

## Transportation Enhancement Grants Awarded Through SCDOT

**T**he Cities of Landrum and Pickens are 2004 recipients of Transportation Enhancement grants. In a year that a South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) staff member calls the toughest competition yet, proposals submitted by these two communities rose to the top when the DOT Commission selected grant recipients at its July 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Landrum will receive \$139,200 in funding for a \$174,000 project that will result in streetscape and pedestrian safety improvements along West Rutherford Street (SC Highway 14), as well as the installation of landscaped medians along SC 14 from Interstate 26 to the city center. Already attractive as a destination for day trips from visitors across the Upstate and Western North Carolina, these improvements will enhance the appeal of the community as a nice place to spend a Saturday afternoon, evening, or entire weekend.

The perseverance of elected officials and staff of the City of Pickens was rewarded with the approval of its grant application. After just missing out on funding in each of the past three years, the city is tasting success with its fourth submittal in 2004. It will receive \$158,989 in funding for a \$200,000 project that will include downtown revitalization, pedestrian safety improvements, and streetscape enhancements along East Main Street.

In accordance with program requirements, grant monies can be used to fund up to 80 percent of a project's cost. Both Landrum and Pickens have committed local funds for the portions



*The attractive Pickens County Courthouse is at the center of streetscape enhancement efforts in that community.*

of the initiatives not funded by the grant. ACOG staff enjoyed the opportunity to work with both cities in developing their applications and is gratified to see the hard work of local officials and citizen volunteers pay off.

For communities that are not in a Metropolitan Planning Organization, SCDOT conducts an annual application process for Enhancement grants, with a deadline typically in March. To put a competitive application together, it is strongly encouraged that applicants start early. For information on project eligibility and other program requirements, as well as for technical assistance on developing an application, please contact Shawn Colin or Dan Wagner at the Council of Governments.



## Development Corporation News

**A** \$110,000 loan was approved for Flamingo, LLC/Tried and True, Inc., to purchase real estate in Simpsonville that houses an existing consignment business that they have also purchased. Two jobs will be retained and an additional three jobs are to be created.

A loan to Partners in Textile Innovation, LLC, has been approved in the amount of \$200,000. The firm is located in Piedmont and treats commercial fabrics for the automotive, home furnishings, and medical markets. At least five new jobs are to be created and ten existing jobs are to be retained.

A loan to Blair Mills, LP, in Honea Path was approved in the amount of \$1 million with the ADC partnering with the Community Reinvestment Fund to provide the funding. Blair Mills is expanding operations by going into a second location and purchasing \$2,500,000 in equipment to make towels for the commercial markets. The Honea Path location will employ close to 100 employees within two years.

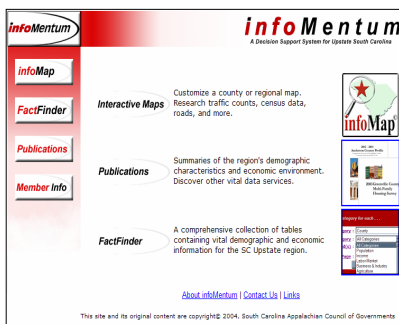
A loan to 3G Mermet of Cowpens was closed and funded in the amount of \$360,000, with the ADC funding \$72,000 and Community Reinvestment Fund funding \$288,000. These funds will allow 3G Mermet to purchase the property that they had been leasing for three years. The company employs over 70 people, with additional hires expected as expansion continues.

A \$100,000 loan to CleanSite Services, Inc., was closed and funded.

*(ADC continued on page 3)*

## Re-Birth of www.infomentum.org

The official web site of *infoMentum* is now fully functional and newly expanded. The web site, [www.infomentum.org](http://www.infomentum.org), serves as a gateway to the new *InfoMap* web-based mapping application, *FactFinder* database, ACOG on-line publications, and *infoMentum* investor and user information.



*InfoMap*, a component of the *infoMentum* decision support system, allows users to interactively view, manipulate and print maps and information on the region from anywhere in the world. Visitors to the site can create demographic reports and do detailed searches of the industrial properties database. Map layers include county and municipal boundaries, census features, water bodies, roads, existing industries, and available buildings, sites, and parks.

The *FactFinder* database is a comprehensive collection of tables containing vital demographic and economic information for the Upstate and surrounding region. An easy to use search engine allows anyone to select from 15 data themes (i.e., population, income, business/industry, etc.). The information is summarized for four scales of geography (Census Tract, Municipality, County, and Metropolitan Statistical Area).

Links to publications available on-line from ACOG include county economic profiles, multi-family housing surveys, county and municipality fact sheet packets, and numerous map products.

The Member Information

section of the *infoMentum* web site will be completed soon. It will contain EDIS Partnership member directory, meeting schedule, and agendas; a description of *infoMentum* Suite of Services; User's Group training topics and on-line manual, meeting schedule, and agendas.

Upstate economic developers and businesses have relied on the *infoMentum* decision support system for over eight years as a tool to aid recruitment of new industries into the region and assist in the expansion efforts of existing industries. The system offers innovative technology and up-to-date statistics in order to make the best decisions and remain ahead of the competition. *infoMentum* on the web is an extension of the robust desktop application. Please contact Carol Andersen (864-242-9733) for more information.

## Greer Commission of Public Works Awarded \$2 Million

The Greer Commission of Public Works (CPW) has been awarded \$2 million to upgrade their water treatment plant from 16 to 24 million gallons per day. The funds include a grant of \$500,000 from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and a \$1.5 million grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The total cost of the upgrade is \$5.7 million. The ACOG Grant Services staff assisted the CPW with both applications and will assist with administering of the grants.

The water treatment plant upgrade will serve the increased water demands of a growing area, including over 50,000 people, numerous businesses, and many large industries including BMW. In addition, the Greer CPW water system will serve the new healthcare campuses planned by the  
(*Greer CPW continued on page 3*)

## Property Tax Cap—Ratified, But Not Law



In June the South Carolina General Assembly ratified House Bill 3065, which contained a cap on property assessment increases resulting from regular quadrennial county property tax reassessments. The bill passed both houses of the General Assembly, but because the legislative session ended the bill did not become law. The Governor has the option of signing the bill into law in the next few months, vetoing the bill, or allowing the bill to automatically become law when the General Assembly returns in January.

### In short, the law would:

- Cap reassessment value increases on real property to a maximum growth of **20 percent during a five-year period**;
- Be **mandatory** for all 46 counties;
- Necessitate that local governments/schools either increase tax millage to make up for lost assessments or lose tax revenues;
- Result in a **tax shift**. The legislation will reduce taxes on high value property that tends to quickly appreciate, but will increase taxes on vehicles, other classes, and other taxpayers.

Economists, local governments, and business associations have expressed concerns about the fairness of the resulting tax shift. Industry representatives have also threatened to challenge the constitutionality of a law that would replace actual market values with arbitrary assessments on some properties. The debate on this property tax relief bill is far from over.

## Where to Turn: Important Support Systems for Advocates

**O**ne of the concerns that this office receives is “What can I do about the care of my loved one?”

Other concerns are that “I am all alone caring for my loved one” and “Is there any support out there?” There are options out there to assist and advise caregivers.

### Inside the Nursing Home

**Resident and Family Councils:** Many nursing homes have active resident councils, made up of residents and representatives, which meet regularly and may make recommendations concerning the facility’s policies. A resident council can provide a strong, unified voice for residents’ concerns and opinions about their living conditions.

Most nursing homes have organized some type of family or community council. Depending on their structure and format, these groups can provide effective forums for discussing and following through on concerns that affect many residents in the facility. Some family groups mainly provide support and information; others actively advocate for changes in care. One barrier to effective family/community councils is irregular attendance due to other family and work obligations. The group must plan ahead and work around schedules.

Nationwide, family councils are helping to change the way nursing homes care for residents. If your facility does not have an active family council, look into organizing one!

### Outside the Nursing Home

**Ombudsman Program:** The ombudsman is a consumer advocate responsible for investigating and attempting to resolve complaints made by, or on behalf of, residents of long-term care facilities. There should be a poster or a sign in the facility that has the ombudsman’s name and phone number listed. If you cannot locate it, ask the social services department or the administrator. Your local ombudsmen are listed at

the end of this article. We service the six counties (Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg) in the Upstate.

When you contact the ombudsman, explain the problem and ask for advice. The information is confidential, unless you give permission to let the ombudsman speak to others or make referrals on the resident’s behalf. The ombudsman will want to talk to the resident (if they are able) and conduct an investigation. The ombudsman will work with you, the resident, and the facility to develop the best course of action.

### Your local ombudsman office:

Jamie A. Guay, Intake Coordinator; Nancy Hawkins, Ombudsman Supervisor; Rhonda Monroe, Celia Clark, and Sandy Dunagan, Area Ombudsmen. We can be contacted at: 864-242-9733.



*(ADC continued from page 1)*

A \$55,000 loan to JRLC Thomas, d/b/a FiltraFry, was closed and funded.

A \$55,000 loan to Breadheads, Inc., was closed and funded.

A loan in the amount of \$271,000 to Craig S. Karriker, DDS, was funded through the ADC’s SBA 504 program, assisting in the construction and opening of a new dental office in Gaffney. The business will employ up to seven people.

A loan in the amount of \$303,000 was funded for The Spa at West End. This loan allowed the principals to purchase the facility on South Main Street in Greenville that they had been leasing for three years. The business employs 20 people, with additional hires expected due to the expansion.

## ACOG Welcomes Tiwanda Simpkins

Tiwanda Simpkins, who has served as the Regional Information, Referral and Assistance (I&R/A) Specialist for the Appalachian region since 2003 with SENIOR Solutions, joined the ACOG staff in July. I&R/A specialist positions were established for each region in South Carolina in 2003 to strengthen the increasingly important role of I&R/A within the aging network.

The primary purpose of the Older Americans Act information and referral system and its component services is to support all older persons and their caregivers in assessing their needs, identifying the most appropriate services to meet these needs, and linking them to the most appropriate service providers. To ensure that the older person and/or their caregiver is linked to needed services, the I&R/A specialist provides important follow-up and advocacy services whenever necessary.

Locating this function at the Area Agency on Aging is consistent with the Administration on Aging vision to have all information, referral and assistance services coordinated and linked. Co-location of the Information, Referral and Assistance Specialist, the Family Caregiver Advocate, the Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman, and the I-CARE (insurance counseling) Program supports this vision.



*(Greer CPW continued from page 2)*

Greenville Hospital System and the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System, which represent a \$67 million investment and will provide approximately 530 new jobs.

For more information on this project or the ARC and EDA programs, contact Dirk Reis at the ACOG offices.



## Pendleton District One-Stop Award



Pictured with Angela Campbell is Robert Oppermann, Vocational Rehabilitation Director, Anderson, on the left, and Claude Leitzsey, Standards and Performance Committee Chairman, Pendleton District Workforce Investment Board, on the right.

The Pendleton District Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and the One-Stop Management Team named Ms. Angela Campbell as the recipient of the Pendleton District One-Stop Award. This award is presented annually to a group or individual in recognition of outstanding work, performance, or customer service. Ms. Campbell was given a plaque and a check from the Pendleton District Workforce Investment Board.

For three years, Ms. Campbell has been the Vocational Rehabilitation Partner Representative in the Anderson One-Stop Workforce Center. She was nominated for her willingness to help the Center in any way necessary. She also goes above and beyond the call of duty to help any of her potential clients.

This past year, the Anderson One-Stop Workforce Center had more referrals to vocational rehabilitation than any other One-Stop in the state. This accomplishment is the direct result of Ms. Campbell's hard work, friendliness, and her strong relationship with other staff.

She continues to improve her service to One-Stop customers by starting weekly orientations for anyone interested in Vocational Rehabilitation services. Ms. Campbell has cerebral palsy and is a wonderful example for the disabled community.

She is an asset to the Anderson One-Stop Workforce Center and the community.

## Valuable Upstate Reports Now Available Online



The Appalachian Council of Governments proudly announces the addition of online publications to the wide range of resources now available at [www.scacog.org](http://www.scacog.org). Among these publications are County Economic Profiles, prepared annually for six Upstate counties. These reports provide a comprehensive overview of socio-economic and quality-of-life conditions within the subject county. Also available for online purchase are Multi-Family Housing Surveys, which offer an in-depth look at the dynamic apartment and condominium markets. These surveys are conducted annually for Greenville County, and biennially for Anderson and Spartanburg Counties.

Other products available for online purchase include county and municipality fact sheet sets, a variety of map products, and note card sets depicting scenery of the Upstate and surrounding region.

For ease of use and advanced security, purchases are processed through PayPal®, a global leader in online payment solutions. PayPal® now allows credit card and E-Check payments without the requirement of signing up for an account. For more information, or to make a purchase, please visit [www.scacog.org](http://www.scacog.org) and click on the "Publications" link.

## New Department, New Director for State Unit On Aging

Lieutenant Governor Andre Bauer has named veteran state administrator Cornelia D. (Nela) Gibbons to direct South Carolina's State Unit on Aging.

"Nela Gibbons' experience and credibility means we won't miss a beat in assuming responsibility for the services and programs that serve South Carolina's 651,000 seniors," said Bauer. "I really appreciate Nela accepting this position and am confident that her leadership ensures that our state's seniors will continue to receive the quality services they deserve."

The state's new appropriations act transferred the aging programs to the Lieutenant Governor from the Department of Health and Human Services, where Gibbons has served as a deputy director over several functions, including senior services.

The State Unit on Aging receives and administers federal Older Americans Act funds, and works with a network of regional and local organizations to develop and manage programs to improve the quality of life for South Carolina's older citizens, helping them remain independent in their homes and communities. Programs include home-delivered meals, social support services, and job training, as well as the state's Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

Gibbons, who was former Governor David Beasley's health and human services adviser, has worked in South Carolina state government for more than two decades. She has served as an agency head for more than 10 years, directing the Foster Care Review Board. Prior to her work at DHHS, Gibbons was a senior executive at the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

Gibbons graduated from the University of South Carolina, earning a B.A. in Secondary Education and a Master's of Social Work. Gibbons and her husband David live in Columbia.

# VIEWPOINT

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## State Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

**F**or the second year, the Appalachian AAA (Area Agency on Aging), in partnership with the S. C. Department of Social Services and the Department of Agriculture, conducted the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). The SFMNP, which is funded by USDA, offers nutrition assistance to low income people age 60 and older by providing coupons for free produce at local farmers' markets. Each eligible person can get \$25 worth of coupons that may be used at participating farmers' markets. The AAA administered the program for Greenville and Spartanburg counties, in conjunction with the local councils on aging. The Anderson County Recreation Department administered the program in Anderson County, and United Way of Oconee County served Oconee County. Through this program, 3300 individuals were served, with a potential economic impact of \$82,500 to local farmers' markets.

Growth and expansion of the program is dependent upon coupon redemption. Counties such as Oconee and Anderson, who have offered the program for two years, had a redemption rate of 90 percent in 2003. For a first year program, Greenville and Spartanburg had a redemption rate of 81.27 percent and 78.65 percent, respectively, in 2003.

This program 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 Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.