

Geneva County Commission



Strategic Plan 2019 – 2031



Facilitated by the
Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

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Strategic Plan Introduction

Plan Purpose and Scope

The Geneva County Commission Strategic Plan is a four to twelve-year forward thinking strategic planning document that was commissioned and completed in the months of February through September 2019. The strategic plan sets the vision and goals of the Geneva County Commission for the next twelve years. During the development of the plan many outside sources from the private sector, higher education, elected leaders and secondary school level were consulted in order to produce a comprehensive strategic plan to move the county forward. The Geneva County Strategic Plan addresses five priority areas that were identified by the county commission. These areas of focus were identified by the Commission as the County’s greatest needs and prioritization of strategies to achieve those needs.

Geneva County Commission Strategic Plan Five Priority Areas



Vision Statement

“Geneva County seeks to become a prosperous, vibrant community that provides quality jobs, education, and sound quality of life for its citizens, while honoring the county’s rich historical traditions.”

Five Priority Areas of Strategic Plan

Economic Development

The Geneva County Commission is committed to attracting quality jobs and industry to locate in Geneva County. During a SWOT Analysis conducted by the Economic Development Committee, strengths and weaknesses of economic development efforts in Geneva County were identified. The below chart highlights these strengths and weaknesses along with opportunities and threats that economic development efforts in Geneva County currently face.

Economic Development	
Internal	S
	W
External	O
	T
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Positive Negative </div>	

Strengths

- Education and Workforce Training
- Quality of Life
- Business Friendly Regulations
- Abundant Available Land
- Work Ethic of Citizens

Weaknesses

- Lack of Broadband Internet
- Aging Workforce
- Building / Industrial Sites
- Lack of Middle Market Housing
- Lack of Four Lane Highway

Opportunities

- Additional Spec Buildings
- Career Technical Education
- Regional Partnerships
- Broadband Grants
- Business Incubator

Threats

- Losing Younger Workers
- Outside Perception of County
- Educated Workforce
- Public Apathy

Infrastructure

The Geneva County Commission understands that investments in public infrastructure are critical for Geneva County to remain an attractive place for businesses to locate and expand. During a SWOT Analysis conducted by the Infrastructure Committee, strengths and weaknesses of the county’s infrastructure were identified. The below chart highlights these strengths and weaknesses along with opportunities and threats concerning infrastructure in Geneva County.

		Infrastructure	
Internal	S	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuild Alabama Funds • Expansive Road Network • Career Technical Schools • Condition of Bridges in Geneva County • Geneva Municipal Airport • GPS Network used by Ag 	W Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued funding shortage • Increased maintenance due to Abundance of unpaved roads • Broadband Internet Access • County Courthouse Physical Condition • Lack of Four Lane Highways
	O	Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuild Alabama Funds • Federal Grants to Assist in Infrastructure Upgrades • Four Lane State Highway 52 and State Highway 167 • Geneva County Industrial Park • Wiregrass Medical Center • Business Incubator 	T Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing Construction Cost • Geneva County Population Loss • Limited school facilities to accommodate new students • Lack of Broadband Internet access
External		Positive	Negative

Capital Improvements – County Buildings

The Geneva County Commission is committed to maintaining the county-owned buildings in Geneva County and wisely stewarding taxpayer dollars to maintain these improvements. During a SWOT Analysis conducted by the Geneva County Commission, strengths and weaknesses of the county-owned buildings and capital improvements were identified. The below chart highlights these strengths and weaknesses along with opportunities and threats that face the county.

		Capital Improvements / County Buildings	
Internal	S	<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm Center Exterior in Good Condition • Courthouse Annex Repurposing • Convenient Farm Center Location 	<p style="text-align: right;">W</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of Courthouse plumbing and electrical systems • Evaluate voting house uses and consolidate if possible • Capital Improvement Plan • Courthouse restrooms need to be remodeled
	O	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Capital Improvement Plan • Farm Center Rental Revenue • Apply for Federal Grants • Repurposing of Old County Jail 	<p style="text-align: right;">T</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plumbing and electrical in Courthouse needs updating • Lack of Revenue • Lack of Routine Maintenance • Limited Funds for Routine Maintenance
External		Positive	Negative

County Departments

The Geneva County Commission is committed to being a quality employer of choice in Geneva County; however, there are challenges facing the Commission to reaching this goal. During a SWOT Analysis that analyzed the county departments, several commissioners identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that are facing the county departments.

		County Departments	
		S	W
Internal	Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSA and LGHIP benefit plans • Paid Holidays for county employees • Four day work week for Solid Waste & Road & Bridge Employees • Safety day award for employees • Sick and Vacation Time Donation • County Commission Stability and Leadership • Job security for employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low starting pay • County employees vacation time accrual • Percentage County pays to health insurance premiums • Flexibility in pay rates for jobs • Outdated Employee Handbook • Advertising requirements for county job postings • Personnel Board hours
	External	O	T
	Opportunities	Threats	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonus for long serving employees • Explore increasing percentage county pays for employee health insurance • Develop better relationships among department heads • Create sick leave bank for employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six months probationary period for new employees • Applicants accept other job offers before county can make offer because of long hiring process 	
	Positive	Negative	

County Revenue

Most local governments especially counties in Alabama are facing a severe challenge in raising funds to be used for operations of local government. The Geneva County Commission possesses very limited authority under the 1901 Alabama Constitution to raise additional revenue for county operations and much needed investments in public infrastructure such as roads and bridges. As a result the Geneva County Commission has and will continue to aggressively pursue state and federal grants and low interest rate loans in order to fully leverage scarce local dollars for projects.

Geneva County is the beneficiary of low property tax rates which encourages business expansion and investment as well as retirees to locate in Geneva County due to lower cost of living and tax rates.

The Alabama Legislature passed the Rebuild Alabama Act in March of 2019 which levies an additional excise tax on gasoline and diesel fuel in order to raise revenue for road and bridge improvements in Alabama. The state gasoline and diesel tax will be increased by six cents per gallon on October 1, 2019, two cents per gallon on October 1, 2020, and two cents per gallon on October 1, 2021. Once fully implemented, the Rebuild Alabama Act will increase the gas tax by a total of ten cents with counties receiving twenty five percent of the additional revenue.

The Geneva County Commission takes very seriously its responsibility to be a good stewards of taxpayer dollars and is looking at all methods of raising additional revenues without raising tax rates on the citizens of Geneva County.

Goals

This portion of the Strategic Plan identifies goals, objectives, and other strategies for Geneva County to utilize in future policy development. These identified actions were derived from a series of SWOT Analyses conducted by the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission for the Geneva County Commission. The SWOT sessions identified five priority areas that the Commission believes is important to the future growth and success of Geneva County. The identified core priorities of the Geneva County Commission are listed below, from which more specific goals are organized into the following topics.

Priority 1: Economic Development

Goal 1: Workforce Development Actions

- Encourage the expansion of the Geneva Regional Career Technical Center (G-Tech) and its programs that provide quality workforce development training to area high school students in technical skills that will be necessary for jobs in the future.
- Partner with community colleges and area high schools to provide job skills and education for the workforce of tomorrow and to ensure younger workers are able to obtain quality jobs and continue to live in Geneva County.

Goal 2: Broadband Deployment Actions

- Pursue federal and state funding opportunities to assist in the deployment of broadband internet infrastructure throughout Geneva County where feasible.
- Seek out regional partnerships among area counties and municipalities to leverage funding and resources in an effort to extend broadband to medical facilities and schools within the county.
- Work with regional partners and private sector to extend broadband infrastructure to all residents of Geneva County that desire service where possible.

Goal 3: Industrial Development Actions

- Continue to build speculative buildings for prospective businesses and invest in continued development of Geneva County Industrial Park to attract additional businesses to locate in county.

Priority 2: Infrastructure

Goal 1: Road and Bridge Improvement Actions

- Use Rebuild Alabama Act funds to repair and resurface local roads in Geneva County. Work with Alabama Department of Transportation and elected officials to prioritize four-laning State Highway 52 and State Highway 167 in Geneva County.
- Geneva County Road and Bridge Department work to address water runoff and recurring damage from poor drainage on dirt roads within the county.

Goal 2: Broadband Improvements and Medical Facilities Actions

- Leverage federal and state funding opportunities to deploy broadband infrastructure to critical community assets such as schools and community facilities, and eventually to all residents in Geneva County.
- Promote the continued growth and expansion of the Wiregrass Medical Center hospital in Geneva to enhance quality healthcare close to home for Geneva County residents.

Goal 3: Agricultural GPS System Infrastructure Actions

- Encourage expansion and investments in existing Global Positioning System (GPS) networks used by the agricultural community in order to promote future growth of agricultural producers and agribusinesses in Geneva County.

Priority 3: Capital Improvements / County Buildings

Goal 1: Geneva County Farm Center Improvements Actions

- Use capital improvement funds and seek grant funding to update interior of farm center in order to increase usage of facility and revenue needed for operations of farm center.
- Market the Geneva County Farm Center's convenient location and potential uses to increase usage and rental revenue fees.

Goal 2: Geneva County Courthouse Improvements Actions

- Update and improve Geneva County Courthouse plumbing and electrical systems and restrooms in order to provide a clean, modern courthouse facility to conduct business for the citizens of Geneva County.
- Develop and implement continuous routine maintenance program, with oversight through the Commission, in order to maintain improvements to Courthouse and extend the maximum useful life of the facility.

Goal 3: Capital Improvements Actions

- Develop capital improvement plan for Geneva County to ensure all county maintained buildings are adequately maintained and the county has planned upgrades accordingly.
- Assess usefulness of voting houses throughout the county and determine if keeping voting house open or consolidating with other voting houses is beneficial to county in the long term future.

Priority 4: County Departments

Goal 1: Personnel Board Actions

- Partner with the Personnel Board to update and modernize the Geneva County Personnel Handbook to better reflect modern personnel laws and procedures.
- Examine hiring process and find ways to shorten the length of time it takes to advertise jobs, interview job applicants and make final hiring selection to ensure that the county recruits and hires quality employees.
- Encourage county department heads to collaborate and develop better working relationships to ensure that county government is operated in the most efficient manner possible.

Goal 2: Employee Benefits and Salaries Actions

- Evaluate feasibility of county offering additional benefits to county employees, such as county increasing paying larger share of employee health care premiums for county employees.
- Create sick leave bank for county employees and examine feasibility of implementing a bonus program for long serving employees.
- Increase vacation time accrual rates for county employees in order to attract and retain a quality workforce that maintains a positive work – life balance.
- Examine job classification pay scales and determine if county budget will allow additional funds to be spent to increase employee salaries in hard-to-fill skill levels and positions.

Priority 5: County Revenue

The Geneva County Commission is committed to being good stewards of the limited public financial resources that are available for its use. Under the Alabama Constitution of 1901, counties are extremely limited in their ability to raise revenues which has caused severe funding shortages for many counties in Alabama. Because of this funding shortage, the Geneva County Commission seeks out public-private partnerships in order to leverage private dollars in addition to local and federal dollars. In addition the Geneva County Commission is committed to actively pursuing any available grants that the county is eligible to apply for (See Sources of Funding Section).

The Alabama Legislature passed the Rebuild Alabama Act in March of 2019 which levies an additional excise tax on gasoline and diesel fuel in order to raise revenue for road and bridge improvements in Alabama. The state gasoline and diesel tax will be increased by six cents per gallon on October 1, 2019, two cents per gallon on October 1, 2020, and two cents per gallon on October 1, 2021. Once fully implemented, the Rebuild Alabama Act will increase the gas tax by a total of ten cents with counties receiving twenty five percent of the additional revenue.

Under the Rebuild Alabama Act, Geneva County anticipates receiving additional revenue in the following manner:

1st year - \$465,000

2nd year - \$620,000

3rd year - \$775,000

The Rebuild Alabama Act requires local governments such as Geneva County to develop a transportation plan detailing how the additional funds will be spent. The Geneva County Commission has developed a local transportation plan detailing how the funds will be spent in order to comply with Rebuild Alabama Act.

Additional steps the Geneva County Commission is taking to increase tax revenue involve recruiting new industry and encouraging expansion of existing industry within the county in an effort to provide jobs for citizens and increase county tax revenues.

Plan Recommendations and Implementation

This portion of the strategic plan focuses on action items and recommendations for the Geneva County Commission to take in order to reach the goals that were identified during the SWOT Analysis and to establish methods to achieve the county’s vision statement. The following recommended actions were derived from the goals developed by the Geneva County Commission during strategic planning sessions. Recommendations also give time frames for goals to be implemented as well as responsible parties that will be instrumental in achieving the goals of the strategic plan. The following abbreviations refer to each priority listed in the below tables:

Economic Development – ED

Infrastructure – INF

Capital Improvements / County Buildings – CI / CB

County Departments – CD

Priority 1: Economic Development Recommendations

The Geneva County Commission understands that economic development is a cooperative effort between government and the private sector. The Geneva County Commission should continue to build upon past economic development partnerships with K-12 schools, community colleges, Wiregrass Electric Cooperative, Wiregrass Economic Development, along with state and federal officials.

Economic Development			
Action	Time Frame	Responsible Parties	Goals Implemented
G-Tech Expansion	Ongoing	K-12 Schools, Community Colleges,	ED-Goal 1
Broadband deployment	Ongoing / Long-Term	Legislature, Geneva County Commission, WEC, APCO, Troy Cable	ED-Goal 2
Identify potential sites for industrial development projects and acquire option to purchase	Ongoing	Geneva County Commission, Wiregrass Economic Development, State ED Officials	ED-Goal 3
Create Business Incubator	Long-Term	Geneva County Commission, Wiregrass Economic Development, State ED Officials	ED-Goal 3
Build “spec” buildings in Geneva County Industrial Park to attract industry and jobs	Ongoing	Geneva County Commission, Wiregrass Economic Development, State ED Officials	ED-Goal 3

Priority 2: Infrastructure Recommendations

Priority 2 recommendations provide actions necessary to improve the infrastructure system within the county. The Geneva County Commission should work with local, state and federal officials to prioritize funding for the four-laning of State Highway 167. The Geneva County Road and Bridge Department should continue to improve water damaged dirt roads throughout the county. Partnerships should be prioritized with Geneva County Farmers Federation and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System to further enhance the GPS network currently being utilized by farmers to support precision agriculture adoption. Additionally the county and municipalities in Geneva County should work together to promote and enhance medical facilities throughout the county.

Infrastructure			
Action	Time Frame	Responsible Parties	Goals Implemented
Implement Geneva County Transportation Plan to prioritize paving of local roads	Ongoing / Long-Term	Geneva County Road and Bridge, Geneva County Commission	INF-Goal 1
Prioritize Four Laning Highway 167	Long-Term	Geneva County Commission, Federal and State Elected Officials	INF-Goal 1
Repair water damage to dirt roads	Ongoing / Short-Term	Geneva County Road and Bridge, Geneva County Commission	INF-Goal 1
Promote expansion of medical facilities throughout the county.	Ongoing / Long-Term	Geneva County Commission, City of Geneva, Federal and State Elected Officials	INF-Goal 2
Support efforts to enhance and expand Ag GPS Network within county	Ongoing / Long-Term	Farmers' Federation, Alabama Cooperative Extension System	INF-Goal 3

Priority 3: Capital Improvements / County Buildings Recommendations

Priority 3 recommendations provide actions necessary to update and improve capital assets such as the Geneva County Farm Center and to improve county owned buildings. The Geneva County Commission should seek external grant funding to improve the Geneva County Courthouse as well as develop a capital improvement plan for all county owned buildings. Additional necessary actions to improve this priority include seeking grant funding to improve the Geneva County Farmer Center and partnering with Geneva County Farmers Federation to increase usage of the Farm Center. The county should also evaluate the efficacy of maintaining the existing system of voting houses throughout the county and take necessary actions based upon findings.

Capital Improvements / County Buildings			
Action	Time Frame	Responsible Parties	Goals Implemented
Update and improve Geneva County Courthouse	Ongoing / Long-Term	Geneva County Commission	CI / CB-Goal 2
Implement routine maintenance program for Geneva County Courthouse	Ongoing / Long-Term	Geneva County Commission	CI / CB-Goal 2
Develop Capital Improvement Plan for county buildings	Ongoing / Long-Term	Geneva County Commission	CI / CB-Goal 3
Evaluate usefulness of voting houses in county and take appropriate actions	Short-Term	Geneva County Commission	CI / CB-Goal 4

Priority 4: County Departments Recommendations

Priority 4 recommendations provide actions necessary to effectively improve and manage the various departments under the purview of the Geneva County Commission. Additionally the Geneva County Personnel Board governs personnel and human resources policy and should be a close partner in any actions taken. The first immediate action should include updating and improving the Geneva County Employee Handbook to better reflect modern human resources practices in order to more quickly and effectively hire and retain quality employees. The county should also examine the feasibility of offering increased benefits to county employees in a fiscally responsible manner in order to hire and retain quality employees that serve the citizens of Geneva County.

County Departments			
Action	Time Frame	Responsible Parties	Goals Implemented
Update and Improve Geneva County Personnel Handbook	Ongoing / Short-Term	Geneva County Commission, Geneva County Personnel Board	CD- Goal 1
Expedite process of hiring county employees to decrease time it takes to hire new employees	Ongoing / Short-Term	Geneva County Commission, Geneva County Personnel Board	CD- Goal 1
Examine feasibility of offering additional benefits to county workers to attract and retain a quality workforce	Ongoing / Long-Term	Geneva County Commission, Geneva County Personnel Board	CD- Goal 2

Priority 5: County Revenue Recommendations

Because of limitations imposed by the 1901 Alabama Constitution the Geneva County Commission is extremely limited in how it can raise revenue for operations of county government. The Geneva County Commission intends to consider available alternatives for raising revenue to operate county government. The Geneva County Commission intends to aggressively seek all available grant funding opportunities that the county is eligible to apply for. The Geneva County Commission is committed to examining available alternatives rather than new or higher taxes in an effort to operate the county in an effective manner.

Sources of Funding

Grants often include local match requirements, but are important sources of funds. The Geneva County Commission aggressively pursues grants and other funding opportunities available to the county and will continue to seek external funding in the future. The following is an outline of available funding sources to the Geneva County Commission.

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is intended to benefit majority low- and moderate-income areas, aid in the prevention or removal of slum and blight, or meet an urgent need. Funding is provided by HUD and locally administered through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) with the following program funds: Competitive Fund, Community Enhancement Fund, Planning Fund and Economic Development Fund.

Competitive Fund

The CDBG Competitive Fund County category currently has a ceiling of \$350,000. Typical funding activities include:

- Water and Sewer Extensions / Rehabilitation
- Housing Rehabilitation
- Neighborhood and Downtown Revitalization
- Street and Drainage Improvements

Community Enhancement Fund

The Community Enhancement Fund traditionally has a grant ceiling of \$250,000. Typical activities include:

- Fire Protection
- Senior Citizens Centers
- Community Centers
- Boys & Girls Clubs
- Recreational Facilities
- Other “Quality of Life” – Related Activities

Planning Fund

The Planning Fund currently has a grant ceiling of \$40,000 for areas exhibiting slum and blight.

Typical activities include:

- Comprehensive Plans
- Elements of Comprehensive Plans
- Downtown Revitalization Plans
- Regional Strategies and Plans, etc.

Economic Development Fund

The Economic Development Fund grant ceiling varies depending on the type of project and requires a 20% local match. This fund is available to all eligible communities for projects supporting the creation or retention of jobs. Construction cannot begin prior to grant award or release of environmental conditions. Typical activities include:

- ED Incubator (\$250,000)
- ED Float Loans (\$10 million)
- ED Grants (\$200,000 subject to waiver)

State Revolving Fund (SRF)

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) are low interest loan programs administered by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) that funds public infrastructure improvements. There are a multitude of water or wastewater projects that qualify for the loan programs, which are eligible to any public body, including local boards and authorities.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is comprised of two programs: a federal program that funds the purchase of land and water areas for conservation and recreation purposes; and a state matching-grants program (50/50) that provides funds for state and local governments.

Eligible activities are divided into two categories: acquisition and development.

Acquisition

- Water-based public recreation projects such as frontage on the bays, rivers, streams, and lakes
- Land for creating water impoundments
- Natural areas and preserves
- Urban land for day use (picnic areas, playgrounds, etc.)

Development

- Renovation of existing outdoor recreation facilities
- Sports and playfields
- Picnic areas and swimming facilities
- Boating, fishing, hunting, camping areas and trails
- Aggregate surfacing of parking areas and access roads

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the EWP program, which is used to assist in relieving hazards to life and property from floods and the products of erosion created by natural disasters that cause a sudden impairment of a watershed. A sudden watershed impairment results from a single natural occurrence or a short-term combination of occurrences.

For the watershed to be eligible for assistance, the impairment must significantly exceed that which existed before the disaster.

Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which distributes money to the states under a formula established by Congress. In Alabama, the RTP is administered by ADECA and the grant ceiling varies by trail type and requires a 20% local match. Eligible activities include development of trails and trail facilities, including acquisition of properties for future trail development.

Other FHWA Funding Programs

With the exception of the Recreational Trails Program, which is administered by ADECA, the majority of FHWA funds available to the Geneva County Commission are administered through the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). The ALDOT is responsible for identifying and prioritizing transportation projects in order to distribute FHWA funding.

Transportation Alternatives

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act replaced the former Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) with a set-aside of funds under the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program designated as TA-Set-Aside Funds. The TA-Set-Aside provides funding for projects including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, enhanced mobility, community improvement activities such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to storm water and habitat connectivity. The TA-Set-Aside also authorizes funds for recreational trail projects, and safe routes to schools projects.

Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission Revolving Loan Fund

The Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (SEARP&DC) has multiple local loan funds, including a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), an Intermediary Relending Program (IRP), and a Microloan Program, that are locally controlled sources of capital used to finance small business start-up and expansion projects that create permanent jobs. In general, the funds can be used to:

- Purchase Land
- Construct New Buildings
- Renovate / Modify Existing Buildings
- Purchase Equipment
- Provide Working Capital

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs State Energy Program

Funding for the State Energy Program comes from a U.S. Department of Energy grant. It is managed by a unit in ADECA's Energy Division known as the "Energy Efficiency and Renewables" unit. The funding is utilized to plan and implement energy programs in Alabama that are designed to achieve national energy goals such as lowering energy costs and consumption, decreasing reliance on imported energy, reducing impacts of energy production and use on the environment and to increase energy security and reliability. Approximately \$260,000 is available for the Energy-Efficient Retrofits of Local Governments, K-12 Schools and Non-Profit Organizations Program. The minimum award amount is \$10,000 per applicant, and the maximum award amount is \$25,000 per applicant.

United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development ReConnect Loans and Grants

This program assists in the deployment of broadband internet infrastructure into rural communities where it is not economically feasible for private providers to provide service to residents. To be eligible a rural area must lack any existing broadband speed of at least 10 Mbps downstream speeds and 1 Mbps upstream speeds. Eligible activities include the construction, acquisition, or leasing of facilities, spectrum, land or buildings used to deploy broadband service for all residential and business customers located within the Proposed Funded Service Area, All participating critical community facilities (such as public schools, fire stations, and public libraries, The cost of providing broadband service free of charge to the critical community facilities for 2 years. Additionally less than 10% of the grant amount or up to \$150,000 may be used for the improvement, expansion, construction or acquisition of a community center that provides online access to the public

United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program

This program offered by USDA provides affordable funding opportunities to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. Eligible applicants include public bodies, community-based non-profit corporations and federally-recognized tribes. To be eligible for this program areas must considered rural which is defined as an area with no more than 20,000 residents according to the last U.S Census. Funds can be used to purchase, construct or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment and pay project related expenses. Applicants can apply for low interest direct loans, grants or a combination of grants and loans.

Vision Statement

“Geneva County seeks to become a prosperous, vibrant community that provides quality jobs, education, and sound quality of life for its citizens, while honoring the county’s rich historical traditions.”