

ARC Releases “Energy Blueprint”

The Appalachian Regional Commission recently released a document entitled *Energizing Appalachia: A Regional Blueprint for Economic and Energy Development*. This document was developed as a result of a February 2006 meeting among governors of the 13 Appalachian states and the ARC federal co-chair, which called on the creation of a strategic framework for the promotion of energy-related job opportunities in the region.

In developing the Blueprint, ARC took three steps: It commissioned a series of research studies; convened three public roundtables where more than 100 experts, educators, government officials and entrepreneurs discussed energy opportunities, challenges and strategies; and created the ARC Energy Advisory Council to identify energy strategies.

Using the input from these steps, ARC identified a goal and three strategic objectives to help the region develop its energy potential.

Energy Goal – Develop the Appalachian region’s energy potential to increase the supply of locally produced, clean and affordable energy, and to create and retain jobs.

Strategic Objective 1: Promote energy efficiency in Appalachia to enhance the region’s economic competitiveness.

Strategic Objective 2: Increase the use of renewable energy resources, especially biomass, in Appalachia to produce alternative transportation fuels, electricity, and heat.



Strategic Objective 3: Support the development of conventional energy resources, especially advanced clean coal, in Appalachia to produce alternative transportation fuels, electricity, and heat.

Five action areas were identified as key to helping the region achieve the energy goal and realize the job creation potential of an energy-based economic development agenda. These include: Public-Sector Investments, Research and Analysis, Workforce Development, Public Awareness and Outreach, and Supportive Policies.

For more information, or to download a copy of *Energizing Appalachia: A Regional Blueprint for Economic and Energy Development*, go to ARC’s website at www.arc.gov.

Did You Know?

The Stumphouse Tunnel, located in Oconee County, was the result of an attempt to connect Charleston with the Midwest. Before the 1860s, the Blue Ridge Railroad started the tunnel as a rail link; however, work came to a halt when the contractor went bankrupt.

Appalachian Region Sweeps Awards at Annual SCARC Conference

The Appalachian region fared extremely well in the awards ceremony at the annual South Carolina



ACOG Board Member Gloria Butler is presented with the Volunteer of the Year Award by SCARC President Dora Martin.

Association of Regional Councils Conference held in Myrtle Beach in mid-November. Representative Dan Cooper, from Piedmont, earned the Legisla-



ACOG executive director Steve Pelissier and board members are presented with the Project of the Year.

tor of the Year Award in appreciation of his tremendous support for regionalism and councils of governments throughout

(SCAR continued on page 5)

Common Questions RE: Medicare Part D Open Enrollment

Will my plan change next year? Very likely. Plans can change their monthly premiums, annual deductibles, copayments and formularies (list of covered drugs) in each new calendar year. They may switch drugs from one price level ("tier") to another and change their "preferred" pharmacies. Also, your insurer may offer more plan choices for 2007, which may be different from the plan you have now.

How will I know if my plan changes? Your plan should have informed you by Oct. 31 of important changes for 2007 in a letter called the Annual Notice of Change. If you haven't received one, call your plan and ask for it.

How do I compare plans? The most reliable way is to use the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder tool at www.medicare.gov, or to call the Medicare help line and ask a customer representative to compare plans for you. Either way, you'll need to make a list of your drugs, their dosages and how often you take them. Feeding this information into the plan finder or giving it to a help-line representative will tell you how much you can expect to spend out of pocket next year under each plan. For a quick way of navigating the plan finder to determine the least expensive plan that covers all or most of your drugs, visit *AARP Bulletin's "Quick Route Through Medicare Drug Plan Finder."*

Other information that may be important to your decision—for example, convenient pharmacies, 90-day supplies by mail order, prior authorizations or other restrictions for your drugs and whether the plan is available nationally—is also available through the plan finder or the help line.

Can I avoid the "doughnut hole" next year? More plans will offer coverage in the coverage gap—the doughnut hole—in 2007. Most cover only generic drugs in the gap, but at least one plan in every state covers both generics and some brand names. (The



Humana Complete plan, the largest provider of full gap coverage in 2006, will cover only generics in the gap in 2007.)

Premiums for plans offering coverage in the gap are generally higher than average, ranging nationwide from \$25 to \$88 a month for generics only and from \$38 to \$110 a month for those that include brand names. But if you take many drugs, or very costly ones, such a plan may still prove less expensive overall. You can test this option by comparing plans as described above.

I could have signed up this year, but didn't. Can I still get Medicare drug coverage in 2007? Yes, as long as you sign up with a Part D plan from Nov. 15 through Dec. 31. Your coverage will begin Jan. 1.

I turn 65 in January. Can I get drug coverage for 2007? You can sign up for Part D when you sign up for Part B (which covers doctor visits and outpatient services). Your special enrollment period lasts seven months (three months before the month you turn 65 and three months after it). Coverage will begin on the first day of the month after you enroll.

My employer's "creditable" drug coverage will terminate March 31. When should I sign up for Part D? You should sign up during March, because your Medicare coverage will begin April 1. If you go more than 63 days without coverage after your employer plan ends, you will pay a late penalty.

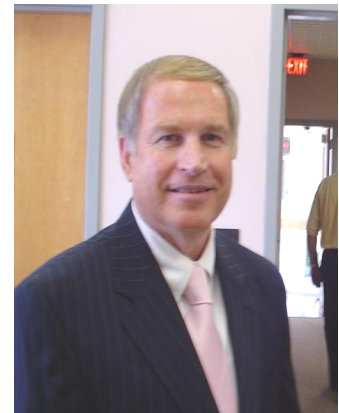
I have good retiree drug coverage, but it costs too much. Can I enroll in Part D? Yes, as long as you're eligible for Medicare. But, since leaving

this plan would be your own decision, you can sign up for Part D only during annual enrollment, from Nov. 15 to Dec. 31. Check carefully with your benefits administrator to find out whether joining Part D would affect your pension and medical coverage for you and/or your spouse under your retiree plan.

For additional assistance, contact the Appalachia AAA at (864) 242-9733.

Reprinted from AARP Bulletin, November 2006.

Chap Hurst to Serve As Pickens County Administrator



Pickens County Council recently appointed J. Chappell "Chap" Hurst, Jr. as the new Pickens County Administrator. Mr. Hurst comes to Pickens with extensive experience in government and small business. He served 13 years as the Administrator for Lancaster County and another 13 years in Chesterfield County.

Mr. Hurst is an alumnus of Clemson University and has notable experience and background in economic development and planning, two "hot-button" issues in the Upstate. Mr. Hurst is scheduled to speak at ACOG's December 8th monthly board meeting.

Ombudsman Corner

Visiting your loved one in the nursing home may be the best gift of all.

It's the holiday season again, and time to start thinking about planning holiday activities and gifts for our family and friends. If you have a family member or friend in a nursing home, you may be wondering what you can do to make sure they feel the holiday spirit, too.

Staff members at nursing homes and eldercare services suggest planning regular visits throughout the season that include activities centered on the holidays.

Help your loved one decorate his or her room with holiday decorations. Small, artificial Christmas trees decorated with holiday ornaments look great on dressers and can really make a room look and feel festive. You may also want to consider flannel holiday bedding such as sheets, pillow cases, and comforters. Not only will this keep your family member warm, but it is another way to add holiday decorations. Be creative! The more festive the better; and, don't forget their favorite holiday music!

It may be difficult for your loved one to send holiday cards to family and friends. You can help write personal notes in the cards, address envelopes, and make sure the cards get to the post office. You can also help a family member read and display the holiday cards they receive.

Consider inviting your loved one on a holiday shopping trip. They can experience all the fun of holiday shopping with your extra help. Consider planning your shopping trip during a time when there will be fewer crowds so it will be easier to move through the stores.

Holiday robes, slippers, sweaters, jewelry and socks are already out in the stores. Consider bringing your loved one holiday apparel and accessories that he or she can wear throughout the season.

You may also be wondering

what would be an appropriate gift for someone in a nursing home. Just as you would with others on your list, consider gifts that match his or her hobbies, interests and needs. Remember the nursing home is their home, so you will want to consider activities or items that help them feel comfortable and secure.

Some suggestions for holiday gifts for a loved one in a nursing home include: framed pictures, prayers or quotes, books, pretty quilts, blankets or pillows that make a room more home like and comfortable. Nonpoisonous plants also make good gifts. They brighten up a room and give your loved one something to care for. Also, a calendar with special dates and upcoming events, such as grandchildren's birthdays, children's anniversaries and graduations, along with a selection of cards and stamps will help your loved one celebrate special occasions.

Even seemingly simple gifts, such as talcum powder, lotion, a toothbrush or toothpaste, can significantly contribute to a resident's comfort and well being. Because the texture of skin changes with age, you will want to check with nursing home staff to make sure such gifts are appropriate. Gift certificates to the nursing home's beauty salon for a haircut or manicure are especially appreciated. To make it more special, you can give yourself a gift and join your loved one at the salon.

Sometimes nursing home residents are not able to attend special family events such as graduation, anniversary or birthday parties. Videotape the event so your family member can see the festivities and feel as though he or she is an important part of the family. Watch it together so you can relive the festivities, too. Books and music are also popular. If your loved one has vision problems, make a date to visit weekly and read to him or her.

Gifts that help your loved one feel warm and cozy during the winter months can be especially welcome. Cardigan sweaters, sweat suits, hand knitted booties or slippers and lap blankets

are just a few gift ideas. And, don't forget to pick up cheerful sweaters, sweat-shirts and socks depicting fun holiday scenes.

Above all, remember that sometimes the simplest gifts are the most appreciated. If your loved one is mobile, take him or her for an outing to a favorite restaurant, plan a visit to a church or synagogue for services, or invite their friends to the nursing home for a special lunch; and, of course, visiting a family member in a nursing home is often the best gift.

Information gathered from Savannah Morning News © 2005.

From your local Ombudsmen: Nancy Hawkins, Jamie Guay, Jessica Arnone, Rhonda Monroe and Sandy Dunagan; phone 864-242-9733.

Home for the Holidays?

One of the hardest things to deal with on a day-to-day basis is the loneliness and isolation related to being the caregiver of a loved one. Whether caring for a senior or a child, the restrictions and isolation can become overwhelming at times. When the caregiver realizes he or she is wearing down emotionally or physically, it is time to call for help.

Respite is what the professionals call it. You may call it "just watching," or "sitting with" or whatever you think appropriate, but it is relief of some kind in the day-to-day duties of caregiving. One of the main purposes of the Family Caregiver Support Program is to assist in providing short-term or bridge assistance in the area of respite care. In this

(Caregiving continued on page 4)



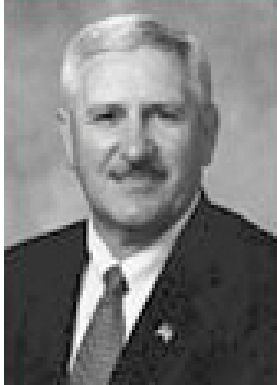
Spartanburg Community College Hires Director of Economic Development

Mike Forrester, a retiring member of the Economic Development Information System (EDIS) Partnership,

has been selected as the new Director of Economic Development for Spartanburg Community College.

He will serve as a

liaison between existing and potential industries and the college. "Forrester's past work in economic development, particularly over the last five years, is well suited for his new position", said Carter Smith, CEO of the Spartanburg County Economic Development Corporation.



Mike retired from Piedmont Natural Gas this year, after serving 27 years in various capacities, from corrosion specialist to vice-president of South Carolina operations. He has served as a steadfast member of the EDIS Partnership, a public-private partnership that is supported in part by investments from Piedmont Natural Gas and other utility companies across the region.

This unprecedented alliance between county government, businesses, utilities, and the Council of Governments addresses the ongoing technical, financial, and political challenges of providing a standardized set of research tools to all the economic developers in the region. As a result of guidance from Mike and the other leaders in the Partnership, these standardized research tools are now fully integrated into the economic development and planning activities of the region through the *InfoMentum* suite of services.

COG staff looks forward to

working with Mike in his new capacity to bridge the gap between economic development interests in the academic realm and economic development activities across the region.

Career Development Facilitator Training



Pictured: seated-Laura Bickley, Julia Hoyle, Beverly Smith; standing-Rhonda Wengerd, Windy Graham, Jennifer Bagwell, Dwain Loyd, Renee Gahan, Andrea Anderson, and Butch Merritt.

A Career Development Facilitator (CDF) is an occupational title that designates individuals working in a variety of career development settings. The counseling profession has made great progress in defining professional counseling and the career counseling specialty through such efforts as career counseling competencies and code of ethics and state licensing and registry requirements. However, several professional groups recognized that many individuals who are currently providing career assistance are not professional counselors. The CDF credential was developed to provide standards, training specifications, and credentialing for these career providers. There are 12 areas of competency taught in the CDF curriculum. The competencies and certification process are endorsed by the National Career Development Association, National Employment Counseling Association, and the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals.

The newly legislated Education and Economic Development Act calls for Career Development Facilitators in all middle and high schools in South Carolina during the 2005-2006 school year. This has caused an increase in the popularity of the training course, and thus a reduction in the number of openings. WorkLink hosted the training course locally and, because of the need, will continue to sponsor this training on a regular basis.

All contractor staff are encouraged to complete this course for their CDF designation. Out of nineteen individuals who started the course in August, twelve graduated on October 20. Prior to this class, four case managers completed the course through Tri-County Tech's Partnership for Academic and Career Excellence program. Another class is scheduled to begin February 2, 2007. Anyone interested in this course should contact Julia Hoyle at 864-646-1827.

(Caregiving continued from page 3)

consumer-directed program, many options are available from which to choose. You may see someone coming into your home as the best option, where another caregiver might think it more suitable to have their loved one in a professional facility of some sort. Options from in-home care and institutional care, to adult day centers can provide much needed breaks at a very hectic time of the year such as we have during this upcoming holiday season. Even the luxury of having time to attend civic or religious activities may not be taken for granted, if you are a caregiver for either a child or a senior adult.

If you are the caregiver, or know of a caregiver in need of some respite care, please contact us at the Family Caregiver Support Program located at the Appalachian Council of Governments, Greenville, South Carolina. Our phone numbers are (864) 242-9733 and toll free (800) 925-4077. Family Caregiver Advocates Debra Brown and Sam Wiley will be happy to speak with you and discuss what possibilities exist.

New Transit Coordination Planning Underway

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), in partnership with Councils of Governments (COGs), recently held a kickoff meeting at the Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) to announce the development of a Regional Transit Coordination Plan for the Non Metropolitan Planning Organization areas of the region. The aim of the plan is



to enhance coordination with multiple federal, state and local programs that fund human services transportation activities. It is also part of new federal requirements identified in the recent Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), that makes development of the plan a pre-requisite for receiving federal funding. At a minimum, projects funded under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula programs for Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317 must be derived from a coordinated plan. The coordinated plans will incorporate activities offered under other programs sponsored by federal, state and local agencies.

SCDOT will be working with COGs across South Carolina to develop these regional coordination plans over the next year and will involve interested stakeholders throughout the process. The kickoff meeting was a forum for local agencies and stakeholders to discuss their relevant needs as service providers. Development and content of coordinated plans will be specific to the needs and issues of the region. The coordinated plans will be developed to ad-

dress intra- and inter-regional needs and issues. Future meetings will be scheduled for stakeholder input at different stages of plan development. For more information, contact Phillip Lemmon at the Council of Governments at 864-241-4645.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Fund Available

As the need for federal disaster assistance has continued to increase, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State of South Carolina have placed renewed emphasis on reducing disaster losses through the implementation of hazard mitigation programs. A primary funding source for mitigation activities is the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM). Limited federal funding is now available through the PDM program to aid eligible applicants with implementation of mitigation measures to reduce the impacts of natural hazards on the local community. The funding is distributed on a nationally competitive basis and is subject to a 75% Federal/25% Non-Federal cost share. The 25% Non-Federal share must be paid by the applicant.

Eligible applicants for the PDM program are state and local governments, including county and municipal governments, school districts, and special purpose districts. Eligible activities under the PDM for FY 2007 include mitigation projects and planning. All mitigation projects must pass a benefit-cost analysis (BCA) to be eligible for funding.

Deadline for submission of applications to the State of South Carolina Emergency Management Division is January 10, 2007, 11:59 p.m. EST. The application must



be submitted under the E-grants electronic application system. Please visit FEMA's website for more information on the program and how to register for E-grants at www.fema.gov/government/grant/pdm/fy2007.shtm. If you have any questions or need assistance, contact Amanda Loach or Thomas Queen with SCEMD at 803-737-8500 or aloach@emd.state.sc.us or tqueen@emd.state.sc.us.



(SCARC continued from page 1)

the year. Long time ACOG Board Member Gloria Butler was presented with the Volunteer of the Year Award for her committed service to the region. In addition, the Appalachian Council of Governments took home the Project of the Year Award for its InfoMap – Online Mapping for Regional Economic Development initiative. A hearty congratulations and thanks are offered to Representative Cooper and Ms. Butler, as well as to the EDIS Board and ACOG Information Services staff for their hard work on the InfoMap program.



VIEWPOINT

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

Address Service Requested

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