

ACOG Offering ESRI Authorized Training

Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) is the premier GIS software provider for the world, with tens of thousands of users worldwide. ESRI training is highly valued, and over 20,000 people attend ESRI training courses annually. The Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) is pleased to announce that they now have an ESRI Authorized Instructor on staff. Ann Ratliffe is certified to teach the *Introduction to ArcGIS I (for ArcView 8, ArcEditor 8, and ArcInfo 8)* and *Migrating from ArcView GIS 3.x to ArcView 8*



ESRI training courses. Both two-day classes are now offered at the ACOG, as well as at client sites.

Intro to ArcGIS I and *Migrating from ArcView GIS 3.x to ArcView 8* are both introductory level GIS courses, designed to teach the fundamentals of ESRI's ArcGIS technology. Both courses teach GIS concepts and cover working with tabular data, editing spatial data, creating maps, and working in the ArcMap, ArcCatalog, and ArcToolbox applications. The *Intro to ArcGIS* course is designed for people with little or no GIS experience, whereas the *Mi-*



grating from ArcView GIS 3.x to ArcView 8 class is geared towards users with prior ArcView 3 experience. The minimum requirement for the *Intro to ArcGIS* class is experience using basic windows software. For the *Migrating* course, students should have either completed the *Intro to ArcView* training class or have 3-6 months of recent ArcView 3 experience.

These courses are excellent for people of many different disciplines and areas of interest. GIS is a very useful tool for data analysis, project planning, modeling and map creation. GIS is utilized for land use planning, routing, utility applications, wetland delineation, hydrologic modeling, permit applications, pollution studies, environmental modeling, public safety applications and much more. Contact Ann Ratliffe at the ACOG today to see if a GIS course could benefit you or your organization!

Appalachian COG Receives National Awards

The Appalachian COG recently received national recognition for three innovative programs. *Innovation Awards* were presented by the National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation for the COG's efforts in *Homeland Security Training, Small Towns Technical Assistance*, and the GIS-based decision support system, *InfoMentum*.

In the area of Homeland Security, the COG conducted a series of Terrorism Awareness classes and briefings including: elected officials and administrators awareness training; a water system security workshop; and briefings by South Carolina's Homeland Security Director and nuclear plant officials. The COG is currently scheduling a series of First Responder Awareness classes for local law enforcement, EMS, and fire personnel.

The Small Towns Assistance program focuses intensive, hands-on technical assistance on some of the region's smallest economically distressed municipalities. The COG conducted a detailed needs assessment for each town, and is currently providing custom computer programming, budget assistance, strategic planning sessions, governmental training, and a number of other services tailored to each town's specific needs. The COG hopes to expand the program in the coming year.

InfoMentum, a program started by the COG several years ago, continues to provide the region's economic development professionals with a powerful database tool used to recruit

(Awards continued on page 3)

Gaffney West End Community Development Plan Completed

The COG, working with staff from the City of Gaffney and residents of the West End community, recently completed a development plan for the West End neighborhood. Through field work by COG staff, interviews with community leaders and input from a series of public meetings, this plan identifies strategies for preserving and enhancing the area. Its conclusions provide a framework for improvement action to be carried out by residents of the



community and the City. It also puts the City in a position to seek Community Development Block Grants to support development initiatives.

Over 50 residents came out for community meetings held at Bethel Baptist Church. Participants were asked to identify strengths of the neighborhood, as well as to list priorities for improvements. Identified strengths include the commitment of long time residents, and the presence of strong churches and civic organizations, as well as a convenient location to downtown and shopping. The top three improvement priorities listed are housing rehabilitation, development of a community center and enhancement of park facilities.

For housing rehabilitation, the primary areas identified are Peeler Street, Broad Street and West Robinson Street. In addition, residents believe that a community center could provide many benefits, including serving as a place for volunteer groups to meet, and

accommodating children's activities. Also, while there is a park located in the West End, citizens identified improvements to the facility, and in security, that could make it more useful to residents.

Over the next few weeks, the Community Development Committee of the Gaffney City Council will review findings of the plan and report to full Council on possible actions to be taken.

2002 S. C. Conference on Aging

This year's conference will be held November 14-15, 2002, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Greenville. The theme will be "South Carolina: A Community for all Ages." Conference highlights will include an address on "Creativity and Aging" by Gene Cohen, M.D., Ph.D., Director of the Center on Aging, the Senior Celebrations Award Ceremony, six concurrent workshops at three separate times during the conference, a great exhibit hall, and a closing general sessions lunch featuring guest speaker Roddy Gray from Abbeville. Information on registration fees and an application should be mailed to interested persons by August 9, 2002. The Appalachian region's aging network is excited about the conference and encourages you to participate and support this wonderful training opportunity. If you have questions, need additional information, would like to receive a registration package, or are interested in being an exhibitor/sponsor, please contact Michael Stogner at the ACOG's office.

Personal Property Taxes in 2003



Another .75% drop in property tax assessments

In 2001, in response to a state-wide referendum, the General Assembly enacted a law gradually lowering the 10.5% assessment ratio on personal vehicles to 6% over a period of six years. The General Assembly created a new class of personal property, including personal cars and pickup trucks, which was assessed at a 9.75% rate in 2002 and will be assessed at 9.00% in 2003. Assessments are to continue to drop by .75% per year until 2007.

By the end of the transition period, vehicle owners will be receiving a substantial tax break. Unfortunately, local governments and schools are also slowly beginning to realize a significant reduction in tax revenues. The drop from 10.5% to 6% will result in a 43% decrease by 2007. Increases in vehicle values may offset some of the loss, but most jurisdictions will lose annual revenue growth that they have come to rely upon to stave off property tax increases.

South Carolina's already complicated classified tax assessment system will be further altered by 1999 Act 130. Local governments will be pressed to make up revenue losses by raising other taxes or fees, and the lower assessments will produce more of a tax "shift," than tax "relief." In any case, local government budget writers must be prepared to deal with shrinking personal property tax revenues.

Upstate Receives Four Community Development Investment Grants

The S. C. Department of Commerce recently awarded Community Investment Grants from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program to four communities in the Upstate. The Grants Services staff of the Appalachian Council of Governments assisted all four communities in developing the projects, submitting the applications, and will administer the grants.

Anderson County was awarded \$250,000 in CDBG funds, and will also receive \$250,000 in ARC funds for the **Lyonswood Sewer Project**. This project will extend public sewer service to a small neighborhood located just south of the Anderson city limits that does not currently have sewer. The neighborhood is suffering from malfunctioning septic tanks, which are creating a severe health and safety hazard in the neighborhood. Residents often have raw sewage standing in their backyards and running down into a nearby creek. This project will benefit 106 persons, 65 percent of whom are low income.

Cherokee County was awarded \$250,000 in CDBG funds and will also receive \$250,000 in ARC funds for the **Wilkesville Water Project**. This project will extend public water service to an area located about 10 miles southeast of the City of Gaffney, which is suffering from contaminated and dried up wells. The project will serve 296 persons, 83 percent of whom are low income.

The City of Easley was awarded \$500,000 to allow the **Good Samaritan Alliance** to purchase a building in order to expand the services offered to the low-income and working poor in Pickens County through the Free Medical Clinic and United Christian Ministries. These services are currently provided out of the West End Community Center, but the agencies

have outgrown the space and desperately need to expand to meet the growing need for medical assistance, food, and clothing. The services benefited 6,847 during 2001.

The City of Landrum was awarded \$350,000 in CDBG funds and will also receive \$150,000 in ARC funds for the **McDowell Street Sewer Project**. The project will extend public sewer to an area that is experiencing problems with malfunctioning septic tanks, causing health and safety concerns for the 67 residents, all of whom are low income. The project will also construct bathrooms for two houses that do not have indoor facilities.

For more information on these projects or the CDBG program, contact a member of the Grants Services staff.

AdVenture Program Holds Graduation

More than 100 students from Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens counties graduated from the AdVenture program through the Paxen Group, Inc. It was the first ceremony in which students from all three counties graduated together. Graduation ceremonies were held on June 28, 2002, at Southern Wesleyan University.

The Paxen Group was awarded a grant from the Pendleton District Workforce Investment Board to deliver youth services for Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens Counties. AdVenture, which focuses on business perspectives, critical thinking, decision-making, and academics, offers an in-school program for ages 14-18 currently enrolled in school, as well as an out-of-school program for ages 16-21.

Of the 79 students graduating from the in-school program, 22 were from Anderson County, 29 from Oconee County, and 28 from Pickens County. The out-of-school program graduated 31 students from the three-county area.

In his graduation address, Pendleton High School's Gary Burgess talked about being adopted and growing up with six brothers and sisters. Burgess' adoptive father worked three jobs to provide for his family and gave them the idea that they could become whoever they wanted to become if they worked hard. Burgess quoted African-American educator and Martin Luther King Jr. confidant Benjamin Mays about dreams: "The tragedy in life doesn't lie, young people, in not reaching your goals. The tragedy lies in having no goals to reach. Today our society is seeking change, but we need to know that the power of change is in our hands," said Burgess. "Success is your only option. Failure is not an option. Don't let anyone look down on you because of the side of the tracks you live on or because of where you come from. Simply make up your mind that you're going to do what you need to do in order to be successful."

In his closing comments, Hugh Carroll, Chairman of the Pendleton District Workforce Board's Youth Council, congratulated students who completed the program. He urged them to put their training to use in job skills and life skills. Carroll commented that "to close" meant "to end," but added that the second definition is "to bring together, and connect the circle – to bring together the youth and talent with training and education, to close the gap, to make a better person, a better employee, a better citizen."



(Awards continued from page 1)

new industry to the region. The COG recently contracted with the new Upstate Regional Alliance to provide database services through **InfoMentum**, which will help that organization market the ten-county Upstate region to the world.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program



What Is a Long Term Care Ombudsman?

- ⇒ A person who is concerned with protecting the civil and human rights of elderly residents of long-term care facilities
- ⇒ A problem solver and a mediator
- ⇒ A source of help
- ⇒ An objective investigator of complaints

Who Can Use the Long Term Care Ombudsman Service?

- ⇒ Residents in any long-term care facility, including nursing homes, personal care boarding homes, psychiatric hospitals and other facilities operated by or licensed for operation by the State Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
- ⇒ Friends and relatives of long-term care residents
- ⇒ Long-term care staff members and administrators with resident-related concerns

- ⇒ The community at large
- ⇒ Other interested groups concerned about the welfare of residents of long-term care facilities

What Does the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program Do For Long-Term Care Residents?

- ⇒ **RECEIVES** and investigates complaints, and assists residents to resolve complaints
- ⇒ **EDUCATES** residents, family, and staff about residents' rights
- ⇒ **PROVIDES** information and referral regarding long-term care programs and services
- ⇒ **ADVOCATES** improvements in state and federal laws and regulations and in improvement of quality of care
- ⇒ **IDENTIFIES** and seeks to remedy gaps in facility, government, or community services
- ⇒ **RESPECTS** the privacy and confidentiality of residents

WHO TO CONTACT?

Contact the Appalachian Council of Governments' Long Term Care Ombudsman toll free at:

Anderson County	225-3268
Cherokee County	489-6960
Greenville County	242-9733
Oconee County	882-7538
Pickens County	855-0163
Spartanburg County	582-1403

Development Corporation News

At the June Board meeting of the Appalachian Development Corporation, a loan to Anderson Door and Glass was approved in the amount of \$163,000. The proceeds were used in conjunction with financing from BB&T of South Carolina to purchase the assets of the business located in Anderson. The company currently contracts with Clemson University and Greenville Public Schools on the replacement of windows and door repair. The purchase allows seven employees to remain working, with three people to be added within the next two years.

A loan of \$140,000 was approved for Joel Hensel to assist him in financing a new office building in Simpsonville for his State Farm Insurance Agency. Joel has been a State Farm Agent for two years. New Commerce Bank has agreed to be the principal lender for the property located in Greenville County. The loan will allow Joel to double his staff to four people during the next two years.

Loans were then approved for World Indoor Sports, Inc., in the amount of \$200,000 from the Revolving Loan Fund and \$1,000,000 through the SBA 504 program. Bob Povost owns World Indoor Sports, Inc., which, in turn, owns Greenville Racquet and Fitness Club. World Indoor Sports, Inc., is opening a second location in Simpsonville. BB&T of South Carolina has agreed to be the principal lender with the total project totaling \$4,480,000. World Indoor Sports, Inc., currently employs 30 people and will hire another 28 people with this project.

During the month of July, the following loans were closed: \$80,000 to Palmetto Graphics for the purchase of a building in Greer; \$154,000 to BAB, LLC for permanent financing on a truck facility on the Westside of Greenville; and \$163,000 to Anderson Door and Glass in Anderson.

VIEWPOINT

**Appalachian Council of Governments
P. O. Box 6668
Greenville, South Carolina 29606**

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GREENVILLE, SC
PERMIT NO. 1604
