



VIEWPOINT

Appalachian Council of Governments Quarterly Newsletter

Third Quarter 2013

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

SC Department of Commerce Awards Infrastructure Improvement Grants

The SC Department of Commerce recently awarded \$966,747 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.

The Town of Lyman was awarded \$500,000 to rehab the sewer in its historic mill village. The project will start at the corner of Lawrence and Station Streets and conclude along River Street, and will include the removal of the old, deteriorated lines and the construction of new lines adjacent to the old. Approximately 6,475 feet of line will be installed, along with 28 manholes. This area of town has seen many sanitary sewer overflows in the past few years, so this project will bring much needed relief to the neighborhood's 157 residents.

The **City of Walhalla** has received \$387,747 to construct new water lines in the Chicopee Mill area of town along Verner Street, East Wesley Street, Gerber Street, and Parker Street. This is the second phase of infrastructure improvements in the Chicopee Mill area. The project will include new 8-inch ductile iron water lines and new service connections to the 75 homes in the area.

The **Town of Central** was awarded \$79,000 to construct 1,050 feet of new 6-inch water line along James Circle. The new line will replace the current 1¼-inch lines and provide 18 homes with increased water pressure and volume.

The ACOG Grant Services Department assisted with the CDBG applications and will administer these grants to ensure that 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 ACOG.



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Don't Miss Out On 2013 Planning Training Opportunities!

The Appalachian Council of Governments, as part of its training opportunities for local government officials, provides the requisite Planning Education training sessions to ensure local government commission members and staffs meet training requirements established by the SC Legislature in [Article 9](#) of the SC Code of Laws. As we come to the last quarter of 2013, there are many who have not met their orientation or continuing education requirements. Luckily, there is still plenty of time to sign up for one of our orientation or continuing education training sessions.

Training is mandatory for local government planning commissions, boards of zoning appeals and architectural review boards, as well as for staff who directly or indirectly work with planning officials. New members must complete a six-hour curriculum their first year to be eligible to serve on boards or as staff for planning officials. Then, in subsequent years, members and staff must complete three hours of continuing education to remain certified.

The schedule of classes is posted on the ACOG website, along with registration instructions. There is a \$35 fee per person for classes. For more information please contact Jennifer Vissage at 242-9733.



Planning director, Chip Bentley

ACOG Provides Diversity Training at the Annual Conference of the SC Association of Counties

At the annual SCAC conference in Hilton Head Island this past August, Donna Kazia, ACOG training coordinator, was invited to provide diversity training to many of the members. Ms. Kazia stressed the importance of recognizing and encouraging diversity in the workplace.

Supervisors are often not aware of the various differences that exist within their staff. There are generational issues, cultural issues, racial issues, and the like, which need to be respected. By simply paying closer attention to the employees, management is much better equipped to address issues before they become problems. For example, it is very easy to recognize generational issues. Rarely are youthful employees seen wearing watches, while more experienced individuals are rarely found without one.



Training coordinator, Donna Kazia

Please take time to recognize these diverse components in your workforce. ACOG sincerely appreciates SCAC for recognizing our knowledge and professionalism in diversity and training in general, and we thank them for the opportunity to impart knowledge to those in attendance at the annual conference.

Grant Enables a Local Senior to "Age in Place"

Last Fall, the Appalachian Area Agency on Aging (AAA) received a grant award from the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging (LGOA) through State Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) in the amount of \$30,000. These funds were earmarked for minor repairs and modifications to homes in our region, with the goal of enabling area seniors to "age in place".

The maximum allowance for each project is \$1000, and there are specific qualifications for eligibility, including:

- Age (60 and older)
- Financial need
- A requirement that the applicant(s) live in the home at which the work is to be completed

To maximize the impact of these dollars, the AAA canvassed various agencies in the region with which to partner for use of the funds. Fortunately, we were able to partner with the Anderson Interfaith Ministries (AIM) and Ready Willing Go (ReWiGo), which collectively serve Anderson, Pickens, Oconee, and Greenville Counties. Both organizations have outreach programs that utilize volunteers to build or refurbish access ramps, porches, roofing, and flooring, and also to install bathroom safety items like grab bars. Thus far, there have been twenty-four such projects completed.

Church groups, individuals and other organizations develop volunteer teams which plan, initiate, and complete each task. For this project, AIM was contacted by Tanner Pabst, a boy scout and sophomore at TL Hanna High School, who had been seeking a service project in his community. Through a friend, he was introduced to Nancy Henderson, who directs this effort at AIM.

Once he found a worthy cause, Tanner solicited help from his fellow scout troop members for a project that would not only assist an 88-year-old woman in receiving a new access ramp, but would also help him meet requirements toward achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. Tanner and his fellow scouts completed a new entrance and ramp, allowing for safer access to her home as she utilizes a walker and scooter for mobility.

In reflection, Tanner said, "I learned that I have to be prepared for the worst, and that things might not always work out how you might like them to. I felt really good and useful, and that I had done something great for a person in need when I saw Ms. Boston on her new porch. I really liked the outcome and all the good feelings that came with it. I think this was a really good character building experience for me and all the other volunteers that attended."

Through Tanner's efforts and the generous efforts of other volunteers, elderly and handicapped individuals are living safer and more independent lives in their own homes. For volunteering opportunities, contact: Nancy Henderson (AIM) at 864-226-2273 or Sara Newton (ReWiGo) at 864-239-3708.



TL Hanna sophomore, Tanner Pabst, with the help of his fellow boy scouts, builds a new access ramp for an 88-year-old area resident.

The Appalachian Regional Commission's November 2013 Conference Registration is Now Open!

TOWARD PROSPERITY:
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
 Transforming Appalachia's Economy

November 6-7, 2013

Charleston, West Virginia



An Appalachian Regional Commission Conference
 Hosted by the State of West Virginia

Entrepreneurs are creating a new economic model in Appalachia — one based on local investment and local ownership — and their impact is already being felt in some of the Region's core sectors, such as manufacturing, health care, and food production. The **Toward Prosperity** conference will explore ways Appalachian communities can develop an entrepreneurial ecosystem that provides support and growth opportunities for both new and established businesses.

The opening session on Thursday, November 7th includes remarks by ARC Federal Co-Chair Earl Gohl and West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin. Sessions will focus on critical issues in fostering local entrepreneurship, such as:

- Addressing gaps in access to capital
- Providing comprehensive entrepreneurship education
- Offering targeted technical assistance

For more information, or to register for the conference, go to www.arc.gov/towardprosperity

ACOG Receives Grant to Build Online "Entrepreneur Friendly Toolkit" for Communities

The Department of Planning and Economic Development recently received a \$55,000 federal grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission to build an online "Entrepreneur Friendly Toolkit". The Toolkit will take local leaders through eight interactive "steps" which will help their communities organize themselves around supporting local entrepreneurs and small business. These steps include:

1. Resource Assessment
2. Centralized Information
3. Training Programs
4. Networks
5. Business Sustainability
6. Local Regulations (zoning, permitting, licensing, etc.)
7. Business-Government Communication
8. Public Recognition of Entrepreneurs.



Each step will require leaders to conduct an analysis, inputting their own local information into the Toolkit. When they complete the eight steps, the local leaders will simply click "print" and a customized PDF report will be generated, entitled "City (or County) of ____ Entrepreneur Friendly Action Plan".

The output is a customized plan, in that most of its content is the local information provided during completion of the eight steps. For example after the City of Pickens completes *Step 1 -Resource Assessment*, an organized map of local resources for entrepreneurs will be generated – complete with those resources' descriptions and contact information. In addition, participating communities will have a user name and password so that they are able to log back in and update their Action Plans. Communities will also be able to post their completed Action Plans on the Toolkit website, enabling them to share their own good ideas with communities throughout the region.

With participation from two volunteer pilot communities (City of Pickens and Oconee County), the Toolkit's development will begin in October and should last approximately twelve months. For more information, contact David Shellhorse at dshellhorse@scacog.org or (864) 241-4649.



ACOG Staff Members Recognized

A number of ACOG staff members were recently recognized by the Board for having 20+ years of service with the ACOG. The following individuals received plaques of recognition at recent ACOG Board meetings:

Dirk Reis

Director of Grant Services; 21 years of service

Debra Brown

Aging Services Volunteer Coordinator; 22 years of service

Steve Pelissier

Executive Director; 23 years of service

Donna Kazia

Government Services Training Coordinator; 24 years of service

Sandy Dunagan

Long-Term Care Ombudsman; 28 years of service

The dedication of these five individuals and their contributions to the region are greatly appreciated!



ACOG's Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman Retires

The Appalachian Area Agency on Aging celebrated a milestone this September. Nancy Hawkins, the Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman, has retired after 15 years in this program.

Nancy has been a true advocate for those institutionalized residents in the six-county region. As the State long term care ombudsman stated at Nancy's retirement reception, "Nancy has a heart of gold and has truly inspired other ombudsmen around the state."

Steve Pelissier presented Nancy with a plaque honoring her time at the Area Agency on Aging. The AAA staff gave Nancy an engraved crystal vase and luggage for her future traveling plans with her husband, Danny. We very much appreciate the service Nancy has given and wish her much happiness in retirement!



Executive director, Steve Pelissier, presents Nancy Hawkins with a plaque of appreciation.