

UPPER CUMBERLAND  
DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT AND  
UPPER CUMBERLAND HUMAN  
RESOURCE AGENCY



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2022

ANNUAL REPORT



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# OUR LEADERSHIP



**MARK FARLEY**  
*Executive Director*  
UCDD-UCHRA

UC::DD  
Upper Cumberland  
Development District

UC::HRA  
Upper Cumberland  
Human Resources Agency



**TOMMY LEE**  
*Deputy Director*  
UCDD



**SHERRY THURMAN**  
*Administrative  
Director/Office Manager*  
UCDD



**GINGER STOUT**  
*Director*  
Finance



**SHERRY BILBREY**  
*Office Manager*  
UCHRA



**LANELLE GODSEY**  
*Deputy Director*  
UCHRA



**HOLLY WILLIAMS**  
*Director*  
Area Agency on Aging and  
Disability



**TOMMY LEE**  
*Director*  
Community Development and  
Planning



**MEGAN CHOATE**  
*Director*  
Economic Development



**MYRA WALKER**  
*Director*  
Housing



**CHERYL COX**  
*Director*  
Community Intervention



**LANELLE GODSEY**  
*Director*  
Community Services



**MEGAN SPURGEON**  
*Director*  
Empower Upper Cumberland



**HOLLY MONTTOOTH**  
*Director*  
Public Transportation



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

As I reflect on the last year I can't express how proud I am of the employees of our two agencies.

We have adapted existing programs to be more attentive to the needs of our customers and we have launched new programs in hopes of creating a better region to live in.

Our involvement in the collaborative Empower Upper Cumberland has opened our eyes to what can be accomplished when we work together for the common good.

Between both agencies we have nearly 500 dedicated and passionate employees who are focused on improving the quality of life for those who call the Upper Cumberland home; whether it be a small child needing daycare, an employee needing a ride to work, or a senior who needs someone to care for them.

While 2022 will be remembered as a pivotal point in this region's history, I truly believe that in 2023 we will start to see transformational change in our society.

We share a common vision, a region where families have a home to live in, economic security, and a quality of life that is unique to the Upper Cumberland region.

**Mark Farley**

Executive Director, UCDD and UCHRA





# VISION & MISSION



## **VISION**

A region abundant in resources, fostering a productive and vibrant life for the people of the Upper Cumberland.

## **MISSION**

To help the Upper Cumberland region cultivate self-sufficiency and build true wealth through innovation, collaboration, and leadership.



# AGENCY OVERVIEW

## UCDD AND UCHRA

In 2018, the Upper Cumberland Development District (UCDD) and Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency (UCHRA) entered into a shared management agreement in which both agencies would be led by the same Executive Director and Administrative team.

Both UCDD and UCHRA are very much their own unique organization; each tasked with specific

responsibilities and obligations within the 14-county Upper Cumberland region. There are also many similarities between the two.

While each agency maintains its own unique DNA, UCDD and UCHRA are very much sibling agencies, and the branding is mirrored between the two agencies - distinctively different but, at the core, united.



*Community partners and stakeholders gathered together to learn more about UCHRA's Empower Upper Cumberland initiative. After being named one of seven recipients statewide to receive \$25 million in TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) funds, Empower UC officially launched on Nov. 1 and will work to alleviate families out of poverty. Visit [empoweruppercumberland.org](http://empoweruppercumberland.org) for more information.*



WORKING TOGETHER:  
EMPOWER UC KICKOFF



# UC: BY THE NUMBERS



**18.4K**  
HOUSEHOLDS PROVIDED  
WITH COMMODITIES



**257K**  
MEALS SERVED OR  
DELIVERED TO SENIORS



**227**  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
UNITS



**\$12.8M**  
GRANT FUNDS  
AWARDED



**44**  
JOBS CREATED THROUGH  
LOANS WITH CAIC



**120**  
GRANTS SUBMITTED  
(AND COUNTING)



**144.6K**  
TRIPS PROVIDED BY PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION



**2.87M**  
MILES DRIVEN BY PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION



**\$924K**  
LOANS GRANTED TO SMALL  
BUSINESSES

*Based on FY 2021-22 data.*

# LEADERSHIP

## UCDD & UCHRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **CANNON COUNTY**

Greg Mitchell, County Executive  
Andy Duggin, Mayor-Woodbury  
Roger Turney, Mayor-Auburntown  
Fred Howell, Industrial Rep.

### **CLAY COUNTY**

Dale Reagan, County Mayor  
Luke Collins, Mayor-Celina  
Doug Young, Industrial Rep.

### **CUMBERLAND COUNTY**

Allen Foster, County Mayor  
Emmett Sherrill, Mayor-Crab Orchard  
RJ Crawford, Mayor-Crossville  
Lisa Patrick, Mayor-Pleasant Hill  
Ethan Hadley, Industrial Rep.

### **DEKALB COUNTY**

Matt Adcock, County Executive  
Josh Miller, Mayor-Smithville  
Lloyd Dyer, Mayor-Alexandria  
Pam Redmon, Mayor-Dowelltown  
Dewayne Blair, Mayor-Liberty  
Suzanne Williams, Industrial Rep.

### **FENTRESS COUNTY**

Jimmy Johnson, County Executive  
Harvey Stowers, Mayor-Jamestown  
Yvonne Gernt, Mayor-Allardt  
Jacob Rosenbaum, Industrial Rep.

### **JACKSON COUNTY**

Chairman Randy Heady, County Mayor  
Lloyd Williams, Mayor-Gainesboro  
Troy York, Industrial Rep.

### **MACON COUNTY**

Steve Jones, County Mayor  
Jerry Wilmore, Mayor-Lafayette  
Kenneth Hollis, Mayor-Red Boiling Springs  
Richard Thomas, Industrial Rep.

### **OVERTON COUNTY**

Stephen Barlow, County Mayor  
Curtis Hayes, Mayor-Livingston  
Shannon Cantrell, Industrial Rep.

### **PICKETT COUNTY**

Stephen Bilbrey, County Mayor  
Sam Gibson, Mayor-Byrdstown  
Bruce Elder, Industrial Rep.

### **PUTNAM COUNTY**

Randy Porter, County Mayor  
John Martin, Mayor-Baxter  
Lisa Chapman-Fowler, Mayor-Algood  
Mark Farley, Interim Mayor-Monterey  
Laurin Wheaton, Mayor-Cookeville  
Amy New, Industrial Rep.

### **SMITH COUNTY**

Vice Chair Jeff Mason, County Mayor  
Stephen Babcock, Mayor-Carthage  
Joey Nixon, Mayor-South Carthage  
John Potts, Mayor-Gordonsville  
Patrick Geho, Industrial Rep.

### **VAN BUREN COUNTY**

David Sullivan, County Executive  
Alisa Farmer, Mayor-Spencer  
Stacy Mills, Industrial Rep.

### **WARREN COUNTY**

Terry Bell, County Executive  
Ryle Chastain, Mayor-McMinnville  
Joel Akers, Mayor-Centertown  
Trent Prater, Mayor-Viola  
Sue Anderson, Mayor-Morrison  
Marvin Lusk, Minority Rep.  
Don Alexander, Industrial Rep.

Denotes Executive Committee Members



## **WHITE COUNTY**

Denny Wayne Robinson, County Executive

Jerry Lowery, Mayor-Sparta

Ray Spivey, Mayor-Doyle

Roger McCann, Industrial Rep.

## **LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS**

Cameron Sexton, Speaker/House of Representatives

Paul Bailey, Senator

## **UCHRA POLICY COUNCIL**

### **Elected Officials/Local Representatives**

Randy Heady, Jackson County Mayor

Mickey Robinson, Mayor-Spencer

Sarah Marie Smith, Mayor-Carthage

Charlene Whittaker, McMinnville Electric Systems

Cindy Putman, WCTE Central Tennessee PBS

Darrin Stout, Cookeville Police Department

### **Consumer Representatives**

Barbara Wheeler, Macon County

Don Hollingsworth, Van Buren County

Billy Adcock, DeKalb County

Linda Pastrick, Pickett County

Marilyn Davis, Warren County

### **Provider Representatives**

Terri Dunn, Department of Human Services

Kristi Paling, Regional Coordinator-TCCY

Marie Ferran, Aging Services for the Upper Cumberland

Bill Gibson, Power of Putnam

Anne Stamps, Volunteer Behavioral Health

Michael Burton, Tennessee Department of Corrections

### **Minority Representative**

Marvin Lusk, Warren County



2021 ANNUAL MEETING



UCHRA POLICY COUNCIL

# Community of the Year

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, TN



*Tennessee's first Buc-ee's opened in Crossville in June 2022 with Cumberland County Mayor Allen Foster and former City of Crossville Mayor James Mayberry in attendance.*



## FAST FACTS: CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Known for artistic excellence, outdoor adventure, and a strong business base, Cumberland County is also centrally located along Interstate 40 providing manufacturers and logistics companies easy access to global markets.

### Cumberland County Boasts

- Nine state parks, natural and wilderness areas
- Nine championship golf courses
- A total labor force of 23,600+
- 21,000+ students enrolled in six regional higher education institutions
- 2,400+ Tennesseans employed in advanced manufacturing



# Housing Complex of the Year

**FAIRGROUNDS APARTMENTS | Jamestown, TN**



## **FAST FACTS: FAIRGROUND APARTMENTS**

Fairground Apartments offer one- and two-bedroom apartments for individuals with verifiable disabilities. Rent includes utilities and is not to exceed 30 percent of income.

### **Apartments Include**

- Kitchen with appliances
- Living room
- One-bedroom
- Bathroom with handicap features (HUD 811)
- Utilities



# Legislator of the Year

**CAMERON SEXTON** | Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives



## **FAST FACTS: CAMERON SEXTON**

The fifth-generation Tennessean is currently in his fifth term serving the 25th House District, which includes Cumberland and Van Buren Counties, as well as the City of Monterey in Putnam County.

### **Speaker Sexton**

- Previously served as House Republican Caucus Chairman for the first half of the 111th General Assembly
- Chaired the House Health Committee during the 109th and 110th General Assemblies
- Served as Majority Whip during the 108th General Assembly
- Chief architect of the historic and innovative CARE Plan
- Previously named Legislator of the Year by the Biotechnology Industry Organization and the Tennessee Chiropractic Association





# Senior Center of the Year

**MONTEREY SENIOR CENTER | Monterey, TN**

Bridgitt Delk, *Director*



## FAST FACTS:

## MONTEREY SENIOR CENTER

Monterey Senior Center had a rough start when reopening after COVID and had to close down again for a short time. Once they reopened they were able to have their annual Christmas party for the first time since 2019. Since reopening they have enjoyed taking day trips in their new bus and hosting activities such as ice cream socials, weekly presenters with a covered dish meal and craft classes.

### Services Include

- Exercise classes
- Day trips
- Telehealth station
- Educational classes, art classes, and game days
- Lunch events and guest speakers



CHAIR VOLLEYBALL



# OUR TEAM

Meet the staff of UCDD and UCHRA

*At the Upper Cumberland Development District and Human Resource Agency, we are passionate about helping people. Through our wide array of services, we connect individuals, families, businesses, and local officials with the resources they need to improve their quality of life. UCDD and UCHRA employ approximately 500 of the region's most passionate and skilled individuals to better meet the needs of the Upper Cumberland.*

UCDD is designated by the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability (TCAD) as the **Area Agency on Aging and Disability (AAAD)** to provide care, nutrition, transportation, and other services to older or physically disabled Middle Tennesseans. AAAD's three primary functions are advocacy services, information and assistance, and provision of services.


UCDD offers a variety of **Planning & Community Development** services to communities across the region including grant writing, administration, and technical assistance related to land use and zoning, solid waste, historic preservation, and housing. The **Economic Development and Lending** department works with community leaders to secure grant funds primarily for industrial development as well as offering loans to small businesses seeking to expand and create jobs. UCDD staffs the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which

administers a variety of lending programs, including the SBA 504 program through the U.S. Small Business Administration. SBDC also partners with TTU's Rural Reimagined program and The Biz Foundry to provide support and technical assistance to businesses and startups in the region.

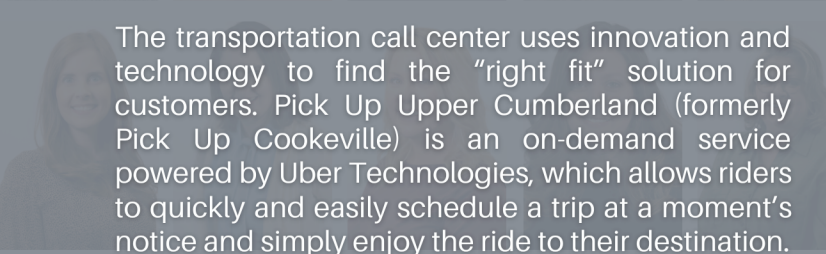
UCDD's **Housing and Family Services** provides affordable housing to low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities. The department also administers programs that provide support to relative caregivers and housing repairs to those in need. UCDD provides data collection and analysis through the Informatics Services department. These services are often used for planning, grant applications, presentations, and publications.

UCHRA offers a variety of **Public Transportation** services from door-to-door rides, scheduled shuttle services, and inner-city bus routes.

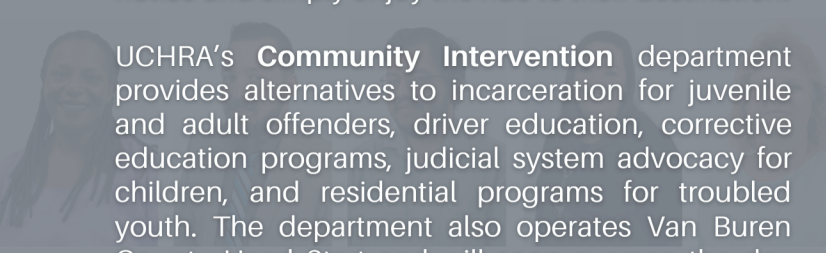




The transportation call center uses innovation and technology to find the “right fit” solution for customers. Pick Up Upper Cumberland (formerly Pick Up Cookeville) is an on-demand service powered by Uber Technologies, which allows riders to quickly and easily schedule a trip at a moment’s notice and simply enjoy the ride to their destination.



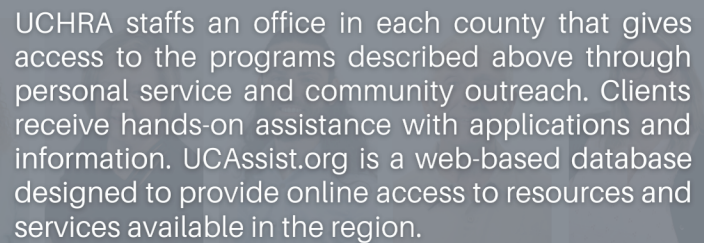
UCHRA’s **Community Intervention** department provides alternatives to incarceration for juvenile and adult offenders, driver education, corrective education programs, judicial system advocacy for children, and residential programs for troubled youth. The department also operates Van Buren County Head Start and will soon oversee the day reporting center program. Day reporting centers (DRCs) provide supervision and services in 12 Upper Cumberland counties; offering a variety of programs and services designed to address rehabilitation, supervision, treatment, education, programming, and re-entry services through a carefully designed curriculum.



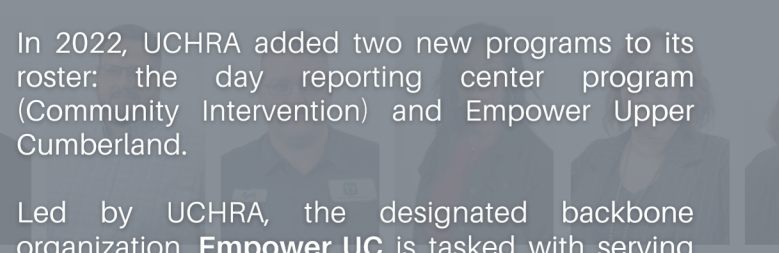
The **Community Services** department administers a number of programs offering support to vulnerable populations including utility assistance vouchers, weatherization, commodities distribution, childcare nutrition, in-home care, and protective services for the elderly. Through a federal grant, the department provides a range of services aimed at reducing poverty and encouraging self-sufficiency.



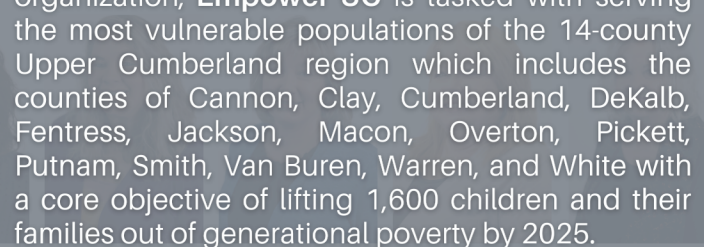
UCHRA’s **Substance Abuse Solutions** team offers a comprehensive list of support services to clients from emergency and transitional housing, reentry to the workforce, transportation, and case management through a variety of grants and pilot programs.



UCHRA staffs an office in each county that gives access to the programs described above through personal service and community outreach. Clients receive hands-on assistance with applications and information. UCAssist.org is a web-based database designed to provide online access to resources and services available in the region.



In 2022, UCHRA added two new programs to its roster: the day reporting center program (Community Intervention) and Empower Upper Cumberland.



Led by UCHRA, the designated backbone organization, **Empower UC** is tasked with serving the most vulnerable populations of the 14-county Upper Cumberland region which includes the counties of Cannon, Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Van Buren, Warren, and White with a core objective of lifting 1,600 children and their families out of generational poverty by 2025.

# CANNON COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**803**

Households provided with commodities



**98**

Households provided with utility assistance



**8,827**

Meals served or delivered to seniors



**4,729**

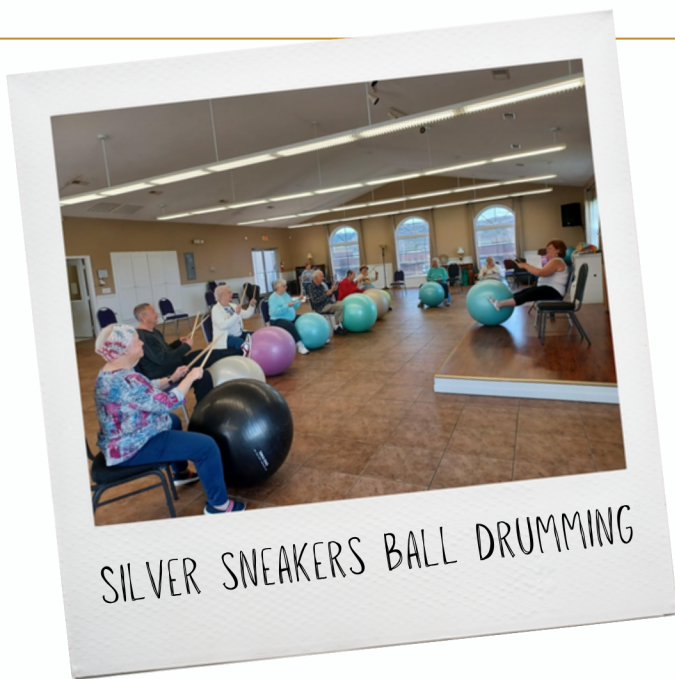
Trips provided by Public Transportation



**94,007**

Miles driven by Public Transportation





## They've got the beat!

The SilverSneakers Boom class at the Cannon County Senior Center kicked off a new activity called Ball Drumming. According to center director Deborah Leach, participants have a lot of fun with it. Sitting on the ball requires balance; and, hitting the ball with drumsticks to the beat of the music (such as "Stayin' Alive" and "Celebration") while following the instructor takes a lot of energy and coordination!

## Wish You Were Here: Short Mountain Distillery

Join the *Wish You Were Here* crew to learn more about Short Mountain Distillery—a craft, small-batch distillery, and restaurant. Located in Cannon County on a 400-acre working farm, Short Mountain distills Organic Tennessee Whiskey, Bourbon Whiskey, and many other authentic and original spirits. In partnership with WCTE PBS and funded by the Economic Development Administration, the *Wish You Were Here: Adventures in Tennessee's* Upper Cumberland program gives a peek into the unique Upper Cumberland region. WCTE's amazing production coupled with coordinating maps will surely make your next adventure exciting and one to remember.



# CLAY COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**1,077**  
Households provided with  
commodities



**282**  
Households provided with  
utility assistance



**20,072**  
Meals served or delivered  
to seniors



**4,603**  
Trips provided by Public  
Transportation



**124,863**  
Miles driven by Public  
Transportation



## Industrial recruitment... from the ground up



Work continues on Clay County's Site Development Grant grading project at the Mitchell Street Industrial Site. Set to complete by end of the current calendar year, this project will allow the county to offer a 'pad ready' site — providing greater flexibility and customization when recruiting a variety of industries.

Funding for the project came from several opportunities including a \$500,000 Economic and Community Development grant from the state. According to Clay County Mayor Dale Reagan, the county's industrial development board has been working on the project for more than five years.

# CUMBERLAND COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**1,728**

Households provided with commodities



**292**

Households provided with utility assistance



**24,918**

Meals served or delivered to seniors



**26,645**

Trips provided by Public Transportation



**256,182**

Miles driven by Public Transportation



## UCHRA Public Transportation Bringing Pick Up Service to Cumberland County

UCHRA Public Transportation's popular on-demand transportation service, Pick Up Upper Cumberland, is coming to Crossville, Tenn. Pick Up Upper Cumberland (formerly Pick Up Cookeville), powered By Uber, utilizes the Uber app allowing riders to schedule and pay for local trips on their smartphones.

"This unique partnership allows UCHRA Public Transportation to meet the evolving transit needs of the community," said Holly Montooth, UCHRA Public Transportation Director. "We're excited to bring this service to the Crossville area and further our mission to get people where they need to go."

This partnership with Uber provides the same reliability and safety provided by UCHRA Public Transportation services, but with a new fleet of custom-wrapped vans equipped with amenities like bottled water, cell phone chargers, and Spotify access.

### *Innovation Recognized*

*UCHRA Public Transportation received the Gordon Acuff Award at the annual TAHRA conference in August. Pick Up Upper Cumberland was recognized as an innovative service for providing on-demand public transportation in the pilot area of Cookeville and Putnam County.*

This project is funded in part by the Improve Grant and the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

To use Pick Up Upper Cumberland, simply download the Uber app and select Pick Up Upper Cumberland to schedule trips during extended hours of regular public transportation service. To learn more, visit [www.ucpublictransit.com](http://www.ucpublictransit.com) or call 1-833-UC TRIPS.



UCHRA PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: 2022  
GORDON ACUFF AWARD RECIPIENTS

# DEKALB COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**1,224**  
Households provided with  
commodities



**109**  
Households provided with  
utility assistance



**4,395**  
Meals served or delivered  
to seniors



**10,154**  
Trips provided by Public  
Transportation



**217,242**  
Miles driven by Public  
Transportation





Pictured, from left: Megan Choate, UCDD Economic Development Director, Kirby Lewis-Gill, TNECD Site Development Director, and Jill Osborne, TNECD Business Development Consultant.

## Site Development Project Nearing Completion in Smithville Industrial Park

In 2019, Smithville's Industrial Development Board was awarded a \$235,080 Site Development Grant by the State of Tennessee's Department of Economic and Community Development. These funds were used to improve the Moog Boulevard property for industrial use. Now, that project is coming to a close.

"We are so pleased that the state recognizes the potential in this site and we're looking forward to moving ahead with the next phase of development," said then-DeKalb County Mayor Tim Stribling.

The grant funds will be used to extend the road into the property, providing a much-improved vantage point for prospective companies considering locating in Smithville.

The community received technical support throughout the application process from Rebecca Smith, Megan Choate, and Leah Bane with the Upper Cumberland Development District and Kendrick Curtis with the Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Association.

# FENTRESS COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**2,142**  
Households provided with  
commodities



**425**  
Households provided with  
utility assistance



**29,423**  
Meals served or delivered  
to seniors



**7,600**  
Trips provided by Public  
Transportation



**150,376**  
Miles driven by Public  
Transportation





## Clarkrange Regional Business Park Nears 'Pad Ready' Status

Grading work of approximately eight acres in the Clarkrange Regional Business Park is 'substantially complete.'

In 2020, the park received a \$500,000 site development grant from the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development to fund part of the project. The Fentress County Industrial Development Board (IDB) and the Fentress County Government partnered together to fund the local portion of the project.

The project consists of a graded pad on a portion of the business park and drainage installation. Being 'pad ready' will position the community as a strong competitor when responding to requests for information from potential businesses seeking suitable space for location or relocation to Fentress County.

The Park has 241 developable acres of vacant land and is conveniently located near Highway 127 and the Jamestown Municipal Airport.



# JACKSON COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**857**

Households provided with commodities



**237**

Households provided with utility assistance



**22,510**

Meals served or delivered to seniors



**4,239**

Trips provided by Public Transportation



**83,800**

Miles driven by Public Transportation





## INTERNAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES CONTINUES

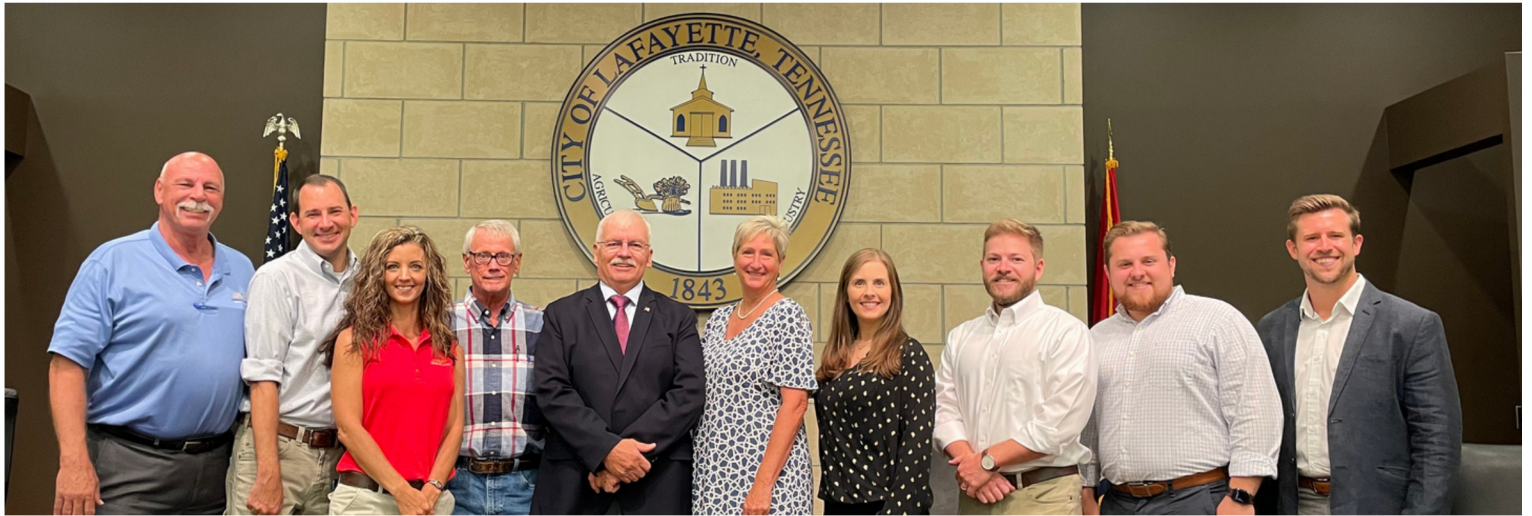
The internal partnership between UCHRA's Community Corrections and Community Services continues. This partnership allows Community Corrections clients to complete required community service hours by volunteering with UCHRA's Community Services department during commodities distribution events. We appreciate the hard work that these men and women do to help ensure those in need of commodities are served quickly and efficiently.

## 2022 MAYORS' RETREAT

It's always a great time when we are able to get together with our mayors to learn more about the needs of our region and how our agency can help fill the gaps in services. The 2022 retreat was held at Wildwood Resort & Marina in Granville, Tenn. Thank you, mayors, for taking time out of your busy schedules to come to the table and meet with our team, and thank you to the Wildwood team for allowing us to use your beautiful facilities!



# MACON COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**618**  
Households provided with  
commodities



**176**  
Households provided with  
utility assistance



**8,335**  
Meals served or delivered  
to seniors



**5,654**  
Trips provided by Public  
Transportation



**113,230**  
Miles driven by Public  
Transportation



## COUNTY OFFICE STAFF STEP UP TO HELP VETERAN IN NEED

When the Macon County UCHRA office received word that a veteran had been discharged from a nursing home and transported to a local apartment complex with absolutely nothing, they leaped into action. Calling on community partners, the staff was able to collect some furniture, household items, and food. Staff delivered the items and even assisted in setting up the apartment for this veteran in need.



## MACON, LAFAYETTE SECURE 130-ACRE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT SITE WITH ASSISTANCE FROM UCDD



In July, the City of Lafayette and Macon County closed on the purchase of 130 acres of property eyed for industrial development. This addition more than doubles the existing footprint of the Lafayette/Macon County Industrial Park, expanding opportunities for business and industry recruitment to Macon County.

The development of this project has been a long-term investment by local leadership and key regional partners such as the Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Association, Tennessee Central Economic Authority, UCDD, TN Economic & Community Development, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. The property has undergone thorough research in order to reach this point including site testing and a comprehensive master plan.

# OVERTON COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**1,902**  
Households provided with  
commodities



**123**  
Households provided with  
utility assistance



**19,768**  
Meals served or delivered  
to seniors



**7,425**  
Trips provided by Public  
Transportation



**137,408**  
Miles driven by Public  
Transportation





ERIC AND DUSTIN

## Ride to Recovery

Eric H. (L) and Dustin B. (R) are both Ride-to-Recovery participants. Eric was able to graduate from his Intensive Outpatient Treatment (IOP) classes thanks in part to the Ride-to-Recovery Program. Eric says, "Without the Ride-to-Recovery Program I may not have gotten to my IOP classes. Thank you!" Thank you to Overton County Recovery Court, UCHRA Overton County, and Pickett County Offices for your tremendous help in making Ride-to-Recovery happen for Eric and Dustin.

## Partner in Prevention

In September, Lehra Trobaugh was presented with the Partner in Prevention Award In Recognition of her passion and commitment. She was presented the award by Ashlen Allen and Tash Mackie the Director of the Overton County Anti-Drug Coalition.



# PICKETT COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**904**  
Households provided with  
commodities



**42**  
Households provided with  
utility assistance



**14,855**  
Meals served or delivered  
to seniors

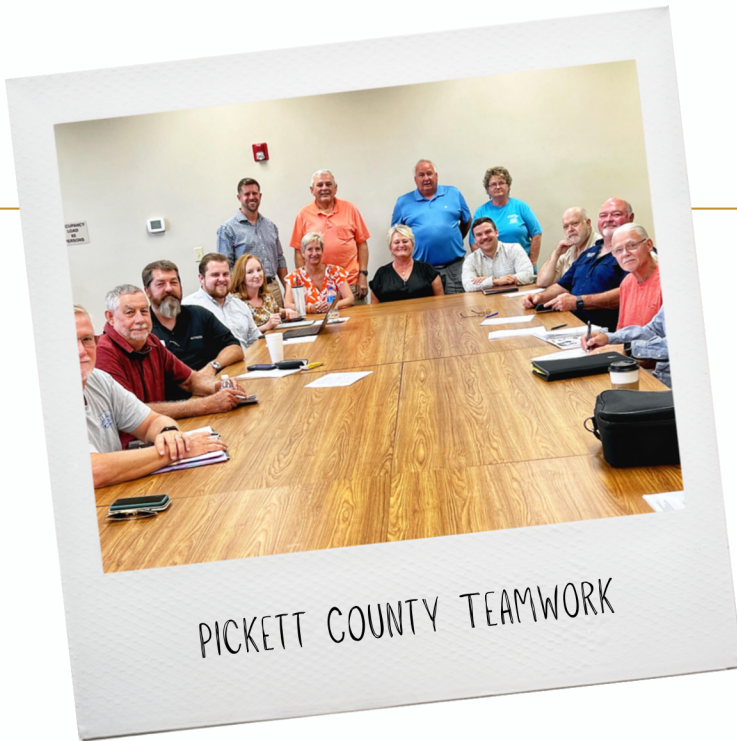


**4,530**  
Trips provided by Public  
Transportation



**98,774**  
Miles driven by Public  
Transportation





## PICKETT COUNTY SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN TNECD PROPERTY EVALUATION PROGRAM

We are proud to partner with Benton, Gibson, McNairy, Pickett, Sullivan, and Tipton counties as they work to enhance their marketability and increase the likelihood of future economic opportunities.”

PEP originates from TNECD’s Select Tennessee Certified Site Program. With assistance from site selection firm Austin Consulting, PEP provides participating counties with guidance on site planning for future industrial development projects.

In September, the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) announced the counties selected to participate in the latest round of the Select Tennessee Property Evaluation Program (PEP).

The counties include Benton, Gibson, McNairy, Pickett, Sullivan, and Tipton. PEP evaluates potential industrial properties, advising counties on industrial site improvements and where investments may be most beneficial. Since its inception in 2015, PEP has helped improve the inventory of industrial sites and buildings across the state, with more than 380 sites being reviewed.

“Having an inventory of shovel-ready industrial sites is a crucial part in recruiting and successfully landing economic development projects,” TNECD Commissioner Stuart McWhorter said. “Through the Select Tennessee Property Evaluation Program, Tennessee communities can gain the competitive edge needed to attract new businesses to the state.

PEP includes an on-site visit by Austin Consulting and TNECD, an educational webinar on the site selection process and a comprehensive assessment of the strengths and needs of each community’s inventory of industrial sites. This assessment also offers recommendations to improve marketability.

“Tennessee has seen a flurry of industry announcements within the last year, many taking place on Select Tennessee Certified Sites,” said Jonathan Gemmen, senior director of Austin Consulting. “It’s encouraging to see such a strong interest in the Property Evaluation Program, as Tennessee needs to continue to fill the pipeline of sites that are ready for industrial investment.”

The six counties were selected based on the demonstrated local need for industrial properties and the county’s ability to assemble properties with viable market potential. The application process begins with a submission of a letter of intent, which is accepted at any time. Upon receipt of the letter, interested communities will receive the PEP application.

# PUTNAM COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**1,717**  
Households provided with  
commodities



**876**  
Households provided with  
utility assistance



**45,771**  
Meals served or delivered  
to seniors



**126,573**  
Trips provided by Public  
Transportation



**363,034**  
Miles driven by Public  
Transportation



# Empower Upper Cumberland Hosts First Circles Meeting, Launches First Circles Meeting in Tennessee

In the months since being named one of seven collaborations selected from across the state to receive \$25 million in TANF Opportunity Act funds, Empower Upper Cumberland has hit the ground running; hiring key positions and hosting the state's first Circles Chapter meeting.

Prior to officially launching on Nov. 1, Empower UC, led by Director Megan Spurgeon, had already begun identifying and serving eligible families through their current two-generation (2Gen) program, TEAM, by implementing Circles meetings. Empower UC plans to establish eight hubs throughout the Upper Cumberland, with a chapter in each hub, in order to serve clients closer to their homes.

The Cookeville/Putnam County Circles is the first Circles chapter in the state of Tennessee. In the coming months, Empower will establish coordinated service hubs that serve families in Warren County as well as

hubs that serve the following combined counties: Cumberland and Fentress, Macon and Clay, Smith and Jackson, Pickett and Overton, DeKalb and Cannon, and White and Van Buren.

"We could not be more excited about Empower Upper Cumberland launching the first Circles USA Chapter in the State of Tennessee," said Megan Spurgeon, Empower UC Director. "Our team has worked incredibly hard to get the chapter up and running and they have done a phenomenal job in bringing this opportunity to families in Putnam County.

"Circles is completely unique to anything that is currently occurring in Tennessee," Spurgeon added. "This relationship-based program between low-income and middle to high-income volunteers will be critical to families reaching their goals."

Circles USA gathers middle-income and high-income volunteers to support families on their journey out of poverty. By being surrounded by people who have landed jobs, negotiated leases, or managed credit card debt, people experiencing poverty are more equipped to achieve long-term financial stability.

"Circles USA is thrilled to support Empower UC to implement a multi-county drop-in of the Circles model to move their families from surviving to thriving through intentional friendships, training, and local partnerships," said Kamatara Johnson, Circles USA Executive Director. "By putting our struggling families in the center of the circle, we can co-create high-impact solutions for Upper Cumberland, finding solutions for rural economic development and building stronger communities together."



# SMITH COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**784**  
Households provided with  
commodities



**208**  
Households provided with  
utility assistance



**7,861**  
Meals served or delivered  
to seniors



**10,050**  
Trips provided by Public  
Transportation



**187,344**  
Miles driven by Public  
Transportation



## UCDD Approves Loan For New Childcare Facility In Carthage

*The following article, written by Benjamin Armstrong, was originally published by NewsTalk 94.1 on July 1, 2022.*

A new childcare facility will be coming to Carthage that will help a region-wide capacity issue. The UCDD Executive Committee approved a \$200,000 loan to the operator for renovations.

"It's a much-needed thing in our community," Smith County Mayor Jeff Mason said. "April comes from a great family. She has a heart for this. I look forward to what she can do for our community."

April Brooks owns Little Sunshine's Academy, who has 20 years of pediatrics and five years of childcare experience. It will be located in an existing building on Eatherly Landing Road.

Loan Officer Jesse Villard said the facility has 70 children on the waiting list and will bring 20 jobs to the area. The center would serve children from six weeks to five years old.

"The total project cost is \$790,000," Villard said. "This is going to be the low-interest child-care loans at 0.5 percent at 20 years."



LITTLE SUNSHINE'S ACADEMY



# VAN BUREN COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**1,092**  
Households provided with  
commodities



**103**  
Households provided with  
utility assistance



**7,676**  
Meals served or delivered  
to seniors



**980**  
Trips provided by Public  
Transportation

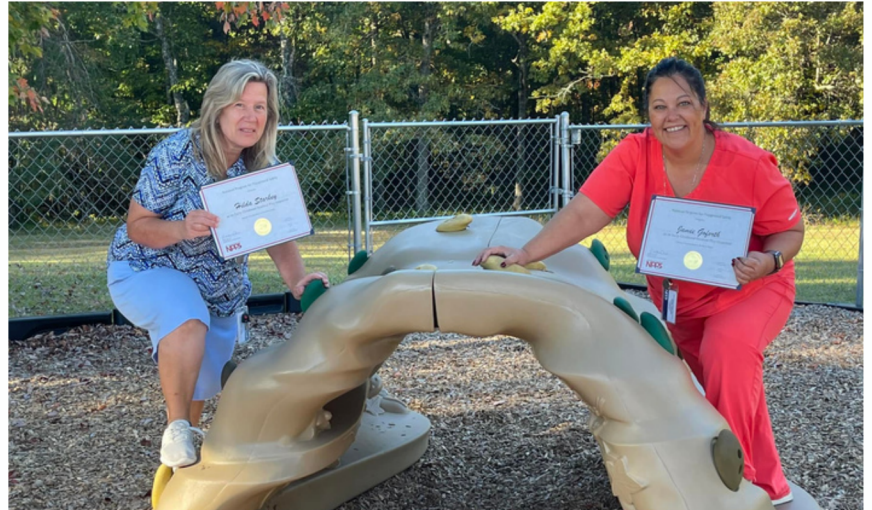


**32,215**  
Miles driven by Public  
Transportation



## *Taking Playtime Seriously at Head Start Facility*

In October, Jamie Goforth and Hilda Starkey employees of UCHRA's Van Buren County Headstart earned their national playground inspection certification. This certification will allow both of these outstanding employees to inspect playgrounds across the nation.



*During Community Action Month in May 2022, our Van Buren County Head Start students shared their one-of-a-kind creations. The Huggy Heart symbolizes the promise of community action. Community Action comes out of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty and from the advocacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

# WARREN COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**1,866**  
Households provided with  
commodities



**235**  
Households provided with  
utility assistance



**13,514**  
Meals served or delivered  
to seniors



**37,858**  
Trips provided by Public  
Transportation



**286,738**  
Miles driven by Public  
Transportation



## Prosperity Point Tour

In August, UCDD/UCHRA team members and regional community outreach partners met and toured Warren County's Prosperity Point, a newly-developed tiny home community established by HOME (Homeless of McMinnville Efforts) that offers six months to a year of stable housing and essential support services to the homeless of Warren County. It is the first of its kind community in the region with eight tiny homes sitting on the property. The development and operations of Prosperity Point are truly a community effort with hundreds of volunteers and local supporters.

Approximately \$100,000 of Street Outreach funds from UCHRA's THDA/ESG grant was distributed to eight agencies across the Upper Cumberland region, including \$18,000 to Homeless of McMinnville Efforts (HOME).



# WHITE COUNTY



## By the Numbers



**1,687**

Households provided with commodities



**238**

Households provided with utility assistance



**29,676**

Meals served or delivered to seniors



**12,503**

Trips provided by Public Transportation



**193,536**

Miles driven by Public Transportation



## Summer Strategy Session Stop in White County



Each summer, UCDD collaborates with the cities and counties of the Upper Cumberland to hold strategy sessions. These sessions provide excellent opportunities to gather feedback and insight into the needs and wants of the communities we serve and how UCDD can be of assistance. Attendees typically include local elected officials, chamber of commerce representatives, industry leaders, representatives of higher education, and state officials.

### *Paying it Forward*

From time to time Carson Davenport cleans out his toy box and donates toys to children who don't have much. This time his sister McKinleigh joined him for her first toy donation. Carson has previously donated toys to the White County UCHRA office. Sheila Robinson, White County Coordinator, says, "This just makes my heart happy that (their) mom Brianna and grandmother Laura are raising this kids at such a young age to give back."





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Tennessee's Upper Cumberland

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