



Creating a BETTER West Alabama

Quarterly Update

July 2021

What's BETTER in West Alabama?



Governor Kay Ivey awards over \$1.3M in COVID-19 Recovery Funds to West Alabama

MONTGOMERY – Governor Kay Ivey has awarded over \$1.3 million to help two West Alabama counties and one city emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and take precautions for future pandemics.

“Every corner of Alabama has experienced some negative impact from the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are bouncing back stronger than ever,” Governor Ivey said. “It is my hope that these funds will help the people in these locations to continue to recover.”

Hale County will utilize a \$200,000 award to purchase an emergency response vehicle to better equip first responders when treating those with life-threatening illnesses such as COVID-19.

Pickens County was awarded \$300,000 to construct a climate-controlled building for the county Emergency Management Agency.

The **City of Tuscaloosa** was awarded \$750,000 to undertake the rehabilitation of an underutilized elementary school building and convert it into a community resource center.

The funds were made available to the state by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and can be used to support COVID-19 testing and vaccinations; rental, mortgage and utility assistance; assistance to food banks and pantries; job creation and business assistance and related projects to provide pandemic relief.

Alabama counties and entitlement communities receiving the CDBG-COVID funds were required to make an application with the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs.

ADECA administers an array of programs supporting law enforcement and traffic safety, economic development, energy conservation, water resource management and recreation development.

BETTER Events



Save the Date:
September 17 and October 15

BETTER West Alabama Strategic Planning Sessions

A critical component of BETTER West Alabama is the identification of strategic goals and actions as we move forward from the COVID-19 pandemic. To assist our counties and communities with this task, the West Alabama Regional Commission, in partnership with The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development, will be conducting a series of strategic planning sessions which will take place at the local and county levels. We would like to strongly encourage the participation of representatives from each of our members. In addition to the creation of local recovery pathways, these informational sessions will also be crucial to the development of priorities and goals for the region.

The regional planning sessions will kick off September 17 and October 15. Invitations will be sent with further details.

BETTER West Alabama Leadership Training



We had a blast at the first session of the BETTER West Alabama Leadership training! Registration is closed, but we look forward to seeing those who have signed up at the next three sessions. Don't forget to come and claim your CMO credits!

Friday, July 30, 2021

Friday, August 13, 2021

Friday, August 20, 2021

All sessions will take place at the Hotel Indigo Tuscaloosa, 111 Greensboro Avenue, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. each day. Lunch will be served. Click [here](#) to read about upcoming sessions.

Alabama Municipal Clerks Institute & Academy



The Certified Municipal Clerk Institute (CMC), Master Municipal Clerk Academy (MMC), and Annual Conference for Municipal Clerks and Administrators is designed to assist and educate municipal clerks in their ever-expanding responsibilities.

Through the biannual training institutes and the annual conference, Alabama clerks have the valuable opportunity to learn from experts and each other on best practices procedures for their municipalities. The program offers solutions to common problems and helps municipal clerks extend their critical professional capacities at all levels of government.

Please contact Cory Johnson at cory.johnson@westal.org or by telephone at (205) 333-2990 x-219 for scholarship information.

Who is Making West Alabama a BETTER Place?



Rural Studio

“We encourage aspiring young architects to address the ethical responsibility for the social, political, and environmental consequences of what they design and build.”

— ANDREW FREEAR, RURAL STUDIO DIRECTOR



Located in rural Newbern, Alabama, Rural Studio is an off-campus design-build program part of the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture of Auburn University. The program, established in 1993 by D.K. Ruth and Samuel Mockbee, gives architecture students a hands-on educational experience while assisting under-resourced communities of West Alabama’s Black Belt.



With a philosophy that everyone, both rich and poor, deserves the benefit of good design, the Studio soon became known for establishing an ethos of recycling, reusing and remaking, while still placing great emphasis on place, beauty, purpose and dignity. By continually questioning what should be built rather than what can, to date, Rural Studio has built more than 200 projects and educated more than 1,000 “Citizen Architects.”



For more information on the Rural Studio and their work, please visit <http://ruralstudio.org/>.

Tools to BETTER Your Community

Grant and Loan Guide for Local Governments in West Alabama

Grant and Loan Guide
for Local Governments in West Alabama
2021



This guide was prepared to assist local governments with their community and economic development efforts. It acts as a resource for commonly used grant and loan programs that are available to counties and municipalities in the West Alabama region. Included in the guide is information from agencies, organizations and foundations at the local, state, and national levels.

For additional information regarding the Grant and Loan Guide, or any community and economic development services offered by the West Alabama Regional Commission, please contact Cory Johnson at (205) 333-2990, Extension 219. Find the full guide [here](#).

West Alabama Mining and Manufacturing Directory



The West Alabama Mining and Manufacturing Directory provides listings of companies in Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens and Tuscaloosa counties within 2017 NAICS sectors 21 (Mining) and 31-33 (Manufacturing).

Please contact Cory Johnson at (205) 333-2990, Extension 219 for more information. Download the directory [here](#).