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A Letter from Joe Barker, Executive Director of SWTDD

In 2021, Southwest Tennessee Development District celebrated 50 years of service to the citizens of Southwest Tennessee! For the past 14 years, I have had the honor of serving as SWTDD Executive Director. Prior to becoming Executive Director, I served on the SWTDD Board of Directors for eight years in my capacity as County Executive of Hardin County. SWTDD continues to be a vital partner with our leaders in local government as we continue to serve the aging and those in need with a dedicated professional staff and volunteers from throughout the District.

SWTDD is the Area Agency on Aging and Disability (AAAD) and constantly looks for more programs and services to assist our increasingly aging population. SWTDD also works closely with our local communities in economic and community development, our ECD division writes and administers grants, provides planning and technical assistance, develops strategic plans, and assists in economic growth with small business loans to grow jobs and expand the local tax base.

However, 2021 will be forever remembered in rural Southwest Tennessee, as the year Ford Motor Company announced the largest capital investment in the history of our great state. SWTDD played an integral role in promoting and supporting the Memphis Regional Megasite. We give our thanks to the many local elected officials who had the vision and foresight to secure the property for the Megasite and worked tirelessly to bring much needed, life changing jobs to the region. SWTDD was the coordinating agency for many meetings and events to promote the Megasite as many different elected officials came and went during the past decade. SWTDD felt it was our responsibility to not let the initial enthusiasm for the Megasite die and to keep the hope that, one day, the fruits of all our labors would be rewarded. The announcement by Ford Motor Company will result in the biggest change in rural West Tennessee in our state's history. However, with change comes challenges. The growth anticipated will create challenges to our workforce, infrastructure, education systems, law enforcement, healthcare, and, at the same time, retaining our great quality of life.

SWTDD looks forward to being involved in this exciting transition in rural Southwest Tennessee and I believe, in the next 50 years of our organization, we will continue to be a vital partner for growth and prosperity.

Joe W. Barker, Executive Director
Southwest Tennessee Development District

Southwest Tennessee Development District Board of Directors

Chester County
- County Mayor Barry Hutchinson*
  - Owner, Minority Representative
- Mayor Melinda Johnston, Enville
- Mayor Bobby King, Henderson*

Decatur County
- County Mayor Mike Cravis*
  - Joseph Fisher, Minority Representative
- Mayor Tim Price, Decaturville
- Mayor Tim David Boaz, Parsons*

Hardeman County
- County Mayor Jimmy Saun*
  - Elmer Cobb, Minority Representative
- Mayor Julian McClise, Bolivar*
  - Mayor Curtis Lane, Grand Junction
- Mayor Ricky Ayers, Huddle Valley
- Mayor Megan Hixson, Horsby
- Mayor Mackie Cox, Middletown
- Mayor Jeff Daniel, Saudville
- Mayor William Beaches, Sibert
- Mayor Jackie Kelley, Toone
- Mayor Gene Bowden, Whiteville

Henderson County
- County Mayor Eddie Bray*
  - Barbara Parker, Minority Representative
- Mayor Jeff Grigg, Lexington*
- Mayor Kenneth Kiser, Parks Crossroads
- Mayor J.W. Creasy, Sardis
- Mayor Kenny Parrish, Scotts Hill

Legislative Members
- Senator Ed Jackson*
  - Representative Chris Todd*

Jenkins County
- County Mayor Jimmy Harris*
  - Herbert Slack, Minority Representative
- Mayor Scott Conger, Jackson*
- Mayor Brad Replique, Medon
- Mayor Larry Sanders, Three Way

McNairy County
- County Mayor Larry Smith*
  - Harry Crayton, Minority Representative
- Mayor David Lockett, Adamsville
- Mayor Gary Bizzell, Bethel Springs*
  - Mayor Jessie Robbins, Eads
  - Mayor Robert Heathcock, Fingal
  - Mayor Keith Rhinard, Guys
  - Mayor Amory Smith, Michie
  - Mayor George Armstrong, Ramer
  - Mayor Sherry Inman, Selmer
  - Mayor Larry Russell, Stantonville

*Member of SWTDD Executive Committee

March 2022
Southwest Development District was created by the Tennessee General Assembly under the Tennessee Development District Act of 1965. Like all development districts, SWTDD provides comprehensive planning and promotes economic, community, and human resource development in a defined geographic area. Organized in 1971, as a public non-profit association of local governments, SWTDD serves Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, McNairy and Madison counties. The SWTDD Executive Director & Board of Directors (including member government officials, a state senator and representative, and minority representatives) manage SWTDD. Its 24-member Executive Committee meets six times per year to set policy and conduct business. The full Board of Directors, which includes all county and city mayors in our region, meets once each fiscal year – typically at the Annual Meeting that is held in the fall.

SWTDD is staffed by about 34 full-time people with expertise in district management, economic development, community development, housing, environmental planning, regional planning, aging and disability assistance, social work, nursing, grant writing, and public guardianship for the elderly. Financial support is provided from EDA, THDA, Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development, Tennessee Department of Transportation, TACIR, Tennessee Commission on Aging & Disability, TennCare, Delta Regional Authority, USDA Rural Development, and others. Funds received from the Commission on Aging & Disability are distributed through contracts to senior centers and regional service provider agencies. SWTDD also receives fees for grant administration/management services rendered to member governments and income from its small business loan program. SWTDD is designated as a regional clearinghouse for projects under Executive Order 12372 and acts as the Regional Affiliate Data Center for the Bureau of the Census.

The Southwest Area Agency on Aging & Disability staff’s ultimate goal is to ensure that each client receives the services and supports to live in a dignified and fulfilling manner. Staff members receive training on providing person-centered planning and strive to include each consumer’s family members when developing a plan of action. The following programs are provided either directly or through service provider contracts:

- **Options for Community Living:** in-home care: meals, homemaker, and personal care services.
- **Public Guardianship:** Court-appointed guardian for financial and medical decisions for persons 60 years of age and older who are unable to manage their own affairs and have no family member, friend, bank, or corporation willing and able to act on his or her behalf.
- **Ombudsman:** Advocates for persons in nursing homes and other long-term care institutions.
- **Nutrition Services:** Nutritious meals at community locations and through home-delivered services.
- **CREVAA (Collaborative Response to Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse):** This referral-based program provides towed emergency services to older and vulnerable adult victims of crime.
- **Senior Centers:** SWAAAD has ten community centers that provide resources, support groups, congregate meals, and activities for seniors and their families.
- **TennCare CHOICES:** Medicaid long-term services and supports.
- **MyRide West TN:** Provides volunteer transportation service to those 60 years and older.
- **Senior Volunteer Transportation Network:** Coordinating statewide expansion of volunteer transportation services to senior adults who are 60 years and older.
- **SNAP Application assistance and information to older adults interested in SNAP benefits.**

The Southwestern Area on Aging & Disability (AAAD) serves consumers who are 60 years and older, as well as adults 18 years and older with a physical disability. The service area includes Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and McNairy Counties. Services are targeted to persons who have the greatest economic need with particular attention to low-income older individuals (including low-income minority older individuals, older individuals with limited English proficiency, and older individuals residing in rural areas).

The Southwestern Area Agency on Aging & Disability (AAAD) works to: provide transportation services to senior adults who are 60 years and older.

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The mission of the Development District’s Area Agency on Aging and Disability is to improve the quality of life for older adults and persons with disabilities in the eight county service region. Never has this mission been in greater focus than during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since older adults and persons with compromised immune systems were at greatest risk for complications from COVID-19, the AAAD was particularly focused on ensuring that services, resources, and information were available through delivery, telephone, and/or online.

This touchstone year saw significant increase in federal nutrition, caregiver services, aging and disability resource center services, and transportation. As a recipient of the funds, the AAAD was able to clear all waiting lists for its services. Unfortunately, an increase in persons approved for services put a significant strain on the aging network within the region who struggled to hire enough staff to meet the increased demand.

The AAAD is particularly proud of the efforts and outcomes of the ten area Senior Centers that it funds. The additional federal funding provided during and because of the pandemic allowed the Agency to contract for telephone reassurance services, errand service, and “grab and go” meals at each Senior Center. These services provided needed support and connection for older adults, especially those who were feeling lonely and/or in social isolation. The Centers provided 30,470 units of service to 1,793 individuals during the FY2021 year.

Nutrition for Older Adults

The Nutrition program at the AAAD provides for the nutritional needs of older adults through the provision of congregate meals, home-delivered meals, nutrition education, counseling, and nutrition screening. During the pandemic, the nutrition sites closed to participants in order to prevent the virus from spreading among participants in close contact. Fortunately, persons who usually ate congregate meals at the sites were able to either drive through to pick up their meals or receive home delivered meals. As previously mentioned, “grab and go” meals (prepared at the site or provided through a contracted local restaurant) were also available. For the period of July 1, 2020 until June 30, 2021, the Agency utilized $1,205,824.75 to provide 266,526 meals. The AAAD works to ensure that the client’s family is involved in establishing the client’s meal plan.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps individuals who qualify with enrollment assistance. SWTDD’s SNAP program coordinator works throughout the region to provide education on the benefits, ways to use purchased benefits, the impact of a fortunate gap, persons who usually are spreading among older adults. The SNAP program is vital to ensuring the nutritional health and security of older adults, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific education related to the increase in benefits during this time was distributed. During the 2021 fiscal year, application assistance was provided to 356 individuals, 2,982 persons were pre-screened for benefits, and $63,080 was utilized for the program.

Public Guardianship Services

The Public Guardianship for the Elderly program provides services to persons over the age of 60 who have a physical disability, are unable to provide for their own needs, or face a financial or healthcare decisions for themselves, and who have no person or entity willing to serve in such a capacity, or who are in an institutionalized setting. The program is not available to solicit cases. During FY2021, the program served 34 individuals through either court-appointed conservatorship or power of attorney, and provided 1,849 units of service. The program has served clients in seven of the eight Southwest Tennessee Development District counties during the 2021 fiscal year. Total fees collected $19,856.65 in fees according to the approved sliding scale rates.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is directly administered by the AAAD through a Waiver for Services with the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability. This program provides advocacy, support, education, and assistance with dispute resolution for persons living in a healthcare facility, assisted living facility, or group home. To take nature of this work, all activity with residents or other representatives is kept highly confidential. There were 665 cases opened in FY2021, 691 cases were closed, and total number of cases handled was 713. Additionally, 55,987 was utilized for the program.

Children and grandchildren of staff and volunteers made cards to accompany meals delivered to isolated seniors during the pandemic. SWTDD’s mobile resource van is 100 percent handicap accessible and is used at festivals and events to make it easier for seniors to access services. SWTDD’s AAAD added a live chat feature to its webpage to quickly respond to those needing specific information on services.

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Assistance for Elderly and Vulnerable Adult Abuse

The CREVAA (Collaborative Response for Elderly and Vulnerable Adult Abuse) program works alongside local law enforcement, district attorneys, Adult Protective Services, and other agencies to provide emergency services for victims of crime. Services may include emergency housing, clothing, food, home modifications, and other items that the victim needs due to the crime. This program saw a dramatic increase in calls for service during the year as compared with previous years. The total number of people served by the CREVAA program during FY2022 was 230 utilizing $36,337.39 in funding.

Home and Community Based Services

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) are integral to fulfilling the mission of the AAAD. By providing homemaker and personal care services, the Agency enables older adults to remain independent and within their own homes longer. The AAAD was able to empty its waiting list for these services during FY2021 due to the substantial funding increases provided through recovery legislation. Persons who are 18 years and older with a physical disability and persons age 60 years and older are screened for services by calling the AAAD directly or by applying online at www.swtdd.org. Home and Community Based Services are managed by three Options Counselors employed by the Agency. The SWAAAD contracts with five private service providers to develop and manage agencies to provide the authorized services. Older American’s Act funding (supplemented by state funding) helped the Agency serve 86 consumers utilizing $58,108.32 for homemaker services. Options funding for the AAAD was $565,200 and was utilized to provide homemaker, personal care, and home-delivered meals to 410 consumers. CARES IIIB Homemaker funding served 88 consumers utilizing $31,648.32.

Legal Representation

West Tennessee Legal Services contracts with the AAAD to provide legal representation and advice to older adults who are 60 years and older. Focus areas include public benefits, healthcare, housing, consumer, and simple wills, powers of attorney, and advance directives. Numerous processes were changed for WTLS during 2020 and 2021 to allow the agency to continue to provide services in a safe and secure way due to the pandemic.

Senior Volunteer Transportation Network

The Senior Volunteer Transportation Network (SVTN) was quick to pivot during FY2021 when the pandemic forced many older adults to change how they receive necessary household items, healthcare, and groceries. The Program had been providing assisted transportation to older adults since 2017, but when the pandemic began to shut down many local businesses and facilities, SVTN staff and volunteers began to offer education and care service to older adults instead of direct rides. Training was provided to interested members on how to utilize telehealth services, order groceries and supplies online, and how to connect with others via computer or smart phone. Across the state of Tennessee, these programs began to make regular reassurance calls to older adults and to offer support to the safety and welfare of its riders. Volunteers were utilized by the individual programs to make calls to people that were at risk of being socially isolated. The SVTN program served 3,172 consumers, performed 15,588 rides, and completed 606 errands.

Legal Representation

Southwest Area Agency on Aging and Disability Services

FY 2020/2021: SWAAAD Accomplishments

Senior Volunteer Transportation Network

FY 2020/2021: SWAAAD Accomplishments

(Clockwise, Page 9) SWAAAD staff volunteer at the Alzheimer’s TN Walk. SWAAAD staff raised money and participated in the annual “Sock Out Alzheimer’s” event. MyRide volunteers began helping with home delivered meals during the pandemic. Pictured (the lower right of page 9) is a Christmas door hanging that was gifted to residents by MyRide volunteers on their meal route.

(Pages 10, top and bottom) The Senior Volunteer Transportation Network (SVTN) hit some major milestones in its third year of operation! (Center photo) SWTDD/MyRide received three “Vehicles for Vaccines” compliments of AARP and Toyota to take people to vaccine and doctor appointments.
The SWTDD Economic & Community Development Team works with our regional governments to improve the quality of life for citizens in the area. Our ECO services are free-of-charge to our area governments — except planning services and solid waste assistance, which are provided on a contractual basis with participating communities. Below are brief explanations of ECO services.

Grant Writing & Grant Administration:
SWTDD has a both a grant writer and a grant administrator on staff. All grant writing services are completely free to our member governments. SWTDD receives an administration fee only when a grant is funded.

Types of Grants Written by SWTDD:
- USDA-FARMS ( getProperty Inventory, Infrastructure Loans, CDBG, CDBG Façade, DRA, SAFETY-1, LRFRP/WCFRTP, USDA-RD, Assistance to Firefighters, Governor’s Highway Safety Office, TDOT, TDOA, Solid Waste, Broadband, Childcare, Downtown Improvement, Downtown Main Street, and Disaster Assistance.

TACIR (Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations):
- SWTDD submitted 83 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects and 18 General Infrastructure projects (including the Tennessee Department of Transportation’s bridge projects) throughout our eight county region for a total project count of 626 projects. All projects were submitted to TACIR through the Public Infrastructure Needs Inventory database (PINI). The inventory projects surveyed

Types of Grants Written by SWTDD:
- SWTDD economic development projects, and 41 Community will be reviewed by local, regional, and state agencies for funding.

Solid Waste/Materials Management Technical Assistance:
- SWTDD contracts with interested communities in our eight county region to provide solid waste services in designing, implementing, upgrading, and maintaining solid waste plans, programs, and facilities; providing assistance in the preparation of comprehensive regional solid waste plans; providing economic development assistance.

Environmental Reviews:
- SWTDD prepares environmental reviews for state and federal grants and for loans that have review requirements — including CDBG, TDIA, TDMA, LRFRP/RTFR, Transportation Enhancement, Revolving Loan Fund, Intermediary, Economic Development Administration, HFA, USDA Rural Development, and other projects as deemed necessary.

Small Business Loans:
- SWTDD provides economic development loans to businesses or industries that are located within the counties that are served by the SWTDD and any existing one. One SWTDD small business loan recipient owns a wedding/ event venue, Horsehoe Lake. This beautiful facility is located in Huron (Henderson County).

Our Specialists Assist Local, Regional, and State Governments

Endnotes:
1. Legacy Funding Group Co. in McNairy County received a loan from the SWTDD Small Business Loan Program. SWTDD’s small business loan program is a public benefit program, not a business opportunity or investment. For more information, visit our website. 
2. The beautiful facility is located in Huron (Henderson County).
Since FY2021 the following communities were awarded CDBG grants: McNairy County received a $308,520 grant for a fire improvement project, the City of Parsons received a $442,002 grant for emergency generators at its water plants, and the Town of Whiteville received a $630,000 grant for sewer system improvements.

CDBGs are used for Economic Development (industrial buildings, equipment, and community development for water and wastewater treatment facilities, housing rehabilitation and projects that improve community livability). CDBG funds are also used for Economic Development (industrial infrastructure, industrial generators at its water plants, and emergency generators at its wastewater treatment facilities, housing rehabilitation and projects that improve buildings and equipment) and Community Development (for water and wastewater treatment facilities, housing rehabilitation and projects that improve buildings and equipment).

The City of Savannah was awarded a $254,179 DRA grant for its sewer system, the City of Lexington was awarded $509,000 for a Sewer Lift Station and Façade Grants: the City of Decatur County received a $498,750 grant for its Reeves Property, Decatur County received a $352,614 for industrial development on the Reeves Property, Delta Regional Authority’s “InvestPrep” grants are specifically match-based funds used to “attract new companies — resulting in more jobs and investments in the Valley.” In FY2021, the City of Lexington received a TVA InvestPrep grant for $352,614 for industrial development on the Reeves Property.

Site Development grants.

The City of Memphis was awarded a $38,000 grant from the Tennessee Wars Heritage Commission for Parkers Crossroads, completed 100 Tennessee Historic Preservation Council reviews, participated in two Certified Local Government (CLG) trainings, began two new National Register of Historic Places nominations, and assisted the THC in overseeing the Alex Haley Home and Interpretive Center.

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**FY2020/2021: ECD Accomplishments**

- **TDEC - Solid Waste Technical Assistance Grant:** In FY2021, SWTDD contracted with several counties to provide assistance on solid waste issues and provide reporting to the Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation. Some of these services included updating and maintaining solid waste plans, programs and policies; assisting in formation or dissolution of planning regions; assisting with workshops, seminars, workshops, conferences, reviewing, and maintaining the regional needs assessment; providing technical assistance to solid waste boards to achieve Solid Waste Management Act goals; and providing assistance to prepare and submit Annual Reports and documents to TDEC every year by March 31st.

- **TVA InvestPrep Grants:**

  - Forest City was awarded a TVA InvestPrep grant for $304,000 to build a new fire station in the Fire Department.

- **TVA Economic Disaster Recovery Grants:**

  - In FY2021, the City of Bolivar received an EDA grant to address post-disaster economic recovery in our region through a strategic planning process. We coordinated the strategic planning process began coordinating individual planning grants in each of the eight counties. SWTDD also began work toward the implementation of the comprehensive regional plan. These plans were developed with professional assistance from Younger Associates and were created with support and input from local elected officials and community stakeholders. The City of Parsons chose the “Phase Two” goals, which focus more on the implementation of the strategic plans through the eight county SWTDD region.

- **SWTDD Economic and Community Development Department**

  - **FY2021 Regional Workshops, Meetings, and Events:**

    - SWTDD hosted trainings, forums, and workshop events — both in-person and virtually. A few of these trainings were CBGS Public Meetings, UPFR Grant Workshops, ECD Select TN Workshop, TDOE, USDA-RD Training, Fair Housing Conferences, Community Transportation Planning Request Studies for State and Federal transportation projects, and planning and coordination efforts for the Memphis Regional Megasite Authority meetings.

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**Community Development Block and Façade Grants:**

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FY 2020/2021: SWTDD’s ECD Accomplishments

Regional Planning:
Regional Planning Services are provided by SWTDD on a contractual basis. During FY2021, planning services were provided to Bolivar, Brownsville, Henderson, Jackson, Lexington, Parker Crossroads, Sartell, Stanton, and McConkey to the counties of Chester, Hardeman, and Haywood. As a result, SWTDD planners attended 61 planning commission meetings and one design review commission meetings for all contract communities. During the FY2021, the SWTDD regional planners had the following major accomplishments; assisted with the Chester County Major Road Plan and Future Land Use Map, prepared an Annexation Execution Plan packet for the City of Brownsville, City of Lexington, Town of Sartell, and City of McConkey; additionally, four Annexation Execution Plan Packets were prepared for the City of Lexington. Planning staff assisted Chester County with Subdivision Regulations and a Zoning Resolution; provided Haywood County with Zoning Ordinance text amendments concerning parking requirements for Industrial Uses; provided the City of Henderson with Zoning Ordinance text amendment concerning provisions for solar farms, bed and breakfast establishments, and consolidated animal feed operation provisions; and provided the Town of Saltillo with Zoning Ordinance text amendment concerning setback requirements vis. In total, SWTDD planning staff attended more than 202 meetings during FY2021.

Community Transportation Grants/RPO Services:
Several transportation-related grants were awarded in the Southwest Tennessee region during FY2021. TDOT awarded the Cities of Brownsville and Lexington Multi-Modal Access Grants. The City of Lexington also received a grant for 360 degree video detectors. SWTDD’s RPO planner prepared Community Transportation Planning Request Studies for State Routes 54 and 179 in Haywood County, attended meetings with city and county officials regarding the RPO program, and participated in Road Safety Audits in Decatur, Chester, and McNairy counties.

FY 2020/2021: SWTDD’s Administrative Accomplishments


Meeting with Tennessee Comptroller at JSCC
SWTDD and NWTDD co-hosted a regional meeting with Tennessee Comptroller Jason Mumpower at Jackson State, which took place in November. The comptroller and had an opportunity to ask him and his staff specific questions regarding eligible uses of funds.

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