



VIEWPOINT

Appalachian Council of Governments Quarterly Newsletter

Second Quarter 2012

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



*The SFMNP benefits both
seniors and local farmers.*

Program Helps Seniors Eat Fresh!

The Appalachia Area Agency on Aging in partnership with the SC Department of Social Services and the Department of Agriculture issued vouchers for the SFMNP (Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program). Applications were taken and vouchers valued at \$25 were issued to 1300 individuals.

The vouchers can be used to purchase produce at designated local farmers' markets from June through October 15, 2012. The SFMNP serves individuals 60 and older with limited income. Our agency administers the program in Greenville and Spartanburg counties. The SFMNP is intended to supplement the diets of seniors with fresh, nutritious produce and to support South Carolina's small farmers. South Carolina is one of several states that received USDA funds to operate the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

All counties in our region except Pickens and Cherokee participate in the program. Expansion to additional counties has been constrained due to limited grant funds. For more information on this program, please contact Mark Wideman at 864-242-9733 or by e-mail at mwideman@scacog.org.

ACOG Offers Employee Training

As a new fiscal year is upon us, please keep in mind that employees are a very valuable asset to your organization, and employees' skills can always benefit from ongoing education. The Appalachian Council of Governments provides training in the areas of supervision, interviewing, labor law, sexual harassment, diversity, and customer service.

In addition, training for council members, boards and commissions is also available for topics such as Freedom of Information, working as a team, and rules of procedure. Individual training specific to concerns of your jurisdiction can also be arranged.

Please contact Donna Kazia, kazia@scacog.org at 864-241-4632 or Doug Burns, dburns@scacog.org at 864-241-4642 for additional information.



*The ACOG offers various training
opportunities to keep employees' skills
and knowledge of up to date.*

2012 Tri-County Community Job Fair Held at Conference Center & Inn at Clemson University



On March 22nd, *WorkLink* Workforce Investment Corporation hosted its annual job fair, held this year at the Conference Center and Inn at Clemson University. More than fifty employers and training providers converged to provide job seekers with a view of immediately-obtainable job opportunities. Training providers were also available to bridge the gaps between job seeker skills and available jobs.

Employers seeking employees at the event included manufacturers, healthcare and homecare companies, service industries, staffing agencies, area colleges and universities, and community-based organizations. Job seekers had the opportunity to attend *JobReady* workshops in the weeks prior to the job fair, which helped them prepare for the event in material ways. These *JobReady* workshops offered tips on preparing for the job fair and were offered at the *OneStop* Workforce Centers in Anderson, Liberty, and Seneca, as well as at partnering organizations, such as Goodwill Job Connections, Adult Education Centers, the Department of Social Services and local colleges and universities.

More than 120 job seekers participated in these workshops, learning how to research available jobs and participating employers, understanding how to dress for the job fair and for interviews, brushing up their resumes, and honing their interview and follow-up skills. Participants in the *JobReady* workshops earned the added benefit of early admittance to the job fair, giving them additional time to interact with employers.

WorkLink works throughout the year to connect companies and employees in Anderson, Oconee and Pickens Counties. The March 22nd event was a success for job seekers and companies in these counties and across the Upstate.



WorkLink's annual job fair develops the link between employers and employees in Anderson, Oconee and Pickens Counties.

City of Pickens Approves Plan Update

The City of Pickens recently approved the update of their comprehensive plan. While the current plan served to guide the community over the past ten years, the update addressed key developments and changing trends, including redevelopment efforts, changing demographics, and their main street program, which will impact the future of Pickens.

The City's focus was on issues surrounding revitalizing the downtown area, developing more parks, and addressing the needs of an aging population. These and other factors will shape future growth in Pickens, and the City used the planning process to assess the challenges they will face.

The planning commission worked to identify issues the City must address to ensure that growth is beneficial and helps the City prosper instead of having negative impacts on Pickens and its quality of life. These issues include protecting existing neighborhoods, addressing transportation needs, preserving and promoting the character of the downtown area, and providing adequate services to all residents of the community. The recommendations from the comprehensive plan will be used to update ordinances and prioritize city work and planning activities for the next ten years.

If you have questions about this plan, please contact Jennifer Vissage in the Planning Services Department.



Downtown revitalization was a focus of the City's comprehensive plan update.



4Balance Fitness, located in Greenville, is one of many area businesses that have benefited from the Micro Loan Fund through ADC.

Development Corporation News

On June 6, the Appalachian Development Corporation was recognized for its work in microenterprise development that has successfully impacted economic development and community welfare in the Upstate of South Carolina. This honor was in the form of a South Carolina House of Representative Resolution, H.5321.

The resolution stated that the House of Representatives was pleased to learn that the ADC offers loans to small businesses in the Upstate that focus on lowering overall debt service requirements and allows for the maximum leveraging of the applicants resources. It acknowledged the ADC as a nonprofit economic development lending corporation that maintained its

overall goal of encouraging job creation through fostering small- to medium-sized businesses.

The Micro Loan Fund provides capital and technical assistance to support the development and ongoing success of businesses created by citizens in Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg Counties. It has helped businesses in the Upstate respond to increases in demand and to meet the need for expansion in order to serve the desires of their customers more effectively. These loans not only allow citizens of South Carolina to continue pursuing their dreams of running their own businesses, but also allow them to have a positive, direct impact on their local economy.



**2011 Greenville County
Apartment Community Survey**

Greenville's Apartment Market Looks Ahead to Continued Growth

Following a brief slowdown in Greenville's conventional apartment market, the **2011 Greenville County Apartment Community Survey** revealed that construction is beginning to pick up. Though only 349 new conventional units were completed between the 2010 and 2011 surveys, the 2011 report revealed that more than 1,100 conventional units were either planned or under construction across four of the county's six market areas.

An overall occupancy rate of 95.5 percent was reported for conventional units. Occupancy rates for individual market areas ranged from a high of 97.7 percent in Market Area 5 (the southwest portion of the county), to a low of 91.6 percent in Market Area 6 (the northwest portion of the county). The survey revealed a continued increase in the median monthly rent charged for one- and two-bedroom conventional units (\$589 and \$729, respectively), while the median rent charged for three-bedroom units (\$802) remained virtually unchanged from the 2010 report.

This survey also reports on rental units having some correlation between the tenant's income and residence eligibility or the amount of rent paid. Due to limited funding, development of new "income-dependent" properties rarely occurs at the same level as in the conventional market. These developments typically consist of fewer units, and oftentimes they serve to replace substandard developments that have been torn down.

The 2011 report revealed the addition of 119 new income-dependent units to Market Area 6 through the completion of The Parker at Cone and Brookside Gardens (a community developed for older adults). Three additional properties were in the planning stages, and upon completion, these developments will add 116 new income-dependent units to Market Area 2 (the county's east side) and 48 units to Market Area 6.

The Appalachian Council of Governments produces this one-of-a-kind survey annually for Greenville County. This unique report contains an inventory and analysis of all known conventional and "income-dependent" apartment properties having forty or more units. For more information, or to purchase a copy of this publication, please contact the Information Services Department at 242-9733. This report is also available for online purchase at www.scacog.org (from the home page, go to "Maps & Data" >> "Publications & Mapping Products" >> "Apartment Community Surveys").





Community Development Block Grant Program Fall 2012 Funding Opportunities

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is designed to provide assistance to units of general local government in improving economic opportunities and meeting community revitalization needs, particularly for persons of low and moderate income (LMI). The Fall 2012 funding round provides opportunities to apply for CDBG funds in two categories

– **Community Enrichment** and **Village Renaissance** Programs. These application requests are due to the SC Department of Commerce on August 17, 2012.

The **Community Enrichment Program** is designed to fund facilities, services and other activities that strengthen existing communities and support a high quality of life within the following state priority areas:

First priority - Workforce Development, which includes:

- library facilities or computer equipment with broadband capability to enhance skills training and education
- Workforce Quick Jobs Training Programs
- Publicly-owned facilities that offer extended educational opportunities for adult literacy or to serve at-risk LMI children or youth

Second priority – Safe and Healthy Communities, which can assist with:

- public safety facilities and services in LMI neighborhoods
- demolition of vacant, dilapidated structures to address and support crime prevention efforts in targeted LMI neighborhoods
- fire substations or trucks serving LMI residential areas that provide significant improvement in service for in-town locations or near business centers
- health clinic facilities or equipment in underserved areas

Third priority – Obstacles to Economic Competitiveness, which include:

- Developing energy efficiencies for CDBG-eligible public facilities that will significantly reduce operating burdens and promote sustainability
- Brownfield projects or demolition of obsolete buildings
- Downtown streetscape infrastructure where there is significant business activity and substantial prior investments, and CDBG funds are needed to complete the necessary infrastructure improvements. Projects must include a plan for retail/small business support.
- Transportation-oriented public facilities or services to serve LMI workforce populations
- Planning for regional infrastructure, smart growth or sustainable development.

The **Village Renaissance Program** is designed to assist in the development of sustainable communities through revitalization of in-town residential neighborhoods. Projects must incorporate comprehensive strategies for linking commercial revitalization successes with improvements to neighborhoods that are generally adjacent to downtown or business centers. Such neighborhoods should be within walking distance to downtown or business centers (typically no more than ½ mile from the downtown or business center).

Each project should involve a three phased program of planning and implementation that may be funded with CDBG and/or other funds. Phase One requires a neighborhood revitalization plan. Phases Two and Three involve activities designed to implement the revitalization plan. Implementation of comprehensive neighborhood revitalization must involve multiple activities including a public safety component. Activities may include infrastructure, public facilities, limited housing improvements, demolition and clearance of vacant and dilapidated properties, and public services such as a crime watch program and drug or gang education and awareness.

For more information, or to discuss a potential CDBG project, contact Dirk Reis at the ACOG.