

South Carolina's Councils of Governments: Partnerships, Progress & Promise—Part V

(This is the last of a five-part series detailing the contributions of South Carolina's councils of governments to the state's economy and quality of life.)

South Carolina's councils of governments will continue to play a critical role in generating prosperity across our state. While unique challenges specific to each region will continue to evolve, the promise of the councils of governments lies in our pledge to continue to work together to address the common challenges that affect the future of our state. These include the need for excellent government, strategic planning, economic development, environmental management, human services, worker training, and up-to-date information.

As South Carolina continues to grow, communities once geographically separate are merging together. Old barriers—political, social, and cultural—are being broken down. Events and actions in one community are having ever greater impacts on surrounding areas. Opportunities for interjurisdictional cooperation are on the rise.

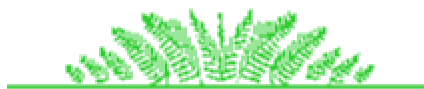
The result? Regionalism is assuming increasing importance in our state, and those who facilitate and promote a regional approach, as our councils of governments do, are positioned for even greater opportunities for contributions and leadership as the 21st century progresses. But there is more to our promise. Without question, our councils will retain the wide-ranging and highly relevant expertise developed

over 30 years of service. But we will also continue to adapt to meet the evolving challenges faced by our local governments and our state as a whole.

As regional councils, we have been called upon repeatedly in recent years to face new opportunities and meet new challenges. In the most recent examples, we have expanded our roles in transportation planning, assumed greater responsibility for environmental management, become central players in natural hazard mitigation, and stepped up to meet the threat of terrorism with an increased role in homeland security.

These examples well illustrate the point that today's Call to Action is fluid and dynamic. South Carolina's councils of governments remain poised to answer that call—no matter what form it may take.

The full COG Impact Report is available by writing the Appalachian Council of Governments at P. O. Box 6668, Greenville, S. C. 29606. It was published in the fall of 2003 by the S. C. Association of Regional Councils (SCARC). The report was initiated by Easley Mayor Chris Christopherson, an ACOG Board member and President of SCARC at the time of publication. Eddie Wynn, also an ACOG Board member and SCARC Policy Board member, was responsible for production of the report.



City of Belton — ACOG Facilitates Annual Planning Retreat



The Belton City Council and City Administrator pictured here upon the successful conclusion of a Saturday strategic planning session at ACOG's office.

The City of Belton conducted its annual planning retreat at the Council of Governments office in January. City Council members spent most of a Saturday establishing and prioritizing long and short term goals and objectives for the municipality. Belton is one of a number of Upstate jurisdictions that utilizes ACOG's staff and facilities to conduct strategic planning.

The City of Belton has very successfully recovered from a major financial crisis. Through much hard work, expenditure cuts, and important utility rate adjustments, the city has managed to balance its budget and put the city on solid financial footing. Belton is a participant in the ACOG/Appalachian Regional Commission Small Town Program.



Department of Commerce Proposes Changes in Community Development Block Grant Programs

The S. C. Department of Commerce, as the designated lead agency for the State, recently released the public comment draft of the 2004 Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development. This document contains program descriptions for four HUD-funded grant programs – Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships, Emergency Shelter, and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS.

South Carolina will receive approximately \$27.8 million in CDBG funds. As in years past, the State anticipates funding projects in support of economic development, infrastructure, planning and housing. The Department of Commerce, however, has proposed some significant changes in the CDBG program.

Some of the changes are as follows:

- Projects located in Distressed and Least Distressed counties and in Federal Enterprise Communities will receive higher weight in the selection criteria for all programs. For practical purposes, this means that all projects submitted from the Upstate, except for those from Cherokee County, will automatically have fewer points when it is rated and ranked by the State. This is going to start our projects off with a disadvantage in the evaluation process.
- Rather than having two funding cycles for any type of project, each project category will be funded only once a year, in either the spring or the fall funding cycle. For example, if you want to apply for a housing rehabilitation grant and are not ready in April, you will have to wait until next year to apply.
- Far fewer water, sewer, and housing rehab projects will be funded than in years past. This is because

each project category now has a fixed amount of money set aside for it, and the State has created four new budget categories in which it must spread the money around. For example, only \$7 million in water, sewer or drainage projects will be funded, even if the State receives many more projects than can be funded.

- Four new project categories have been developed to further the Governor's goals of economic competitiveness. These are Commercial Revitalization; Workforce, Education and Technology; Small Business Capital; and Entrepreneurial Training and Development.

The following project categories can be applied for in the April funding cycle **only**. Application requests are due March 18, 2004, and applications are due April 16.

- **Community Infrastructure:** \$7 million for water, sewer and drainage projects that serve predominantly low to moderate income persons.
- **Neighborhood Revitalization:** \$2.5 million for housing rehabilitation projects that serve low to moderate income persons.
- **Local Planning:** \$200,000 for local governments to undertake planning activities that contribute to economic competitiveness and serve low to moderate income persons.

The following project categories can be applied for in the September funding cycle **only**. Application requests are due August 19, 2004, and applications are due September 17.

- **Commercial Revitalization:** \$2.1 million for assistance to downtown commercial districts. The local government must already be participating in a S. C. Downtown Development Association program or

Community Builders program.

- **Workforce, Education and Technology:** \$3 million to provide coordinated workforce education or technology training, or services and increased access to resources, primarily for low to moderate income persons.
- **Small Business Capital:** \$3 million to set up revolving loan funds targeted to small businesses, and that benefit low to moderate income persons.
- **Entrepreneurial Training and Development:** \$500,000 to train and advise new and small businesses. Projects must benefit low to moderate income persons.

A copy of the public comment draft of the Consolidated Plan is available at the ACOG's office or on the S. C. Department of Commerce web site (www.scommerce.com). A comment period runs through February 12, 2004.

The Pendleton District Workforce Investment Board Welcomes Windy Graham

The Pendleton District Workforce Investment Board would like to announce the addition of Windy Graham to its staff. Windy joined the staff on November 3, 2003. Windy will be responsible for contract management, including monitoring for compliance and performance, as well as oversight of the Virtual One-Stop System.

Windy received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration Insurance and Economic Security from the University of South Carolina.

(Graham continued on page 3)

Easley Adopts Undated Comprehensive Plan

On January 12, 2004, the City Council of Easley adopted an updated version of the *City of Easley Comprehensive Plan*, originally adopted in 1999. The adoption of this ordinance is a culmination of efforts by the City Planning Commission and City Council. The Appalachian Council of Governments assisted the City of Easley with the development of the plan.

A series of public meetings was held with the Planning Commission to solicit information from the citizens of Easley. Information obtained from these meetings, as well as current Census data, was used to identify existing conditions of the City. The Planning Commission worked to identify strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats to the City. Identified strengths and opportunities were used as building blocks to develop strategies based on positive conditions within the city, while weaknesses and threats were used to develop mediation-based strategies aimed at eliminating or reducing negative conditions.

The Comprehensive Plan addresses seven elements as required by South Carolina Law, including: *population, economy, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, housing and land use*. The Planning Commission performed a thorough examination of each element by compiling an inventory of existing conditions, developing a statement of needs and goals, and developing implementation strategies with time frames to accomplish the objectives of each element in the plan. Several issues have been addressed and included in the updated plan. These include strategies to deal with rapidly developing corridors and transition areas within the City, as well as endorsement of the City's Tax Increment Finance District adopted by City Council in 2003.

The plan must be reviewed at



least once within five years, and a new Comprehensive Plan must be completed at least every ten years.

The City of Easley has experienced significant growth over the past decade. Emerging development corridors, such as the intersection of U.S. Highway 123 and Brushy Creek Road, have become attractive locations for a mix of land use activities such as the development of a Publix grocery store and other commercial establishments that are now located on the site shown in the above picture. The City continues to be vigilant in its examination of positive and negative impacts these developments will have on adjacent and surrounding areas. The City wants to continue to support growth and development in these corridors that is compatible with existing neighborhoods and levels of community facilities.

(Graham continued from page 2)

She has eleven years of experience with the Department of Social Services, as well as additional experience with the Department of Health and Environmental Control and Developmental Services. This experience, along with her dependability, service-oriented approach, and ability to work quickly with detailed information, made her an excellent match for the position.

Windy and her husband, Gene, have been married for 14 years. They have one son, Ely, age 8. Her hobbies include reading and surfing the Internet.

Development Corporation News

A loan of \$200,000 was approved for Palmetto Quilting. The company will offer stuffing and finishing services for quilts and pillows. Development Corporation funds will be used to purchase a building in Woodruff, and provide for financing of equipment and working capital. Primary funding is coming through Arthur State Bank. This project will create at least 50 employment opportunities.

A loan in the amount of \$40,000 was approved to Techniform, Inc., a forms consulting business that works with businesses throughout the Upstate. The Appalachian Development Corporation (ADC) funds will help fund equipment and working capital. Palmetto Bank is providing the primary funding. The business will employ up to four people.

A \$100,000 loan to LA Graphics of Greenville County was closed and funded.

A \$528,000 Small Business Administration loan, prepared by the Appalachian Development Corporation, was approved for funding to Tewell Industries of Greenville. Carolina First is the primary financial institution on this project.

A \$259,000 ADC-prepared SBA 504 loan to Alverson's LLC, doing business as Bruster's Ice Cream and Yogurt Shop, was recently funded. This project is on Pelham Road in Greenville.

A \$505,000 ADC-prepared SBA 504 loan was recently funded to Superior Machine Company, Inc., in Seneca. This machine company will employ up to 20 people.

Bruster's Ice Cream and Yogurt Shop received \$200,000 in permanent funding through the ADC's SBA 504 program for its second location on White Horse Road in Greenville.



Radius and Demographic Reports Now Available With Projections for 2003 and 2008!

Out of the wide array of services

provided by the *InfoMentum* decision support system, two of the hottest products are the Radius Report and Demographic Report. The Information Services Department is now pleased to announce that the database from which these reports are generated has recently been updated to provide data projections for 2003 and 2008, based on geography from the 2000 Census.

These reports provide a concise three-page summary of socioeconomic statistics for a user-specified area. The data categories include racial, marital and age characteristics of the population, educational attainment, labor force characteristics, income characteristics, household spending patterns, and a summation of select businesses located within the specified area.

A Radius Report differs from a Demographic Report in that the user specifies a radius area of up to 30 miles. Data for as many as three radius rings may be presented on a single report. The information presented in the summary is a compilation of data from the census block groups located within the specified radius or radii. A color map accompanies the report to highlight the incorporated census block groups for each radius ring. There is a great demand for these reports from professionals in real estate, marketing, and retail trade to study the characteristics of a proposed site.

Demographic reports also provide a summary of statistics based on census block group data. Unlike radius



reports, demographic reports allow the user to individually select the census block groups for which data will be incorporated into the report. Instead of providing information for an area radiating from a central point, demographic reports profile areas that are delineated entirely by the user. Examples include reports for areas within a specified ZIP Code, and reports for areas within a certain school district.

The ACOG *InfoMentum* team works with each client to create a customized report. Pricing depends on the number of radius rings and requests for extra map services. For more information or to place an order, please contact the Information Services staff at 242-9733.

The Family Caregiver Support Program

The Family Caregiver Support Program is pleased to have been active in the Upstate for the past three years. Providing the best possible network of services to caregivers, thus giving them options for support possibly not available to them prior to this program, has

been a consistent goal. The past two months have brought with them opportunities to streamline and expedite the process of helping caregivers in the Appalachian Region:

1. We have added a second Caregiver Advocate to the staff. Previously the staff consisted of one Advocate and one part-time assistant.
2. The activation of the database developed in Columbia, with the input of Caregiver Advocates across the state, has enabled the program to document its progress with greater efficiency.
3. The constant upgrading of the program has enabled us to reach as many as 290 people in the first six months of this fiscal year.
4. The program is developing an ever-widening system of service providers, enabling the caregivers of our region to truly have consumer-based choice.
5. A new intake package, which is tailored to the consumer, is mailed to each new applicant, giving them a wealth of information for their immediate use.

The coming six months of the fiscal year bring with them exciting possibilities to provide improved access to services throughout the Upstate. If you know of a caregiver in need of support, please pass the word. The program strives to help caregivers of any age who care for seniors over the age of 60 with at least two activities of daily living they cannot do alone, or a senior over the age of 60 who is rearing a relative child in his or her home. We will be happy to provide you with information for groups or individuals by contacting:

Family Caregiver Support Program
Toll Free Number: 1-800-925-4077
Fax Number: 1-864-242-6957
e-mail: brown@scacog.org



VIEWPOINT

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

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From Home to . . . Homeless?

The losses most people experience as they go from their own homes into nursing homes are enormous. It's traumatic to make the transition to nursing home life. There are lots of losses that bring about such a move. There are also losses that come because of the move. Increasing mental and/or physical frailty forces a person to leave the last vestiges of independence and turn to a nursing home.

Think of the word "home." What does it mean to you? Do you have warm feelings and images? Are you thinking about family? Privacy and security? Think about how you feel as a guest in someone else's home. Remember what it's like when it's not your kitchen? Not your bathroom? Not your special chair? Multiply that feeling by 365 days per year and you'll sense the perpetual anxiety and tension that most nursing home residents feel. Home is an important link to our identity. It's our connec-

tion to people, places, and events of our lives. Look around your home at all those reminders of who you are and where you have been.

Nursing home residents experience a disconnection and loss of their identity. They will cling to the past events of their lives when they felt more like "themselves." One major loss of the feeling of home is the loss of their daily routines. We all develop ways of living that provide comfort and order in our lives. It is our own way of handling stress, socialization, personal interests and relationships. It could be talking on the phone, a television show, radio station, reading, gardening, etc. Unfortunately, these patterns of living are usually the first sacrifice one has to make during the transition into long term care.

Facilities are now trying to omit the "institutionalized" setting of nursing homes and making them more "home-like." It is our responsibility as caregivers to notify the facility of what our loved one was like at home. We have to let them see that our loved one had a sched-

ule that they followed at home.

This should be done upon admission into the facility and periodically during the stay. Nursing home residents are not just "numbers," they are people who had meetings to go to, television programs to watch, grandchildren to love, etc.

Your local Ombudsmen are:
Celia Clark, Sandy Dunagan, Jamie Guay, Nancy Hawkins, and Rhonda Monroe.

*Information gathered from:
Nursing Homes, Getting Good Care There, 2001.*

