

COG Accepting Applications for Housing Trust Funds

The Appalachian Development Corporation Board has approved a request from the Grants Services staff of the COG to serve as the 501(c)(4) non-profit entity in applying for South Carolina Housing Trust Fund grants. The South Carolina Housing Trust Fund was established in 1992 through the Real Estate Transfer Tax. A percentage of each fee charged for Deed Stamps is collected by the Budget and Control Board and allocated to the S.C. Housing Finance and Development Authority (SCSHFDA) annually for administration of various programs. Six million dollars in Housing Trust Funds are made available statewide on an annual basis. The Appalachian COG will be providing important housing services to local governments and individuals through two programs:

Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program

- \$20,000 maximum grant award per individual household
- 50% match required (dollar for dollar) – other grant sources can be used as match
- Requires the homeowner to sign a 20-year covenant of affordability or forgivable loan that decreases by 10% per year during years 1-10, less \$500 that is forgiven during years 11-20.
- Applications are accepted monthly,



and are considered 30 days prior to each monthly Board of Commissioners meeting. The Board of Commissioners of the SCSHFDA has the discretion to make all grant awards.

Emergency Repair Program

- \$6,000 maximum grant award
- No match required
- Requires the same 20-year covenant of affordability as the Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program
- Applications are accepted monthly, and grant awards are made by the SCSHFDA staff.

The COG will prepare and submit applications for assistance on behalf of low income individuals. If you are aware of needs in your community that can be served through either of these programs, please contact Dianna Gracely in Grants Services at the COG.

Jeri Bennett Joins A COG Staff

Jeri Bennett has joined the COG staff in the position of PC support. She is responsible for maintaining the COG's com-



puters and printers. Jeri has worked in the computer field for over 25 years and has an A.S. Degree in Electronic Engineering from Capital Institute of Technology in Kensington, Maryland.

Jeri is a Greenville native who recently returned to South Carolina. She moved back to work for Milliken to ensure their computer systems were Y2K compliant. Before returning, she worked for Digital Equipment Corporation, where she received a "black badge" level security clearance in order to service computers for the federal government.

Jeri is a sports enthusiast who particularly likes football. Her favorite



Did You Know?

The Appalachian Council of Governments was the first regional council in South Carolina. In 1965 it was known as the Appalachian Advisory Commission, which was created to advise the Governor on the use of Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) funds.

Regionalism : Concept and Practice

Part V : How Regional Councils Benefit Local and State Governments

As members of regional councils, local governments benefit in a variety of ways. Regional councils provide a forum for sharing information to solve common problems, or take advantage of common opportunities. This type of sharing also helps to avoid duplication of efforts and better coordinates service delivery.

Many councils, like the Appalachian COG, engage in legislative and/or economic research and help local officials become better informed on issues that might impact local communities.

Councils provide a single agency to obtain and administer funds from numerous federal, state, and other agencies. The Appalachian COG has assisted local jurisdictions in our region in bringing in and administering over \$400 million during the Council's history.

Using available professional expertise to aid in local operations. Regional councils maintain professional staffs who can assist local governments in specific projects related to public administration; public works; grants and grants administration; local planning; information technology; and many similar areas. Many local jurisdictions may not have the need or the resources to maintain full-time staff in these disciplines.

Promoting cooperation between the public and private sectors. The regional public-private partnership, Informatum, and the Greenville County Information Alliance are excellent examples of ways the COG has helped promote public-private cooperation.

State and federal agencies also receive the benefits brought about by partnering with regional councils. In South Carolina this includes being able to deal with 10 regional councils versus 46

counties and well over 200 municipalities for planning, coordinating, and overseeing the administration of state and federal programs.

Regional councils assist local governments in handling tasks that are set by state or federal regulation or mandate. This helps ensure the consistency and quality of the local government response and enhances the chances for the impact being consistent with the state or federal intent.

The regional council approach helps foster cooperation that avoids duplication of effort and takes advantage of economies of scale. This allows state and federal agencies to use their limited financial resources in the most efficient manner, to reach the largest number of beneficiaries.

Discussing Issues of Aging with Your Parents Can Be Difficult

Your Parents' Most Important Planning Documents

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care/Health Care Surrogate Appointment. Don't assume that as their child you are automatically entitled to step in and help if your parents become unable to make their own health care decisions. Your parent must give you the legal authority to make those decisions, and that's done through a durable power of attorney for health care, also called a health care surrogate appointment.

Durable Power of Attorney for Financial and Legal Matters. If your mom suffers a stroke and becomes in-

competent, you may have to step in to help. But you can't take money out of



her IRA or sell her stock to pay her bills unless she's given you the power to do so. A durable power of attorney for financial and legal affairs allows you to.

Living Wills. With the wonders of modern medicine, doctors can keep patients alive longer than ever before. But if your parent were in a permanent vegetative state, would he want to be connected to a machine to keep his lungs breathing or heart pumping? A living will prepared when your parent is mentally fit is the only legal document designed to enable your parent to express his wishes about life-support issues.

Will and/or Living Trust. Unless your parents want the state to decide for them, they must specify how and whom they'd like to leave their estate at death; this is done with a will or living trust. A will is simpler and less expensive to create than a trust. But at death, assets passing under a will go through probate, which can be expensive and time-consuming. A living trust will be more involved and costly to create, but can be used to pass assets to heirs without probate.

Where Do Your Parents Keep Their Important Papers?

It's a crucial question - one that needs to be discussed with your folks. In addition to telling you the location for each of the documents described previously, your parents should also tell you where they keep their checkbook, financial statements and tax returns. They

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Multi-Modal Plan Focus Group Meetings Planned for April 2001

The Appalachian Council of Governments is partnering with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and the other nine COGs to produce the Statewide Multi-Modal Transportation Plan. In an attempt to decentralize the planning process and allow for more local input, each COG is responsible for their region's plan. All of the plans are then compiled with the SCDOT's information to create the statewide plan. Over the last few months, the ACOG has compiled a Regional Scan of the current transportation components here in the Appalachian Region. The types of transportation providers inventoried include passenger and freight rail, public transportation, roads, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and aviation facilities.

The next step for this plan will be to hold focus group meetings with various transportation organizations, local planners, area chambers of commerce, bicycle and pedestrian groups, and land conservation and preservation groups to discuss the Scan and identify regional transportation issues and needs and develop broad recommendations to meet the transportation needs of the region. The first round of meetings will take place during the month of April and the follow-up round of meetings will take place in May. To allow for greater input, attendees will be encouraged to participate in many meetings, not just the ones for their areas of transportation. After both rounds of meetings, the plan will then be submitted to the ACOG Board for approval and upon Board approval, the plan will be sent to the SCDOT. Below is a listing of the focus groups and meeting dates for April.

Surface Transportation - April 9, 2001, 2:00 p.m. (Monday)

Aviation - April 10, 2001, 2:00 p.m. (Tuesday)

Rail and Freight - April 11, 2001, 10:00 a.m. (Wednesday)

Transit: Bus and Rail - April 16, 2001, 2:00 p.m. (Monday)

Transportation and Community* - April 18, 2001, 2:00 p.m. (Wednesday)

Bicycle and Pedestrian - April 19, 2001, 2:30 p.m. (Thursday)

*Addresses the interrelationships between transportation, land use, and community development planning.

All focus group meetings will take place in the Board Room of the ACOG office. For additional information about the Multi-Modal Plan or the focus group meetings, please contact Steve Pelissier or Dan Wagner.

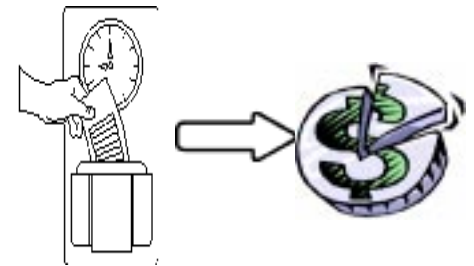
Brownfields Opportunities for Carolina Communities

A Workshop On Tools To Redevelop Contaminated Properties
Great Smokies Holiday Inn
SunSpree Resort
Asheville, North Carolina
May 9, 2001

Cities and counties nationwide are facing the economic and environmental consequences of contaminated properties, or brownfields. On

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Overtime Pay A Serious Drain on County Budgets



Overtime Budgeting and Analysis

The Council of Governments has recently been involved with in-depth projects tied to overtime budgeting and analysis for Spartanburg and Oconee Counties. Staff member Donna Kazia recently finished a review of Spartanburg County's Overtime Budgeting and Procedures. Findings and recommendations centered around budgeting and incentives for departments to monitor and curtail overtime. Other recommendations included the creation of temporary labor pools to assist departments with high volumes of work during specific times of the year and alternative work schedules to reduce scheduled overtime.

In a similar project, Melissa Welborn is currently working with Oconee County to review their uses of overtime and compensatory (comp) time. She is focusing on departments with the most overtime and comp time expenses, including the Sheriff, LEC, Communications, Roads, Building Codes, Airport, Animal Control, Clerk of Court, Rock Quarry, Tax Collector, Register of Deeds, Motor Pool, and Solid Waste. In addition to reviewing the process for

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ADC Approves Five New Loans

Indexx, Inc., a printing company that specializes in providing high volume index tabs and high speed laser copying, was approved for a loan of \$200,000. The ADC funds will be used with funds from The Palmetto Bank to provide long-term financing of a new building and land for the business. The loan was approved for 15 years for a project that exceeds \$1,300,000. The company currently employs forty people and plans to expand by at least eight additional employees within the next two years.

Excalibur Youth Services, LLC, a high management group home being established to provide training to troubled youths, was approved for a loan of \$110,000. The ADC funds will be used to provide long term financing for the land and building being purchased and remediated at the campus near Travelers Rest. Sunbelt Commercial Capital provided additional funding for the project that totals over \$900,000. Excalibur will employ over twenty people within two years.

Harris & Harris, P.A. was approved for a loan of \$40,000 to help the Spartanburg-based firm introduce and offer new accounting services for small businesses. The ADC loan will be used to fund equipment and working capital. Summit National Bank is providing additional funding. The firm currently employs two people and expects to expand by an additional two employees.

Elite Concrete Construction Company was approved for a loan of \$145,000. Elite provides concrete curbing for commercial projects. A long with Regions Bank, the ADC is providing permanent funding for the purchase of equipment for a total project of over \$300,000. The firm employs eight people and expects to add an additional five people.

IDC Trim and Upholstery Supply, Inc., of Spartanburg was approved for a loan of \$65,000. The ADC funds will be used to fund additional inventory and

equipment for inventory control. Other funding is from Isuzu Financial and BB&T. The firm employs four people and expects to add two more employees.

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May 9th, join top brownfields experts to identify tools and opportunities to reclaim brownfields and unlock economic prosperity within South and North Carolina communities.

Join us to:

- Identify available state and federal brownfields resources and funding;
- Learn from successful community brownfields programs; and,
- Develop strategies to overcome brownfields barriers.

This conference is sponsored by: The S.C. Appalachian Council of Governments, National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals, National Association of Development Organizations, North Carolina League of Municipalities, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, Municipal Association of South Carolina, South Carolina Association of Counties, Development District Association of Appalachia, Land-of-Sky Regional Council, North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, North Carolina Department of Commerce, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, and the South Carolina Job-Economic Development Authority/Carolina Capital Investment Corporation. Funding for the workshop is being provided by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

For more information, please contact Andrew Seth at NALGEP at (202) 638-6254 or by e-mail at nalgep@spiegel.mcd.com. To register

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should give you a list of names and telephone numbers of their trusted professionals as well, including doctors, lawyers and accountants.

Handle With Care

How do you broach the topics of long-term care, wills and all of the other issues facing elderly parents without causing defensiveness? First, "Be careful not to step in too soon," cautions Donna Benton, Ph.D., a gerontologist at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. "Otherwise, they may feel resentful and think that you're trying to take away their independence." It's tough to know the right moments, but if you notice such red flags as persistent memory lapses, more frequent doctor visits or an increased reliance on others for help, then it's time to talk. Look for natural openings. Ask your parents about their friends. If one is ill or having difficulty, use it as a springboard to inquire about the plans your mom has made in the event of a medical crisis. Or, to get a conversation going, frame it in the form of asking advice. Tell your dad you're planning for your own family's future and you wondered how he decided to handle his medical decisions or arrange his financial affairs. When you have these talks with your folks, be patient, non-judgmental, sensitive and loving. They probably feel as uneasy as you do. Emphasize that you're concerned about their continued quality of life as they age. "Don't expect to get this all done in a day," adds Dr. Benton. "Start a dialogue, and plant the seeds for future discussions."

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budgeting overtime, she will look at alternative scheduling possibilities, and other potential ways to decrease overall overtime costs.

Local governments interested in having the Council of Governments review overtime expenses should call ei-

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 6 Summer School of Gerontology Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Department of Mental Health, Columbia.
- April 12 Aging Component Directors Meeting, 2:30 - 4:00 p.m., COG Training Room.
- April 19 SE4A / S.C. Conference on Aging Committee Meeting, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Columbia.
- April 20-21 SE4A Board Meeting, Memphis, Tennessee.
- April 23-27 Greater Greenville Senior Sports Classic; applications and registration information available at Greenville County Recreation and Senior Action.
- April 25 Public Hearing on Regional Aging Plan, 9:30 - 10:15 a.m., COG Board Room.
- April 25 Regional Aging Advisory Committee Meeting, 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., COG Board Room.
- April 27 COG Board of Directors Meeting, 10:30 a.m., Council Board Room.

VIEW POINT

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