and counties in the River Valley Region and was successful in having three approved for funding. Those receiving funding were City of Marshallville $500,000, Unified Government of Webster County $500,000, and the City of Vienna $500,000 for a total of $1.5 million in CDBG grant funds for the area.

In addition, the staff assisted the Sumter County Economic Development Authority in writing and submitting a grant application for a One Georgia Equity Grant in the amount of $500,000 to add an additional access road to a local existing industry. This access road will resolve major safety issues created when congested traffic conditions are combined with an adjacent major rail line crossing. The grant application was approved for funding and the groundbreaking was held in June 2017.

Also, as you travel throughout the River Valley region you should be able to witness first-hand the transportation improvements that have been made and improvement projects that are under construction and funded with Georgia Transportation Investment Act (TIA or TSPLOST) funds. As of June 2017, the region has received approximately $204 million dollars, with $153 million going to regional projects and $51 million distributed to all local governments in the region for their use for transportation improvements in their communities.

Our staff provides many programs and services for our local governments and the citizens of the region. The aging staff is always available to assist our seniors and persons with disabilities with resources and services to allow them to age in place. The bicycle initiative through our planning department has brought statewide and even national recognition to the region. Our Community and Economic Development department is available to assist small businesses with loans and technical assistance. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs provide eligible individuals with job training and job retention. The RVRC staff is always willing to assist our local governments with projects. Just give them a call.

The RVRC, in FY 2017, brought in approximately $11,366,726 to the 16 county region; this means that for every $1 dollar of dues received by the RVRC from our cities and counties, their overall return on investment was $30.10 in federal and state funding. Sixty-six percent (66%) of funding received this year was federal, and thirty-four percent (34%) was received from the state.

We hope each of you will find this annual report informative, and we want to remind everyone that our role as a regional commission is to assist each community in identifying and seeking out the resources necessary to remain a viable and productive community for years to come.

Clinton Perry
The River Valley Regional Council, composed of representatives from our 16 counties and 35 cities, meets monthly to review and discuss activities of the RVRC. Individual committees have been formed within the council to discuss issues related to transportation, economic development, aging, and planning. The committees meet as needed to review, discuss and make decisions on related projects and report their findings back to the full Council.

**Clay County**
Lee Hubbard, Commissioner
Shirley Ann Christian, Councilor,
City of Fort Gaines

**Columbus-Muscogee County**
Jerry “Pops” Barnes
Councillor, City of Columbus,
RVRC Secretary
Evelyn Turner-Pugh,
Councillor, City of Columbus
Fred Gordon
Private Industry Appointee

**Crisp County**
Sam Farrow, Jr., Commission Chair
Jeanie Bartee, Cordele, Vice Chair

**Cussetta - Chattahoochee County**
Jim Lawrence, Commissioner
James Morton, Commissioner
Edward Lee,
Private Industry Appointee

**Dooly County**
Terrell Hudson, Commission Chair,
RVRC Council, Immediate Past Chair
Hobby Stripling, Mayor, City of Vienna

**Georgetown-Quitman County**
Carvel Lewis, Commission Chair
Danny Blackman,
Commission Vice Chair

**Harris County**
J. Harry Lange, Commission Chair
Rebecca Chambers, Mayor,
City of Hamilton
Doug Etheridge,
Private Industry Appointee

**Macon County**
Mickey George, Commission Chair
Bruce Hill, Mayor,
City of Oglethorpe
Tommy McKenzie,
Private Industry Appointee
Jayson Griffin,
Private Industry Appointee

**Marion County**
Cecil McMickle, Commissioner
Ralph T. Brown, Mayor,
City of Buena Vista
James R. “Bump” Welch,
Private Industry Appointee

**Randolph County**
Jimmy Bradley, Commission Chair
Steve Whatley, Mayor,
City of Cuthbert
Patricia Goodman,
Private Industry Appointee

**Schley County**
Greg Barineau, Commission Chair
Carlton Wilson, Councilor,
City of Ellaville
Jason Hoch,
Private Industry Appointee

**Stewart County**
Joe Lee Williams,
Commissioner
Debbie Stone, Councilor
City of Lumpkin
Chip Jones,
Private Industry Appointee

**Sumter County**
Randy Howard, Commission Chair,
RVRC Vice Chair
Nelson Brown, Councilor,
City of Americus
Wally Summers, Private Industry Appointee

**Talbot County**
Freeman Montgomery,
Commissioner
Knox Blackmar, Councilor,
City of Talbotton
Pam Jordan,
Private Industry Appointee

**Taylor County**
Barry Whitley, Mayor,
City of Butler
Tameka Harris, Commissioner
Tom Queen,
Private Industry Appointee
Clinton Perry Jr.,
RVRC Council Chair,
Private Industry Appointee

**Webster County**
Tony Kennedy, Commission Chair
Melvin Crimes, Commissioner

**Governor’s Appointees**
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County
Richard McCorkle, Marion County

**Lt. Governor’s Appointee**
A.J. Rivers, Crisp County

**Speaker of the House Appointee**
Dr. Carole Rutland, Muscogee County
REGIONAL PLANNING
The current River Valley Regional Plan, adopted in 2013, established a regional vision which included minimum standards for local governance and identified minimum environmental protection measures needed to help achieve the vision. In addition to annual updates to the regional plan, planning staff has been assisting local governments with compliance of minimum standards for local governments. RVRC staff were also asked to participate with the state to review and incorporate changes into the regional planning standards. The recommended changes were sent to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs’ board for their review and approval in August 2017. In anticipation of the new regulations, staff has begun the process of preparing a full update of the regional plan.

LOCAL PLANNING
Since enactment of the Georgia Planning Act in 1989, the state has established three iterations of Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning. These are the standards for local government use in identifying and developing priorities for growth, management and resource protection. Over the course of this fiscal year, staff assisted five counties and their municipalities with plan development:
• Macon County-Ideal/Marshallville/Montezuma/Oglethorpe (adopted October 2016)
• Stewart County-Lumpkin/Richland (adopted February 2017)
• Sumter County-Amercus/Andersonville/De Soto/Leslie/Plains (adopted June and August 2017)
• Dooly County-Byromville/Dooling/Lilly/Pinehurst/Unadilla/Vienna (draft for adoption October 2017)
• Randolph County-Cuthbert/Shellman (draft for adoption October 2017)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Staff provides assistance to people interested in restoring historic properties and to historic organizations throughout the region that promote preservation. This year staff reviewed 63 applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for the Board of Historic and Architectural Review for the City of Columbus. Staff also provided the following services:
• Assisted the State Historic Preservation Division and local historians regarding the MLK Trail project in Columbus
• Assisted six property owners with Historic Preservation Tax Credit applications to rehabilitate their buildings in the communities of Americus, Plains, Richland, Webster County, and Clay County
• Assisted representatives from the Lamson-Richardson School in Marshallville to develop a book featuring the history of the school, its staff, and its students that will be used as a fundraiser to landscape a city park
• Assisted the community of Tazewell (Marion County) to place a school on the National Register of Historic Places (on-going)
PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PLANNING
These plans are a federal requirement for eligibility for pre-disaster mitigation assistance and post-disaster recovery assistance. The plans require identifying a community’s most likely disaster threats and determining how best to reduce exposure to those threats. Staff provided assistance to:
• Schley County on the update and adoption of their pre-disaster mitigation plan
• Chattahoochee County, Macon County, Clay County, and Quitman County on updates to their pre-disaster mitigation plans (on-going)

ZONING
Zoning helps preserve property values and provides local governments the tools to prepare for growth. This assistance allows local governments to utilize their zoning ordinances to make the most informed and educated decisions possible. Technical assistance also helps local governments remain current with evolving zoning case law.
• Provided planning and zoning technical assistance to Chattahoochee, Quitman, Stewart and Talbot counties and the cities of Butler, Hamilton, Pine Mountain and Richland
• Assisted the Town of Dooling with enactment of a moratorium on development pending development of land use regulations

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING
Staff is working on two Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) funded grants through Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act to restore watersheds within the RVRC region this year.
• Pataula Creek watershed grant implementation began in November 2016. The objective of this project is to reduce high levels of fecal coliform and sediment. Our environmental planner performed chemical and nutrient analysis of water quality samples, obtained results for two rounds of DNA/microbial source tracking, delivered educational presentations on water quality issues, and performed research for composting facilities which will be installed in the coming year.
• Kinchafoonee Creek watershed grant was executed in April 2017. The objectives of this project are to address a sediment/macroinvertebrate impairment in one stream segment and maintain supporting levels of fecal coliform in another stream segment. Agricultural, forestry, and dirt road best management practice (BMP) conservation plans are in the process of being developed.
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

TRANSPORT Activities
The Lower Chattahoochee Regional Transportation Authority manages the Pataula Transit System in Quitman, Randolph and Stewart counties. The RVRC staff administers the program, and Resource Management Systems, Inc. operates the system, which is based in Springvale (Randolph County). Transit helps residents meet their employment, health care, social interaction and recreational needs.

The RVRC staff continues to work with the Department of Human Services (DHS) on coordinated transportation efforts for the 16-county region. In FY17, 77,191 trips were provided in the region and an additional 892 bus pass trips were made available in Muscogee County. Of these trips, 48,642 were to and from 11 of the region’s senior centers.

JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC) MOBILITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
The Mobility Management program received a national award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for FY17, which acknowledged the RVRC’s work in addressing an emergency situation in Muscogee, Harris, and Chattahoochee counties when the DHS transit subcontractor ceased operations on extremely short notice. The Mobility Manager used statewide contacts to locate potential new transit providers and helped secure temporary transit for dialysis patients in the interim. After contacting dozens of transit providers, negotiations took place and a new subcontractor was selected. Operations resumed less than two weeks after the last provider ceased transportation.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANNING
The RVRC Bicycle and Pedestrian staff have been very active in the region promoting awareness and coordinating events to encourage the use of cycling and walking as alternative forms of transportation. Our Bike and Pedestrian Planner hosted four Complete Streets trainings around the region including locations in Columbus and Americus. A Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the City of Americus was also completed. The RVRC Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner continues to serve as Technical Adviser to the Board of Directors of Bicycle Columbus and Sumter Cycling and to the following committees in Columbus: Chattahoochee Valley Area Southern Off Road Bicycle Association, Minimum Grid-Maximum Impact project, Friends of Dragonfly Trail System, and Standing Boy Creek Park Steering Committee.
7th Annual Prison to Peanuts Event connecting Americus to Plains and Andersonville; 140 participants

Staff participated in numerous events throughout the year such as celebrating International Walk to School Day and held a school-wide bicycle rodeo at The Furlow Charter School in Americus. The Bike and Pedestrian Planner wrote three grant applications to GDOT Multimodal Safety and Access Program and was awarded two of these grants totalling $222,755 for sidewalk improvements in the cities of Columbus and Americus. Staff were also instrumental in the successful Bicycle Friendly Business designation from the League of American Bicyclists for Nonic Bar and Kitchen in Columbus and were instrumental in developing the 15th annual Fair on the Square bicycle ride in Lumpkin, Georgia which had over 160 participants. This event connects downtown Lumpkin to Florence Marina, Providence Canyon and Omaha, Georgia.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)
The RVRC GIS Specialist creates and updates maps and serves as the map depository for member governments in the region. Global positioning technology enabled by earth satellites is used to locate and accurately map virtually any kind of infrastructure or natural resource such as roads, streets, buildings, property lines, underground utility systems, physical addresses, wetlands and an infinite number of other data types. Other projects staff were involved in this year included:

- Collected Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) data and an aerial collection of accurate topographic data of the region
- Created address ranges and relocated address data points in the databases for Clay, Randolph and Quitman Counties for merger into new E-911 systems
- Mapped plots in the City of Oglethorpe cemetery
- Updated parcel data for tax assessors in seven counties: Crisp, Harris, Macon, Marion, Quitman, Randolph, and Webster
- Began the first year of a multi-year contract verifying county road and traffic control data for GDOT (Sumter County road data was completed through this project)
- Began the initial steps in the process of reviewing local addresses for the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) for the upcoming 2020 Census
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The RVRC staff worked towards completion of the 5 year update to the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document for the Federal Economic Development Administration. The two basic goals for the CEDS focus on maximizing the potential for people and places in the River Valley region.

Develop the People Resources of the Region
Sustain and Improve the Land Assets of the Region

These goals strive to help people achieve their potential and ensure availability of land assets to maximize utilization and gain economic growth. All objectives of the CEDS can be placed into one of the two goals and are outlined below:

- Provide quality, genuine places and experiences for visitors
- Assist the workforce of the region to gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for regional jobs in the 21st Century
- Support the recruitment, retention and expansion of businesses in the region
- Assist the region in sustaining and improving quality of life
- Foster community leadership
- Support agriculture
- Improve infrastructure
- Support Main Street and downtown improvements
- Improve housing stock
- Maintain environmental integrity in the region

The CEDS committee reviews and provides input throughout the document development

OneGeorgia Authority Equity Grant
Eaton Road Project
$500,000 Equity Funding
New road construction will create a safe vehicular connection to the Eaton Corporation facility, avoiding conflicts with an adjacent major rail line

Aerial Site Map

Eaton Road Groundbreaking Ceremony, June 2017

CDBG Success Stories

City of Vienna
$323,804 Redevelopment Funds
Restoration of the Henley Building which is now occupied by Southwest Georgia Rehabilitation, Inc., creating 2 jobs

before after
CDBG Success Stories continued

Marion County
$260,000 in CDBG funding
Road construction and repairs to an unpaved road constantly inundated with water runoff creating erosion and subsequent damage

Kings Gap Project
$500,000 in CDBG funding
Rehabilitation of roadway with inefficient and dangerous conditions that when coupled with rain events restrict access and endanger lives of residents

Staff is available to assist any local government, authority, or business in the development of a project. This includes providing assistance in finding state or federal resources such as tax credits, export/import assistance and other resources. Grant applications are also developed and administered to provide necessary infrastructure such as water, sewer, roads, rail, air, broadband or natural gas. These grants are made to local governments and/or development authorities by either state or federal agencies. The purpose of the grants is to provide what the business needs to create and/or retain jobs as well as making private investment into the project. The end result is an increase in the tax base, creation/retention of jobs, and a business whose bottom line has improved.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS (CDBG)
In April 2016, staff prepared 13 CDBG applications. The following were approved for funding in September 2016:

- City of Marshallville - $500,000 Sewer Improvements
- City of Vienna - $500,000 Infrastructure Improvements
- Unified Government of Webster County - $500,000 Street/Drainage Improvements

In April of 2017, RVRC submitted 14 CDBG applications for the FY17 CDBG funding cycle

OTHER REGIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS
RVRC staff focused on workforce development and promotion of the Realizing Educational Achievement Can Happen (REACH) scholarship program for middle school students. Currently, 12 of our 16 counties are participants in the REACH scholarship program.
In addition, ColumbusMakesIt, a creativity and entrepreneurship center, has been open and operating for 2-1/2 years in space provided by the RVRC.
The River Valley Regional Commission serves as the grant recipient and administrative entity for local area Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services. These services are governed by the Middle Flint Workforce Development Board (MFWDB), which is comprised of local private and public sector members. The local WIOA area serves the counties of Crisp, Dooly, Macon, Marion, Schley, Sumter, Taylor and Webster. WIOA services offer education and training to eligible individuals, at least 17 years of age within the area, to assist and enhance opportunities that can lead to employment, job retention, and individual self-sufficiency. WIOA Grant Awards designated for the area during Program Year (PY) 2016 and Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 totaled $1,289,290 and span a two year period which ends June 30, 2018. A total of 133 businesses or employers benefitted from serving as worksites or by hiring WIOA participants.

**INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS (ITAs)**

ITAs are training services which provide educational and occupational skills training to enhance employability. This typically includes both classroom training and hands-on learning for specific educational and occupational related areas. Georgia’s Eligible Provider List allows individuals to choose training providers that offer various types of ITA training services. Albany State University (Cordele), South Georgia Technical College and Georgia Southwestern State University are three ITA eligible training providers located within the area. ITA participants can receive assistance with fees for tuition, books, training supplies, and transportation costs. ITA enrollments totaled 116 individuals served.

**ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT)**

OJT is designed to assist local area employers in finding skilled individuals that meet their employment needs. Employers work with an OJT Career Advisor to define required work duties, qualifications, and to determine training time needed to master job tasks. WIOA participants are interviewed by the employer, who later makes the final hiring decision. The employer is eligible to receive a reimbursement for the training costs of the permanent employee from the OJT program. Reimbursements to OJT participating employers total $56,376. OJT enrollments totaled 41 individuals served. Employers participating: Tyson Foods (Dooly), Innovative Senior Solutions (Crisp & Sumter), and Pharma Centra (Sumter).
GED PLUS TRAINING SERVICES
GED Plus Training Services are designed to assist WIOA eligible participants with obtaining their General Education Diploma (GED) by offering basic skills remediation. This training is an instructor-led review of GED subject areas and includes a Work Readiness training segment. The “Plus” portion focuses on resume preparation, job search techniques, interviewing skills, career exploration, work ethics, personal finances, youth Work Experience, dress for success, post-secondary education exploration and workplace skills. Support services are available for GED exam fees and the cost of training. GED Plus enrollments for the year totaled 121 individuals served.

WORK EXPERIENCE SERVICES (WEX)
WEX is designed to bridge the gap and enhance employment opportunities for WIOA participants who have obtained their GED and who have little or no work experience. Youth are paid wages, $7.25 per hour, and Worker’s Compensation Insurance coverage is provided for the duration of training.

Employers who have participated include: Sumter County Board of Commissioners, Habitat for Humanity, City of Americus, Sumter County Head Start, Fuller Center, Center Stage Market, City of Montezuma, Sumter County Boys & Girls Club, Macon County Board of Commissioners, Con Centra, Pharma Centra, Indigo Life Communications, Montezuma Public Library, Innovative Senior Solutions, Dr. Whitest Medical, Beal Consulting, Little Caesar’s, and EconoLodge.

INCUMBENT WORKER REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP
Incumbent Worker Registered Apprenticeship is a new endeavor in the Middle Flint Workforce Area, which takes selected currently employed individuals for additional training to increase their education and skill level for purposes of advancement and talent development. Wage increases, employment position upgrades, and leadership development are results of the training.

Interfor U.S. South was approved for a federal Registered Apprenticeship by United States Department Of Labor (US-DOL) to train individuals for Journeyman Apprenticeship occupations. Interfor has seven facility sites located in five local Workforce Areas in Georgia. The Interfor facility in Preston (Webster County) has selected three individuals who will participate.

The WIOA performance outcome report indicates our local area is exceeding overall performance measures required by the state through 3rd Quarter Program Year (PY)16.
The mission of the Area Agency on Aging is to create and sustain a livable community that promotes health and well-being for older adults and persons with disabilities. Our vision is to “Be Informed, Be Prepared and Live Well.”

AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE CONNECTION (ADRC)
ADRC is the portal for seniors, caregivers and people with disabilities to obtain information as well as placement for appropriate services and resources. Access to these services provides opportunities for the elderly and disabled to maintain independence and dignity through a comprehensive, coordinated system of resources and support. Our database includes more than 330 service categories. Counselors have discussed options with more than 3,600 callers seeking information.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY
The River Valley Area Agency on Aging has been providing Options Counseling for the residents within its 16 county area for many years. Recently we partnered with Tools For Life, Georgia’s Assistive Technology Act Program, adding a new option for those living in our 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 currently has a “toolkit” of various items that we use to increase awareness of assistive technology, and we are able to offer information on how and where the items can be purchased.

EVIDENCED BASED WELLNESS PROGRAMS
The following evidence-based wellness programs were taught by AAA Staff this year:
• Matter of Balance, an interactive fall prevention program, teaches participants to cope with the fear of falling. The AAA conducted two MOB classes this year teaching over 20 seniors these skills.
• The Chronic Disease Management Program (CDMP) teaches participants to live well with and manage their chronic condition. Lay-Leader training was offered to seven persons, with six participants completing the class.
• Tai Chi, an exercise program improving balance and strength for seniors and those with arthritis, was taught once a week for 10 weeks.

“I found the exercises that I learned have helped me have better balance, I continue to use them at home. I also learned things to prevent falls around the house and I have taken steps to make my home safer. I really enjoyed meeting the other ladies that participated. It was fun being with them and I feel like we learned from each other.”

-Matter of Balance participant and new volunteer for GA Cares program, Sally Haskins

ELDERLY LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ELAP)
ELAP provides legal representation, legal information, and community education in civil legal matters. Community educational sessions were provided at all twelve senior centers. This program served 130 clients and provided 1,336 counseling hours. ELAP also provided 350 people with information and referral services.
CAREGIVER SERVICES
Caregiver Services help keep caregivers healthy so they can continue providing care to their loved ones while taking care of themselves too. The River Valley CARE-NET continues to meet quarterly. Three Dealing with Dementia Behaviors classes for family caregivers were held this year. More than eighty persons were provided information as well as given a Dealing with Dementia Behaviors Guide which provides valuable information for caregivers.

HOME-DELIVERED AND SENIOR CENTER MEALS
Home-delivered and Senior Center Meals are available through our subcontractors that serve meals in twelve senior centers and deliver meals to homes. More than 206,000 meals were served to seniors over 60 years of age, their caregivers, and persons with disabilities. We subcontracted with four providers who manage senior centers in the region that offer a variety of recreational opportunities such as exercise, games, and arts and crafts in addition to group meals.

COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES PROGRAM (CCSP)
CCSP is a Medicaid waiver service for those needing extensive care at home to prevent nursing home admission. The program saves Medicaid dollars and allows the clients to remain in their own home and community. The average time a consumer receives services under the CCSP waiver is 48 months. The average Medicaid cost for nursing home care is $56,844 per person. The average Medicaid service benefits cost per CCSP consumer for the same period is $30,000. This is a savings of approximately $27,000 per consumer or almost half of the traditional costs of nursing home services.

SENIOR FARMERS’ MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM
Senior Farmers’ Markets were held at 13 senior centers, four subsidized apartment complexes and three additional community centers and served over 830 seniors! This is the eleventh consecutive year the AAA was able to provide this service. Each senior was able to cash in a $20 voucher in exchange for fresh produce from a local Georgia farmer on site. For the second year in a row all 16 counties in the River Valley region were served.

CASE MANAGEMENT
Case Management provides assistance to clients on the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiting list who have little or no caregiver support and are not able to receive Home and Community Based Services immediately. Other resources are identified and an action plan is developed to help meet the client’s needs. Case management services were provided for 53 clients.
GEORGIA CARES

GeorgiaCares provides information about Medicare and other related insurances. The River Valley GeorgiaCares program attended 150 events and reached more than 103,000 beneficiaries this year. The program partners with many organizations in and around the 16-county region. Staff assists Medicare beneficiaries through enrollment in such programs as Low Income Subsidy offered by Social Security, which saves beneficiaries $4,000 per year in Medicare prescription drug costs. Our program is proud to have saved Medicare beneficiaries almost $2 million on their drug expenses and over $300,000 in Medicare Savings Program Assistance this year. More than 800 applications were completed for the Medicare Savings Program and 400 for Low Income Subsidy programs. The River Valley GeorgiaCares program is also the designated Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) investigating Medicare errors, fraud and abuse. Staff provided 60 SMP events and outreach activities.

This year staff recruited and trained 10 new volunteers. Our volunteers have contributed over 1500 hours to serving Medicare beneficiaries and conducting outreach events. In June 2017, RVRC AAA honored our volunteers by hosting a Volunteer Appreciation luncheon.

MONEY follows THE PERSON (MFP)/OPTIONS COUNSELING

MFP and Options Counseling assists residents who wish to return to their communities. The AAA options counselor visits with nursing home residents and works with nursing home staff to determine if further action should be taken based on the resident’s self-direction. If services are available and the resident wishes to leave the nursing home, the program known as “Money Follows the Person” is initiated. This program assists residents in resettling in the community with home and community services. Through a contract with RVRC, Access 2 Independence transitioned 17 people from nursing homes back into the community. The AAA options counselor provided counseling to 114 residents in the region’s 20 nursing homes.

AAA Success Story:

At the time of contact with the River Valley AAA in April of 2017, a 70 year old client featured in the following story was struggling both physically and emotionally. A resident of Muscogee County and recently widowed, she was referred to case management to assist with her lack of support and other needs. She had not been to her primary care physician in over a year and constantly relied on friends and neighbors to supply her with food, especially when she ran out of money towards the end of the month. She is unable to read or write as she received no formal education past the third grade and previously relied on her late husband for such tasks. At the first home visit, the case manager observed the client to be significantly depressed. An appointment was scheduled with her primary physician, and she was registered in the TRIPS system that would provide her a free ride to all her appointments. Over time, the client’s physical and emotional well-being appeared to improve. Applications were submitted and the client was approved for both Medicaid and food assistance as well as reduced utility services. The case manager assisted her in purchasing a discounted microwave with the money she saved from receiving food assistance. The client is now enrolled in the Community Care Service Program to assist her with physical tasks that she simply cannot perform. More importantly though, the client has experienced a significant change in her emotional state as seen during case management home visits and while she socializes with neighbors on her porch.
The River Valley Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging received the Excellence in Sustainability Award presented by the Georgia Division of Aging Services.

The Mobility Management program received a national award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for FY17.

The River Valley Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Implementation received a National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Excellence in Regional Transportation award in June 2017.
Reminder: The River Valley RC has funds available to lend to eligible existing and emerging small businesses. Let us help you!