

Development Corporation News



Ms. Jane Zhang has been nominated by Brad Schneider, vice-president of the Appalachian Development Corporation (ADC), for the South Carolina SBA Small Business Person of the Year. Ms. Zhang is the CEO of GH Global Services and Star EV Real Estate, LLC. The ADC, through the SBA 504 loan program, was able to assist Ms. Zhang in relocating her company into a single facility that will allow her to have her sales, management and production teams under one roof. Her story is a “made for Hollywood” rags-to-riches tale of inspiration and triumph.

She left her home country of China alone in 1989 and moved to the United States to complete her graduate studies at the University of South Carolina. With very little family support and financial backing, she had to acclimate herself into American society with limited English skills. She now has a bachelor’s degree in automation control and a master’s degree in mechanical engineering.

After college, Ms. Zhang first worked in a small family business in Charlotte, NC. After a year of gaining some valuable business experience, she

came to Greenville and began working for Carter and Crawley Company, where she ultimately earned the position of engineering manager and vice-president of engineering. Shortly after her promotion, Carter and Crawley was sold to another firm that resulted in a change to the family atmosphere of her work environment. Because of this change, Ms. Zhang and her husband, Jun, began JH Global Services in 2003. JH Global Services imports and distributes STAR brand electric golf carts, golfing accessories, and industrial products to dealers nationwide. It also offers outsourcing services to U.S. companies that want to have parts or products made in China, especially engineered metal products.

Ms. Zhang has built her company from a very small, family-run operation of two people into a thriving small business of 140 employees, with revenues in excess of \$27,000,000. In 2008, the company had sales of \$9,700,000, but the company’s meteoric growth in 2009 was due to an IRS designation granting ten of their vehicles with tax credit status. This spurred the sales growth to the current \$27,000,000 level. The company has also shown tremendous growth trend in profitability, as reflected by pretax profits of \$426,000 in 2008, a record \$5,100,000 in 2009, and an expected net profit of nearly \$3,000,000 in 2010.

Ms. Zhang’s ability to guide her company to success during turbulent economic times is exemplary and has earned her many personal accolades and recognitions along the way. These in-

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Farewells . . .



As she leaves her post on Greenville County Council, Ms. Judy Gilstrap also rotates off of the ACOG Board. A former ACOG board chairman, her dedication was recognized last year when she received the 2009 COG Volunteer of the Year award. During the December meeting, current Board Chairman Ed Elliott presented Ms. Gilstrap with a plaque in honor of her years of service.



At the December board meeting, Board Chairman Ed Elliott recognized and thanked Becky for her dedicated service.

After fifteen years of service, ACOG finance director Becky Hall has

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Budget and Control Board Offers Loans

The Office of Local Government at the South Carolina Budget and Control Board is again offering low interest loans for water and sewer projects through the State Revolving Fund (SRF) for Wastewater and the SRF for Drinking Water.

The SRF for Wastewater is sponsored by EPA under authority of the Federal Clean Water Act. For FY 2011, over \$100 million is available for wastewater projects at interest rates ranging from 1.0% to 3.0%. Municipalities, counties, and special purpose districts are eligible to apply for loans through this program for wastewater projects, including construction of wastewater facilities, relocation of sewer lines due to highway widening, stormwater management, and “green” projects. The program allows up to 100% financing of all eligible costs. All projects must be on the DHEC priority list to be eligible for a loan. However, projects may be added to the list at any time by submitting a project questionnaire to DHEC.

The SRF for Drinking Water funds are available for drinking water supply or distribution system improvements, including relocation of water lines due to highway widening, “green” projects, and radio-read meters. The SRF for Drinking Water operates virtually the same as the SRF for Wastewater. For FY 2011, over \$38 million is available through this program.

The interest rates for both programs are:

Standard Rate – 3.0%: Applies to all systems with more than 10,000 population and all systems with Median Household Income (MHI) greater than \$37,082 (State MHI) regardless of size.

Small System Rate – 2.0%: Incentive rate for small systems of less than 10,000 population and MHI less than State MHI.

Hardship Rate – 1.0%: Available to systems that would meet the small system rate and their Level of Effort is at



least 1.4%. (LOE is annual cost of water or sewer based on 6,000 gallons monthly usage divided by system MHI.)

These low interest rates significantly reduce annual debt service costs, as well as the total amount paid over the life for the loan. Such savings directly benefit the rate-paying customers and the system.

For more information on either of these loan programs, contact Ms. Trish Comp at the S.C. Budget and Control Board in Columbia (737-3808), or Dirk Reis at the ACOG. Additional information is also available on the Budget and Control Board’s website at <http://www.olg.sc.gov/programs.aspx>.



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clude being elected president of the Greenville Chinese Cultural Association and receiving the 2010 Suzanne Thaler Rising Start Award, named in honor of the founder of GSA Business and presented at the GSA Women’s Summit in recognition of a leadership in the Upstate business community. Ms. Zhang was also named Entrepreneur of the Year for Industrial Services in June 2010 by Ernst & Young of the Carolinas at the accounting firm’s awards event in Charlotte, NC. In November 2010, JH Global Services was named number four on the [list of South Carolina’s 25 fastest-growing companies](#). Ms. Zhang exemplifies the best traits of an entrepreneur - that of a determined, intelligent person who overcomes barriers and hurdles to build a successful small business.

2011 Legislative Session Preview

The 2011 Legislative Session is fast approaching, and many representatives and senators have already pre-filed bills in an attempt to move their issues through more quickly. It appears that there are at least three major issues of concern for

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in government. Many legislators seem interested in these topics and have sponsored a number of bills addressing them.

One bill requires photo identification in order to vote. Another bill allows local police to retain individuals if there is a “reasonable” question as to whether they are legal or illegal. Other bills outline a new Department of Administration that may be created by moving many of the responsibilities of the Budget and Control Board as well as the Office of the Governor under its auspices. Some elected positions, including the Secretary of Education, Comptroller General and Secretary of State may become appointed positions by the Governor.

The main issue, however, continues to be the budget. The Session will begin with an anticipated \$1.2 billion shortfall. Recommendations from the Tax Realignment Commission (TRAC) to stabilize revenues will be considered, and cuts in Education and Medicaid will be explored. Almost inevitably, the Government Fund is in jeopardy.

Census data should be available to the State by March 2011 providing the data necessary to explore redis-

(Legislative continued on page 3)

Woodruff City Council Adopts Updated Comprehensive Plan

The City of Woodruff approved the update of their comprehensive plan during the November council meeting. While the current plan served to guide the community since the original plan was adopted in 1998, the update addressed key developments and changing trends including redevelopment efforts, changing demographics, and transportation issues that will impact the future of Woodruff.



Downtown Woodruff, SC is a key element in the city's newly approved comprehensive plan.

The city's focus was on issues surrounding revitalizing the downtown area, developing more parks and addressing the issues of an aging population. Each of these issues will have a significant impact on growth in Woodruff, and the city is using the planning process to assess the challenges they will face. The planning commission worked to identify issues the city must address to ensure that growth is beneficial and does not have a negative impact on its quality of life. This includes protecting existing neighborhoods, addressing transportation needs, preserving and promoting the character of the downtown area, and providing adequate services to all residents of the community. The recommendations from the comprehensive plan will be used to update ordinances and prioritize city work and planning activities for the next ten years.

The updated comprehensive plan will be located on the City of Woodruff website at <http://www.cityofwoodruff.com>. If you have any questions about this plan, please contact Jennifer Vissage in the ACOG Planning Services Department.



WorkLink Shares the Keys to Business Success

WorkLink recently participated in two area business expositions to share information about training services, small business solutions, and the WorkKeys® Assessment System. The Gain Momentum Expo, held October 21st at the Anderson Civic Center,



WorkLink joined local businesses at the Gain Momentum Business Expo in Anderson and the Business of Oconee Expo in Seneca.

offered the opportunity to network with more than 50 businesses, making it one of Anderson's "largest business expos," according to the Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce. The Business of Oconee Expo (BOO), a Halloween-themed event held October 28th in Seneca, provided business information

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ACOG Welcomes a New Finance Director



The Appalachian Council of Governments is pleased to welcome Don Zimmer to the staff. He is the new finance director, replacing Becky Hall who retired in December. Previously, Don was the finance manager with the Greenville County Library System and TeleTech Holdings, Inc. Don lives in Greenville and is looking forward to working with staff and the local governments in the region.

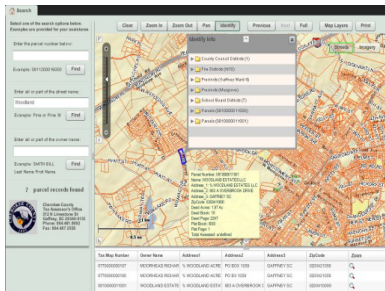
WorkLink would like to invite your business or organization to connect with www.worklinkweb.com for employment resources. By linking to the website and other social media, you can keep up with the latest workforce news in Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens Counties and enhance your own website. Please add a link to www.worklinkweb.com or friend and follow us on Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/worklink> and Twitter - <http://twitter.com/WorkLinkWeb>.

(Legislative continued from page 2) tricting. It is anticipated that South Carolina will gain another Congressman, thereby increasing its strength in Washington. This strength may be needed sooner than later. Legislation has been re-introduced at the federal level that will require local governments to enter into collective bargaining agreements with their public safety employees.

Updates will follow as the Session begins.

Cherokee County Launches GIS Web Application

Cherokee County recently launched a new interactive public GIS web application to provide easy access to county parcels, local map data, and imagery. ACOG staff worked closely with Cherokee County leaders and the Assessor's Office to develop this innovative web tool using cutting edge technology and the most current local and nationally available data.



In addition to parcels, the site displays a wealth of map layers, including fire districts, zoning, monuments, school districts, and contours. Layers are set to turn on as the user zooms in to the appropriate scale. Graphic tools and search menus allow the user to search by parcel number, owner, or street name. Users can display, query, and print simple maps.

ACOG provided application design and programming and hosts both the county's public access site and GIS data in-house on dedicated GIS servers running ESRI ArcGIS Server software. "ACOG is pleased to offer this custom GIS service. It is a prime example of how we can leverage regional assets to benefit individual counties," says ACOG executive director Steve Pelissier. Joe Sparks, Cherokee County IT Director, is delighted to have the site available to the public at this point in the year.

The new tool can be accessed through the "GIS Info" link on the Cherokee County website

(www.cherokeecountysc.com), or via the "County GIS" link on the Cherokee County Development Board website (www.cherokeecounty-sc.org).

For more information, please contact Carol Andersen, ACOG Information Services, at 864-242-9733 or andersen@scacog.org.



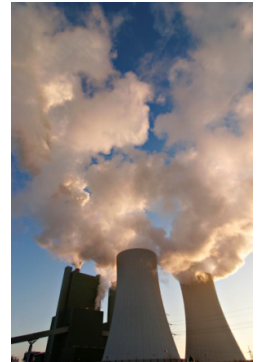
(WorkLink continued from page 3)

and treats for the whole family. More than 1,200 people attended the event, according to the Oconee County Chamber of Commerce.

In addition, Jimmy Pennell, WorkLink business services representative, presented information at the Small Business seminar in Williamston on November 4. By listing a job with the Virtual OneStop System, available at www.sconestop.org, small businesses can save the expense of an advertisement and avoid the hassles of being contacted by unqualified applicants. Interview space, copiers, fax machines, and computers are available for companies who wish to interview at the OneStop Workforce Centers. Businesses of all sizes can also benefit from WorkLink's On-the-Job Training for new hires; Incumbent Worker Training for upgrading the skills of current workforce; and WorkKeys® profiles and assessments, which measure the skills needed for positions in a company, as well as the skills of current and future employees. Businesses that are interested in these services should contact Jimmy Pennell at jpen-nell@worklinkweb.com or (864) 646-5899. Funding is available on a limited first-come, first-served basis.

EPA Delays Release of Final Ozone Standards

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has delayed – for the third time – setting the new ozone standard that will be used as a benchmark for clean air.



The announcement was expected December 31. The EPA now says it intends to set a final standard by the end of July.

The EPA assesses air quality by measuring ozone. The gas is formed when nitrogen oxide (also known as NOx) reacts with other compounds in sunlight and becomes smog. The standard, set in 2003, is 75 parts per billion (ppb) of ozone. The Upstate region's monitors have been registering ozone levels of 68 to 78 ppb over the last few years. All but one of the Upstate monitors met the 75 ppb standard based in 2010.

However, this won't be the case once the new ozone standards are finalized. In a draft rule released last January, the agency proposed lowering the air quality standard for ozone to between 60 and 70 ppb. The new numbers will almost certainly lead to non-attainment designation for parts, or all, of the Upstate and potentially curtail future recruitment of manufacturing and other industries that contribute to air pollution.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Pickens Seniors Receive Grant Funds

Senior Citizens of Pickens, Inc., was awarded a grant through the S.C. Senior Center PIP (Permanent Improvement Program) to enhance energy efficiency in the Hagood Center. The funds will be used to replace windows in the center and to provide vinyl boxing around the exterior of the build-



Senior Citizens of Pickens, Inc., awarded grant money for building renovations.

ing. The building housing the Hagood Center was built in 1928 and still has the original windows in all areas of the center except the cafeteria. The Hagood Center has recently undergone a major renovation through a CDBG-R Energy Efficiency grant funded by stimulus money through the City of Pickens.

The Hagood Center currently offers a group-dining and home-delivered meals program, an exercise room, and recreational and craft activities. Activities are provided in conjunction with Pickens County Seniors Unlimited.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Veterans Services Make Headlines in November



The live morning broadcast of Fox Carolina took over the town of Pendleton on Veterans Day, November 11, featuring WorkLink's Priority of Service for Veterans.

WorkLink Workforce Investment Board gives priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses. This service policy aligns with the Jobs for Veterans Act and ensures that those who have served our country move to the front of the line for employment and training services. For more information about the services available to job seekers, visit <http://www.worklinkweb.com/sc-jobseekers.php>.



(Hall continued from page 1) decided to retire. Becky has plans to start painting again. Her plans also include visiting family and friends, and doing more volunteer work - with both people and animals. She hopes to travel and learn new things while enjoying the things and people around her. ACOG staff wish Becky the very best in her new role as retiree and promise not be jealous of her new goals! Best wishes Becky!

Medicare Prescription Drug Open Enrollment



ACOG volunteer Linda Watts assists a beneficiary with choosing a Medicare drug plan. During Medicare prescription open enrollment (November 15 - December 31), counseling was scheduled off site at locations in each county of the region. Many consumers sought plan comparisons, but others also had questions about upcoming changes with Medicare in 2011. For a highlight of the changes with Medicare for next year, visit our website at www.scupstateadrc.org under the I-CARE program section, Medicare Fall Update.



The ACOG Board welcomes a new member. Easley Mayor Larry Bagwell attended his first Board meeting in December.

VIEWPOINT

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

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Viewpoint Is Changing

In an effort to improve communication and reduce costs, the Viewpoint newsletter is changing. The Viewpoint will be published quarterly via email. The first email edition will be delivered on March 31. While we are reducing the number of newsletters published annually, we plan to use our new email capabilities to more quickly notify you of grant opportunities and other time-sensitive issues. Email will also be utilized for training and event announcements.



If you wish to continue receiving Viewpoint and helpful announcements, please visit the Viewpoint section of our website (<http://www.scacog.org/General/vp.htm>) to join our mailing list.