



Creating a BETTER West Alabama

Quarterly Update | January 2021

What is BETTER West Alabama?

As part of its efforts to support economic recovery and revitalization in the 7-county region, the West Alabama Regional Commission has been awarded \$400,000 from the U.S. Economic Development Association's CARES Act Recovery Assistance in support of its BETTER (Bringing Economic Tools To Enrich and Revitalize) West Alabama initiative.

This cooperative campaign seeks to minimize the economic injury of the COVID-19 pandemic on local agencies, businesses and industries. By engaging local leaders, businesses and industries, BETTER West Alabama aims to stabilize and rebuild the economy in Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens and Tuscaloosa counties. Funding for this award has been made possible as part of a larger \$2.8 million investment in seven EDA Economic Development District organizations across Alabama.

Visit our website

Who is Making West Alabama a BETTER Place?

The West Alabama Regional Commission

The West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC) serves the local governments and citizens of Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamer, Pickens and Tuscaloosa Counties and their respective Municipalities by coordinating region-wide projects and services, promoting cooperation among local governments and carrying out state and federal programs. Divisions include:

- Community & Economic Development - As the designated Economic Development District by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, WARC's Community & Economic Development serves member governments and their citizens by coordinating region-wide projects and services such as project planning, grant writing, resource development, small business funding and providing community & economic development technical assistance.
- Transportation Planning
- Area Agency on Aging

For more information on how the West Alabama Regional Commission can assist your community, please visit their website www.westal.org

The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development

Founded in 1987, The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development (UACED) serves as a gateway to technical assistance resources at The University of Alabama. Through the utilization of professional staff and customized project teams, UACED assists communities, agencies and organizations to take an "asset-based" planning approach to economic development opportunities. One of UACED's goals is to address the economic development needs of rural and urban communities throughout Alabama. To learn more about The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development, visit www.uaced.ua.edu.

BETTER Events



BETTER Leadership Training

2nd & 4th Saturdays of the month
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (lunch provided)
Locations TBD

April 10 & 24 – Leadership & Professionalism

Essentials of Leadership
Effective Communication
Coalition Building / Impactful Partnerships
Volunteer Development / Inclusion & Diversity

May 8 & 22 – Municipal Management: Building Resilient Communities

Municipal Management & Hiring
Municipal Law Overview
Maximizing Municipal Finances / Revenues
Capital Budgeting

June 12 & 26 – Community & Economic Development

Community Assessment / Asset Identification
(Strategic Planning)
Economic & Community Development
Entrepreneurship & Small Business / Main Street
Revitalization
Tourism & Outdoor Recreation

July 10 & 24 – Project Management & Finance

Project Development & Management
Project Finance
Leveraging Grants & Resources
BETTER / WARC Overview & Wrap-up

Email better@westal.org with questions.



Community Conversations

When working as a collective, we can do a lot to help our communities grow and prosper. The UA Center for Economic Development in partnership with the UA Center for Business and Economic Research is conducting community conversations to determine the grass-root needs of rural communities regarding economic growth, workforce development, education, community development, infrastructure needs, etc.

The findings from these community conversations will be used to inform policy and legislation and will be disseminated to economic development officials, community leaders and others at the local, regional and state levels.

These meetings will be facilitated by **Nancy Beggs**, the director of rural workforce development at UACED. Call or text Nancy at **334-301-2012** (leave a message if no answer) or email nlbeggs@ua.edu to host a virtual conversation.

An accomplished workforce development professional, Nancy Beggs is a dedicated leader who believes that there is dignity in hard work and gives 100% to every project. Through UACED, Nancy uses her expertise in education and workforce development strategies to develop and strengthen the workforce pipeline, particularly in rural areas. She is the former State Director for Career and Technical Education for the State of Alabama and has worked on many projects across rural Alabama.

BETTER Highlights

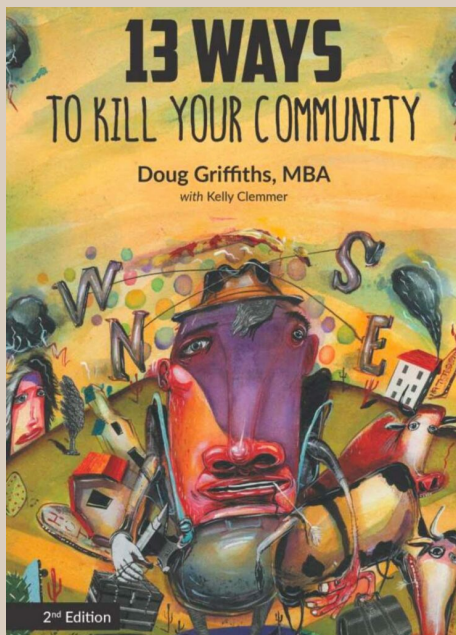
Alabama Association of Regional Councils' 2020 Virtual Conference



This past November, BETTER West Alabama sponsored community leaders to attend the Alabama Association of Regional Councils' 2020 Virtual Conference. Keynote speaker Doug Griffiths has helped improve over 500 communities across North America. After retiring from politics in 2015, he founded 13 Ways, a company dedicated to helping communities grow and thrive through speaking, consulting, rebranding as part of an overall community growth strategy. In his best-selling book, "13 Ways to Kill Your Community," Doug weaves data, personal experience and anecdotes together with humor to explain the common challenges communities face around North America and to understand their paths to success. "My mission is to push communities to face their challenges to find their unique path to success." -Doug Griffiths

[Read more](#)

Tools to BETTER Your Community



Learn more in Doug Griffiths' non-fiction book, [**"13 Ways to Kill Your Community."**](#)

"13 Ways to Kill Your Community"

We all do things that undermine our opportunities for success, whether we're aware of it or not. The challenge is to realize the consequences of our choices. Many communities want success, make plans for it, and work hard to prosper, but they make decisions or display attitudes that counteract their long-range goals. If we simply stop doing what encourages failure, and ensure our attitude is aligned with our goals, our communities can and will prosper well into the next generation. The first step in producing a healthy community comes in the realization that a community's success or failure depends on the members of that community possessing a deep and real willingness to change and a strong desire to fight for success. Below are Doug Griffiths' 13 Ways to Kill Your Community:

1. Don't Have Quality or Quantity of Water
2. Don't Attract Business
3. Don't Engage Youth
4. Deceive Yourself
5. Shop Elsewhere
6. Don't Paint
7. Don't Cooperate
8. Live in the Past
9. Ignore Seniors
10. Be Short-Sighted
11. Ignore Newcomers and Immigrants
12. Become Complacent
13. Don't Take Responsibility