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VIEWPOINT

Appalachian Council of Governments Quarterly Newsletter

Fourth Quarter 2015

CDBG and ARC Grants Recently Awarded

The SC Department of Commerce recently awarded over \$700,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to benefit low- and moderate-income people in the Appalachian Region.

The **City of Inman** was awarded \$500,000 to undertake the first phase of a streetscape project that will enhance the portion of Main Street from City Hall to Mill Street and also improve Mill Street from Main Street to Humphrey Street. The scope of work includes landscaping, decorative pavers, enhanced crosswalks, handicapped ramps, and improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks and parking.



Mill Street, Inman

The **City of Westminster** has been approved for \$89,850 to upgrade the city-owned electrical transmission system by replacing obsolete and inefficient transformers with new dual current transformers. This project is being undertaken to help with reducing the cost to customers; making the city more competitive in recruiting new business; making it easier to retain existing business; and reducing energy loss.

The **City of Woodruff** has received \$115,000 to demolish a city-owned building which is located across from City Hall and the city's McKinney Park. The site will be

cleared, and site improvements such as landscaping, benches, sidewalks, and lighting, will be undertaken to transform the site into an attractive green space.

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) also recently awarded grants for the following projects:

The **Town of Blacksburg** was awarded \$368,000 for the Highway 5 Sewer Project, which will involve the construction of 1,700 feet of 8-inch gravity sewer, 3,500 feet of 6-inch force main, and a sewer pump station to serve industrial sites along Highway 5.

The **Town of Central** was awarded \$223,000 for the Clayton Street Improvements Project.

This project includes road expansion and turn lanes at the Highway 93 entrance to Southern Wesleyan University, which will improve safety and provide access to the university's sports complex facilities, which are open to the public.

The **City of Easley** received a grant of \$250,732 to develop the Doodle Trailhead, which is an access point for the Doodle Rail Trail. The facilities will include parking, landscaping, restrooms, and an information booth.

The **City of Pickens** was awarded \$164,755 to renovate the auditorium of the Hagood Community Center to serve as a performing arts center, exhibition and lecture hall.

Pioneer Rural Water District was awarded \$500,000 to be used toward the construction of the new \$9.5 million Lake Hartwell Water Treatment Plant.

The ACOG Grant Services Department assisted with the submission of these applications and will administer most of the grants to ensure that the funds are expended in compliance with state and federal guidelines. For more information on the CDBG and ARC programs, contact Dirk Reis at the COG.



Senior Advocates Issue Legislative Priorities

Under the leadership of its newly elected speaker (president), Hannah Timmons (Richland County), the 186-member South Carolina Silver Haired Legislature (SCSHL) recently held its 17th Annual Legislative Priorities Session in the House chambers of the S. C. State Capitol. The statewide assembly was authorized by the S. C. Legislature in 1999 to give experiential advice to the governor and lieutenant governor, through the legislature, on emerging and longstanding senior issues. After three days' productive debate, the Priorities presented to the Second Session, 121st General Assembly, are:

- Funding for in-home and community-based services
- Funding for additional Adult Protective Services workers
- Funding for Vulnerable Adult Guardian Ad Litem Program

The Silver Haired Legislature is a statewide volunteer organization with representatives from each county who meet annually to discuss and prioritize issues of concern to South Carolina's senior adults age 60 and older. Created by state law, this organization advocates for legislation in SC to improve the health and quality of life for seniors.



Senior P.R.E.P. Event Encourages Individual Emergency Preparedness

On Tuesday, December 1st, the Appalachian Area Agency on Aging participated in a Senior P.R.E.P. event at Walgreens, located at 1 The Parkway in Greenville. Senior P.R.E.P. is a program designed to raise awareness of the

importance of individual emergency preparedness for South Carolina's senior population.

Special guests included S.C. Lieutenant Governor Henry McMaster, S.C. Emergency Management Division chief of operations, Mike Russell and Walgreens district manager, Matthew Malloy. Although Mother Nature tried to dampen this event, she did not discourage seniors from attending. Free emergency starter kits, t-shirts, emergency prep information, and blood pressure checks were provided for those attending.



Several local, state and federal agencies were on hand to provide information on their respective services and to display emergency preparedness vehicles as well. Participating agencies included the Greenville County Sheriff's Department, Greenville County Emergency Management Office, Spartanburg County Emergency Management, Salvation Army, S.C. Office of State Fire Marshall, Boiling Springs Fire Department, Senior Action, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Area Agency on Aging.

This event was a huge success in terms of ensuring that our seniors received the necessary information for being prepared in the event of an emergency situation. We appreciate those participating organizations that made this event a success, and we look forward to working with our seniors to provide additional information. With the help of several state and local agencies, the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging has produced a Senior P.R.E.P. brochure - available from the aging.sc.gov website - which outlines several "hot issues" in emergency preparedness relating to seniors.



infoMentum

2015 Brings New InfoMentum Investors!

For twenty years, the ACOG InfoMentum program has served as an economic development data clearinghouse for the region in its efforts to recruit and retain employers. ACOG has received numerous national awards for InfoMentum, including eight Innovation Awards from the National Association of Development Organizations. The program includes a restricted log-in website which Upstate economic developers use to generate maps and economic data for business and industry. The ACOG InfoMentum team also offers services for more complex mapping and research needs. A portal has also been established through which information on available industrial buildings and sites is downloaded from the S.C. Department of Commerce's LocateSC database. This information is then delivered via agency-branded websites and property flyers, which were developed and are maintained by ACOG.

Like any program that relies on ever changing technology, the expenses of maintaining InfoMentum can be considerable. Fortunately the program continues to attract new investing partners. The S.C. Rural Water Association and the SC Small Business Development Center - Clemson Region signed on as investors in 2014. This year has been even more successful, as new partnerships were forged with the Upper Savannah Council of Governments (Greenwood), the Catawba Council of Governments (Rock Hill), the City of Anderson Economic Development Department, and the Greenwood Partnership Alliance. ACOG is committed to sustaining and improving InfoMentum as a powerful economic development tool for the region. If your economic development department or organization is interested in learning more, visit www.infoMentum.org or contact David Shellhorse, program manager, at (864) 241-4649, or dshellhorse@scacog.org

ACOG Board Members Recognized at the Annual SCARC Conference

ACOG board member Senator Billy O'Dell was presented with the Legislator of the Year Award, and board member Ed Elliott was named Volunteer of the Year at the recent SC Association of Regional Councils(SCARC) Annual Conference.

In presenting the award to Senator O'Dell, SCARC president Yancey McGill noted that the senator has been a staunch supporter of regionalism and the COG system since first joining the Senate in 1989.

President McGill called Senator O'Dell "a true servant of South Carolina and a valued friend." With a district that crosses into both the Appalachian and Upper Savannah regions, both ACOG director Steve Pelissier and USCOG director Patricia Hartung cite Senator O'Dell for his outstanding leadership, guidance, and commitment to meeting the needs of citizens.



*Pictured from left to right:
SCARC vice-president Eddie Lee, Senator O'Dell, and
SCARC president Yancy McGill.*

In naming Ed Elliott as the Volunteer of the Year, President McGill noted his leadership at both the state and regional levels, culminating as SCARC president in 2014. In addition, Mr. Elliott has served as a SCARC board member since 2008 and served as Vice President in 2013. At the regional level, Mr. Elliott has been an active board member with ACOG since 2006. He has provided leadership in such positions as Finance Committee Chair, Secretary, and Board Chair. As a lifetime resident of the region who is well respected by the community, Mr. Elliott gives the agency instant credibility with governmental and private sector leaders. He has an excellent sense of the pulse of the region, and provides strong counsel in tackling challenges.



*Pictured from left to right;
Eddie Lee, Ed Elliott and Yancy McGill*