



VIEWPOINT

Appalachian Council of Governments Quarterly Newsletter

Third Quarter 2012

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**Serving six
counties and 42
municipalities
since 1965.**



ACOG staff members assist seniors during the annual drug plan enrollment period.

Annual Enrollment Period Medicare Prescription Drug Program October 15 - December 7

Medicare beneficiaries can switch to a new Medicare drug plan October 15th through December 7th each year, and the coverage will start January 1, 2013. Once enrolled in a Medicare drug plan, consumers are generally enrolled for a calendar year.

Individuals on our staff serve as Medicare State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) counselors and assist consumers by providing up-to-date information on Medicare, supplements and health insurance to consumers. Information and application assistance on Medicare Prescription Programs and Medicare Savings Programs are also provided.

It is important to point out that Medicare SHIP counselors assist consumers and are not affiliated with any insurance product. For assistance in comparing plans, individuals may contact the Appalachian Area Agency on Aging at 864-242-9733 or 800-434-4036 (toll free) for assistance during the annual enrollment period.



WorkLink Workforce Investment Board News



The SC Workforce Investment Board recently recognized the WorkLink Workforce Investment Board for meeting the Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) Standards. Consequently, WorkLink is now designated a High-Performing LWIB. Thanks to everyone involved in meeting the goals necessary to obtain this award!

The WorkLink Workforce Investment Board also recently welcomed the following new board members:

Michael Keith, Sauer-Danfoss
Pam Smith, SC Vocational Rehabilitation
Beverly Allen, SC Appalachian Council of Governments
David Bowers, JM Mold South
Sandy Snider, Inergy Automotive
Mike Roneker, Cross Country Home Services
Elaine Bailey, DSS
Robert Halfacre, BB&T
Richard Blackwell, Oconee Economic Development

Please join us in welcoming them!

CEDS 2013-2017: Building 21st Century Economic Development Capacity

The ACOG Planning Division recently completed a full re-write of the region's 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS is developed to promote economic development and opportunity and to serve as a mechanism for guiding economic development decisions for the Economic Development Districts (EDD) throughout the nation. The plan is prepared in accordance with requirements of the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) and illustrates to EDA that our six-county region has a roadmap for economic development success. The new CEDS, entitled, *CEDS 2013-2017: Building 21st Century Economic Development Capacity*, provides many key insights into the region's economic development climate.

CEDS 2013-2017 provides a summary of important regional and county-level economic data that represent a snapshot of current economic conditions. It also emphasizes key areas of economic development that are focused in the region, which is consistent with the priorities of EDA and other grant funding agencies. These areas include: (1) Clusters, Target Industries and Innovation Capacities; (2) Workforce Development; (3) Infrastructure; (4) Available Sites and Buildings; (5) Entrepreneurship; (6) Access to Capital; and (7) Local Asset-Based Development. The CEDS document is a resource that can be used to guide decision makers and funding providers as they make strategic choices on supporting projects that will further economic development in the region over the next five years. To view *CEDS 2013-2017* online, visit www.scacog.org/OurServices/PlanningServices.aspx. For questions or comments, please contact David Shellhorse, Economic Development Planner, at 864-241-4649 or dshellhorse@scacog.org.



Workforce development is one of the key areas of economic development focus in the region.

SC Department of Commerce Awards Infrastructure Improvement Grants

The SC Department of Commerce recently awarded \$951,350 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to benefit low- and moderate-income people in the Appalachian Region. These funds are allocated to South Carolina through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to undertake a variety of community revitalization and economic development activities.



Cavins Road Pump Station

Anderson County was awarded \$500,000 for the Homeland Park Waterline Upgrade Project. The project entails construction of 4,100 feet of 6-inch water line and 6,000 feet of service line, and will serve 133 people along Keys Street. Over 70 percent of these beneficiaries are low to moderate income. The total project is expected to cost \$576,636.

The City of Woodruff has received \$451,350 to undertake the Cavins Road Pump Station Upgrade Project. The project, which is estimated to cost \$499,350, will include the construction of a new wet well, three pumps, valves, electrical panel, and a standby generator. This will replace an existing pump station that is over capacity and has a long history of overflows. The project will serve approximately half of the town's population.

The ACOG Grant Services Department assisted with the CDBG applications and will administer these grants to ensure the funds are expended in compliance with state and federal guidelines. For more information on these projects, or the CDBG program, contact a member of the Grants Services staff at the COG.

Appalachian Development Corporation News

The ADC is in the process of closing a recently approved loan to Carbures USA, a limited liability partnership located at 5 Hercules Way at the South Carolina Technology and Aviation Center (SC-TAC) in Greenville. The ADC, in participation with The Palmetto Bank, will provide funding for the purchase of equipment and leasehold improvements at the company's facility.



Cabures USA is an American company with Spanish ownership, Carbures Europe, SA. The Cadiz, Spain-based Carbures Europe was seeking a strategic location for its North American operations. The location at SC-TAC (formerly Donaldson Center) was due to its proximity to such companies and groups as Boeing, CU-ICAR, BMW, and Cytec. Carbures USA provides engineering services and the manufacture of carbon fiber structures for aerospace, automotive, and nautical industries. Carbures USA will also provide engineering services to Carbures Asia, the Tier 1 supplier to Airbus, located in China.

The US operation projects that the staffing for Carbures USA in the next 24 months will total 23 employees and will grow to 46 employees within four years. In addition, these jobs will consist of Engineer, Operator and Director positions, which typically command higher pay ranges.

For more information, please contact George Long at 864-382-2350 or long@appalachiandevelopmentcorp.com, or you can visit the Appalachian Development Corporation website at www.appalachiandevelopmentcorp.com.



ADRC Website Receives National Award

The Upstate Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) website - a statewide template for South Carolina - has been chosen to receive a NADO 2012 Innovation Award. Each year, the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) recognizes member organizations with the Innovation Award for demonstrating innovative approaches to regional economic and community development.

The Upstate ADRC website is significant because it was designed, produced, hosted, and is maintained entirely within the Appalachian Council of Governments. The staff of the ADRC and Information Services Department worked together to design and implement the website. After reviewing numerous similar web resources to identify best practices, they proposed tools and resources to address the three main groups of beneficiaries: those in need of care; care providers; and community advocates. Original content and links to other state and local services were built into an ADA compliant template, and hosted from a web server at the ACOG location. The process of creating a website from scratch enabled the ADRC staff to reevaluate the flow of work and identify new areas for regional services.

As the first web-based resource of its kind in the state, the tools and resources provided on the ADRC website offer a new and efficient way to respond to the needs of more beneficiaries than ever before. On average, 400 visitors view almost 1,600 pages per month. Web analytics also show that 70 percent of the visitors are new and they usually find what they need within four or five clicks. This is important for an older user group who may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the Internet.

The design of the web site was carefully structured to comply with the Section 508 amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which means the website is accessible to people with disabilities. It follows strict guidelines for font size, color combinations, use of animations, and content outline. This enables visually impaired or physically limited visitors to easily navigate the site, sometimes using external reader services. Surprisingly, few web resources - especially those aimed at seniors or disabled citizens - comply with the guidelines that enable ease of use.

The website was also designed for use as a template to enable replication in the other nine ADRCs in South Carolina. ACOG staff is currently working with the SC Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging to standardize the structure and design of the site for other ADRC regions to populate with their own unique information and content. The Upstate ADRC will continue to add new features and test new ways to use the web medium for reaching its beneficiaries on behalf of the statewide network. Visit this award winning website at www.scupstateadrc.org.



Practical Tips for Dealing with TERC

Occasionally some of our jurisdictions have encountered challenges in complying with the Tourism Expenditure Review Committee (TERC) rules and regulations in spending tourism funds. The following summary - presented by Thomas E. Leath, Myrtle Beach city manager, at the SC City-County Managers meeting in July 2012 - provides some advice for jurisdictions to consider when planning their expenditures. This summary is not to be interpreted as legal advice. Mr. Leath does not represent TERC.

I was recently nominated by the Municipal Association to replace Mark Williams on TERC, the Tourism Expenditure Review Committee. Kevin Yokim, Finance Director for Florence County, is a member nominated by the Association of Counties.

Sections 6-4-5 through 6-4-35, Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, govern Accommodations Tax receipts and expenditures. These sections provide for how the money is spent, accounted for and, more importantly for the purposes of this presentation, reported to the Tourism Expenditure Review Committee (hereinafter TERC) (Sec. 6-4-35). The law provides for how the money is divided up, and I will be concentrating on the 60 Percent Fund. But let me point out one important aspect of the 30 Percent Fund. Make sure the 30 Percent Fund is being spent by a qualifying group (6-4-10 (3)). Your Council cannot be that group, no matter how pure the motive.

Three broad rules govern expenditures from the 60 Percent Fund: 1) it must be for tourism-related purposes; 2) it must be reviewed by the local committee; and 3) it must be reported annually to TERC. I have only attended a few meetings, but it is apparent that we are having problems playing by the rules. So let me point out these problem areas, to make your life, and the lives of TERC members, easier.

- *File the report on time. If you fail to file on time (Sec. 6-4-25 (D)), TERC can assess \$500 per month, capped at \$5,000 (Sec. 6-4-35(B)(1)(b)). It is your money, so don't throw it away by filling late.*
- *Check your local advisory committee. \$50,000 in A-TAX receipts triggers a requirement to have a local advisory committee (Sec. 6-4-25); Council cannot be the committee. Make sure the membership is correct and that you identify in your report to TERC which member represents which required area. (Sec. 6-4-25(A)).*
- *All expenditure requests must run through the local advisory committee. Do not spend money without going through the committee (Sec. 6-4-25(B)). If an appropriation fails for some reason (e.g., an event didn't happen) do not let Council just find another use for the money. Bring the committee back together to make a recommendation for the expenditure.*
- *Explain Council's independence. Regardless of whether your Council agrees with the committee recommendations, you still have to tell TERC what those recommendations were (Sec. 6-4-25(D)). If your Council does not follow the advice of the local advisory committee, TERC will want to know why, so include that in your report.*
- *Make sure your numbers balance. If the numbers don't add up, there may be a good explanation, so go ahead and tell why in the report. If not, TERC will be back in touch asking why..*

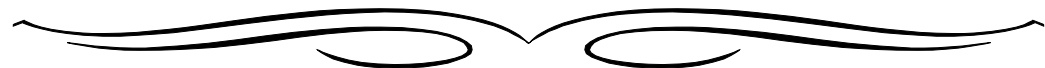


Tourism Fund expenditures must comply with TERC rules and regulations.

Practical Tips for Dealing with TERC (continued from previous page)

- *Make sure you account for interest income. The law requires that you spend the interest in the same manner as the principle (Sec. 6-4-10(4)(a)), so account for it. I know it is not much, but you still have to account for it.*
- *If it isn't for out-of-market advertising, then explain how the expenditure meets the law. Ads in Southern Living Magazine speak for themselves. Ads on your local AM radio station do not. Explain the expenditure. How does it bring tourists to the area? How does it impact tourism? How does it provide for tourism? If you do not have a good explanation, then do not make the expenditure*
- *The "50-mile Rule" isn't really a rule. I think. TERC tried to make it a rule, but has backed off, sort of...in print, if not in practice. But in defense of TERC, remember that the purpose of this money is to grow tourism. See (Sec.6-4-10(4)(a)) and, for high concentration areas, see (Sec. 6-4-10 (4) (b)). Remember the AM radio example? Ask yourself, "Who is the audience?" and tell TERC.*
- *Make sure that you respond to inquiries. TERC will write a letter or call, but receive no response. You can't hide from TERC, so please respond.*
- *Seek advice. If you have a question, you can always write or email TERC and get an opinion. Some of you do that, and it seems to work.*
- *If denied, ask to appear in person. If TERC notifies you of an adverse ruling, ask to appear before the group at its next meeting to make your case in person.*
- *Re-read the law from time to time. I am often surprised by what I forget between readings.*

For more information on complying with the Tourism Expenditure Review Committee rules and regulations in spending tourism funds, please contact a member of the Government Services staff at 864-242-9733.



Census Bureau Releases New American Community Survey Figures

In September, the US Census Bureau released 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates for all geographies having a population of 65,000 or more. The ACS is an ongoing survey that provides data every year - giving communities the current information they need to plan investments and services. Information from the survey generates data that help determine how more than \$400 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year for projects related to:

- schools
- job training centers
- hospitals
- location of new businesses
- care for children, veterans, and seniors
- roads, bridges, and transportation projects
- emergency services
- housing value



ACS data are used to determine federal and state funding for programs like education.

How is the survey conducted? Each year, about 3.5 million addresses are randomly selected to participate in the survey. Responses from each respondent become a part of a sample that represents thousands of other households.

Do I have to participate, and is it safe? Survey recipients are legally obligated to answer all the questions as accurately as possible. All Census Bureau employees take an oath of nondisclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data. Violating the oath is a serious crime. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to 5 years, or both.

How do I access data for my community? The recently released 1-year figures are available for geographies having a population of 65,000 or more. Within the ACOG region, this includes Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg Counties. In October, the Bureau will release 3-year ACS estimates for geographies of 20,000 or more population, which will enable access to data for Cherokee County, along with many of the region's larger municipalities.

What's the difference between 1-year, 3-year and 5-year ACS estimates? The smaller the geography, the more important it is for the data to represent multiple years in order to minimize the margin of error. Consequently, the upcoming 3-year estimates will represent an average of the information collected in 2009, 2010 and 2011. In December, the 5-year estimates will be released, enabling access to data for all geographies, down to the census block group level.

How does the ACOG utilize this data? Information from the ACS and other Census programs is compiled for the region and is made easily available via our online [InfoMentum Fact Finder](#). New ACS data will be incorporated in October, upon release of the 3-year estimates. This invaluable resource also delivers data from other sources, including the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, SC Department of Education, SC Department of Employment and Workforce. Area economic developers utilize this vast selection of data in their efforts to recruit industry and bring in new jobs. These data tables are also a valuable resource for decision-makers as a basis for setting policies in various fields, including education, health, welfare, housing and development, transportation and other services.

For more information on the types of data available, please visit the [InfoMentum Fact Finder](#) at www.scacog.org, or contact Information Services at 864-242-9733.