

Appalachian COG Honored Twice at Statewide Conference

The Appalachian COG and ACOG Board member Chris Christopherson, in particular, were honored recently at the annual conference of the South Carolina Association of Regional Councils (SCARC).



Mayor Christopherson Receives Volunteer of the Year Award.

Mayor Christopherson received the prestigious “COG Volunteer of the Year” award for his work in bringing state and national recognition to the Association and to South Carolina’s COGs. Mayor Christopherson was responsible for creating and publishing *South Carolina’s Councils of Governments: Partnerships, Progress, and Promise*, which identified the significant impact our COGs have had on the State’s economy and quality of life.

“I have always believed that South Carolina’s COGs are the ‘unsung heroes’ of our State’s economic progress,” Christopherson said. “It has been a great honor to help bring some recognition to their accomplishments.”

The Appalachian COG was also honored to receive SCARC’s “Regional Project of the Year” award



Eddie Wynn Receives Project of the Year Award for ACOG.

for its Terrorism Awareness Training Program. Started shortly after the 9/11/01 terrorist attacks, this program has provided initial terrorism awareness training for nearly 1,000 first responders and local elected officials.

Receiving the award, ACOG Chairman Eddie Wynn said, “We are very pleased that the Association has recognized us for this effort. It is one which our Board has enthusiastically supported, and it has been in great demand among our local law enforcement, fire and emergency services personnel.”



Cherokee County First Responders Receive On-Site WMD/Terrorism Awareness Training



Cherokee County first responders were among the first to take advantage of an on-site WMD/Terrorism Awareness training program offered by the Appalachian Council of Governments. Seventy-six volunteer firefighters, EMS personnel, police officers and E911 communications personnel were instructed at the Blacksburg Fire Department over two evenings in December. Three additional classes are being planned in Gaffney for January and February.

For the past two years, ACOG has been conducting WMD/Terrorism Awareness training for first responders in the six counties of the Upstate. The training has been conducted for the most part at ACOG’s training facility in Greenville. ACOG is now attempting to reach local volunteers and personnel who have not been able to make the trip to Greenville.

The awareness-level course is based upon a U.S. Department of Homeland Security lesson plan and is designed to familiarize first responders with radiological, chemical, biological

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Governor Announces Grants Totaling \$3.4 Million for Upstate

The Governor's Office announced on December 10th that it has funded eight Community Development Block Grants in the Upstate out of nine submitted for funding. This is one of the best success rates in the state; only one other COG region received more grants than the Appalachian region. The grants will bring a total of \$3,437,050 to eight local governments for water and sewer projects, housing rehabilitation, and small business development. The Grants Services staff of the Appalachian COG was involved with application preparation for all of the grants, and will assist local governments in their administration. Following is a breakdown of the projects:

- **Anderson County-Booker Street Housing Rehabilitation:** \$500,000 to revitalize the Booker Street neighborhood; 16 homes will be renovated, 1 home will be replaced, and 1 vacant house will be demolished. Of the 32 beneficiaries of the project, 100 percent are low to moderate income.
- **Town of Blacksburg Holly Grove Water Project:** \$500,000 to extend public water to the Holly Grove neighborhood, which is suffering from contaminated wells; 115 persons will benefit, of which 74 percent are low to moderate income.
- **Town of Central Sewer Trunk Line Upgrade:** \$500,000 to replace and upgrade a sewer trunk line that is a documented health and safety threat to town residents. Of the 1,223 beneficiaries, 67 percent are low to moderate income.
- **Town of Honea Path Mill Hill Community Housing Rehab:** \$372,050 to revitalize the Mill Hill community; ten homes will be renovated, one home will be replaced, and one vacant house will be demolished. Of the 21 beneficiaries of the project,

100 percent are low to moderate income.

- **Town of Iva Townwide Sewer Project:** \$500,000 to replace and upgrade deteriorated sewer collection lines townwide that are a documented health and safety threat to town residents. Of the 1,142 beneficiaries, 57 percent are low to moderate income.
- **Town of West Pelzer Townwide Water Project:** \$500,000 to replace and upgrade the water system throughout the town, which is a documented health and safety threat to town residents. Of the 2,291 total beneficiaries, 59 percent are low to moderate income.
- **City of Woodruff Townwide Sewer Project:** \$500,000 to upgrade the sewer system townwide, which is a documented health and safety threat. Of the 4,229 total beneficiaries, 58 percent are low to moderate income.
- **Anderson County Small Business Development:** \$65,000 to help the communities of Williamston, Iva and Pendleton with small business development.

For more information on these projects, or the Community Development Block Grant program, contact a member of the Grants Services staff at the ACOG office.

SCDOT Grant Workshop

The South Carolina Department of Transportation will hold an Enhancement Grant Workshop for its TEA-21 Program in the Appalachian Council of Governments' Boardroom on Tuesday, February 8, 2005, at 10:00 a.m. All interested parties are invited to attend. Please call Dan Wagner or Shawn Colin with ACOG at (864) 242-9733 with any questions.

Family Caregiver Support Program Tips for Caregivers

Do you know the symptoms of hypothermia? Due to a tragic loss in a Greenville



County community recently, we

are encouraging caregivers of seniors to be more vigilant in checking on those individuals who live alone. The death of the 89-year-old woman in Greenville seems so tragic, but nevertheless it happened under all our noses.

Please be aware of what the symptoms of hypothermia are:

- Drowsiness,
- Weakness and loss of coordination,
- Pale and cold skin,
- Confusion,
- Uncontrollable shivering (although, at extremely low temperatures the shivering may stop), and
- Slowed breathing or heart rate.

As you can see, these might be difficult to observe in the case of a senior, as they might be prone to some of these symptoms due to other conditions. This is all the more reason to keep tabs on seniors that might run the risk of leaving the heat too low to maintain proper body temperature, or of being embarrassed to tell anyone if their source of heat is not available for whatever reason.

This region is very fortunate to have wonderfully experienced caregivers, as well as some who might be less experienced. The Family Caregiver Support Program strives to be a source of encouragement, support and information for the caregivers of the Upstate region. This region includes Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg Counties. We can be contacted by phone at (864) 242-9733, toll free (800) 925-4077, fax (864) 242-6957, or e-mail: brown@scacog.org, or swiley@scacog.org. We hope you have a wonderful holiday!

Prepare A Plan to Stay “IN TOUCH” With Older Relatives During a Crisis

As families reflect on 2004 -- a year in which thousands of Americans from coast to coast experienced natural disasters -- the Eldercare Locator is encouraging families to spend some time mapping out a plan that will keep their older relatives safe when disaster and personal crisis strikes. The Eldercare Locator, a nationwide service funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging that links older consumers and their families to local aging services, has released an action plan, “**IN TOUCH**,” to help families establish a strategy to assist older relatives in emergency situations. “**IN TOUCH**” was developed to assist families initiate a discussion about ways to help older relatives should an emergency occur.

Disaster and emergency situations can strike quickly and without warning, forcing immediate evacuations or even confining seniors to their homes. There are many reasons why older Americans must be prepared, including age-related characteristics, such as delayed response time or reduced ability to see or hear. Mental or physical impairments also can be barriers to quick response, as can chronic health problems, limited finances, and language and cultural differences. Families can cope with emergencies by preparing in advance for the worst-case scenarios.

The Eldercare Locator encourages families across the country to establish a family plan with older loved ones to stay “**IN TOUCH**” during disasters and emergency situations. Whether you live far away or are directly caring for your loved one, an “**IN TOUCH**” plan will aid your family communications efforts before, during, and after a crisis situation:

Identify potential emergency situations and disasters that could occur in your older family member’s home and community.

Note what community resources are available that might assist your

efforts in establishing your “**IN TOUCH**” plan.

Talk about individual circumstances that are concerns for you and your older loved one.

Outline your “**IN TOUCH**” plan in writing and share it with everyone involved.

Update your “**IN TOUCH**” plan as situations change.

Communicate regularly and test your “**IN TOUCH**” plan.

Have peace of mind knowing that you have an “**IN TOUCH**” plan.

“Older persons are very resilient, but they may need special help to overcome the adversities of disastrous events,” said Josefina G. Carbonell, Assistant Secretary for Aging at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “An emergency preparedness plan is a must for all families, and this “**IN TOUCH**” plan addresses the special needs of older loved ones before a crisis occurs. I urge you to work with your State or Area Agency on Aging to identify ways to keep your older relatives safe all year round, not just in an emergency.”

In 2004, the country was hit by serious natural disasters – disasters that put seniors in a very difficult position when there wasn’t a plan in place. Many older Americans have serious obstacles to safety when faced with an unexpected situation such as lack of transportation; dependence on daily medications; or lack of heat. If emergency situations arise, an effective plan can avert the situation turning into a crisis. If families need assistance identifying local resources to complete the plan, the Eldercare Locator can connect them with agencies that provide transportation services, meals on wheels, and home health services among others.

“When an emergency occurs,

there is no time to sit down and figure out what to do,” said Sandy Markwood, CEO of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. How will your aging relative signal for help if needed? Have arrangements been made for a friend or neighbor to check on them? We strongly encourage families to spend a few minutes identifying ways to stay in touch with older relatives during crisis situations.”

For a copy of the “**IN TOUCH**” plan, contact the S. C. Appalachian Council of Governments’ Area Agency on Aging at 242-9733. You may also contact the Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116 or www.eldercare.gov. The Eldercare Locator is a public service of the Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and is administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and the National Association of State Units on Aging.

Media Note: For additional information, go to the Eldercare Locator Media Center at <http://www.n4a.org/mediacenter.cfm>.



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and conventional weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and basic emergency response measures. The course satisfies a prerequisite requirement for additional training at the USDHS Center for Domestic Preparedness at Ft. McClellan, Alabama. Graduates of the ACOG awareness training are awarded Department of Homeland Security training certificates.

The WMD training is being co-sponsored by SCDHEC and Upstate AHEC under a federal Bioterrorism training program and is offered without charge to emergency first responders. The half day training sessions are limited in size and must be coordinated in advance. Contact Joe Newton at 864-241-4642 or e-mail at newton@scacog.org for further information.

Many Appalachian Region Municipalities Review and Update Comprehensive Plans

The Appalachian Council of Governments Planning Staff has assisted several municipalities review and update their respective Comprehensive Plans over the past year. The adoption of these ordinances is a culmination of



efforts by each Planning Commission Council and staff. The Appalachian Council of Governments provides project management and technical assistance during plan development and provides each client a finished document at the end of the planning process.

A series of public meetings was held with each Planning Commission to solicit information from the citizens. Information obtained from these meetings, as well as current Census and other data was used to identify existing conditions of each municipality. The Planning Commission worked to identify strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats. 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 mitigation-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 and 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.

According to State Planning Enabling Legislation, Comprehensive Plans must be reviewed at least once within five years of adoption and new

Plans must be completed at least every ten years. The municipalities that have completed or are



near completion of the review and update requirement with assistance from the Appalachian Council of Governments staff include: Belton, Blacksburg, Chesnee, Cowpens, Landrum, Lyman, Pickens, Walhalla, and Woodruff.

Pendleton District WIB Hosted Economic Development Panel Discussion

The Pendleton District Workforce Investment Board hosted an economic development panel discussion on November 18, 2004, at the Clemson University Madren Center. The Board invited the three Pendleton District counties' Economic Development Directors to meet with the Board during their Annual Planning Retreat. Mr. John Lummus from Anderson County, Mr. Ray Farley from Pickens County, and Mr. Jim Alexander from Oconee County attended the retreat.

Each Director made a presentation regarding the economic development activities in their county. They defined how economic development was handled and how they determine success. They discussed each area's targeted industries and future goals. Areas of common interests were identified, as well as the Upstate combined efforts through the Upstate Alliance.

There was a discussion regarding resources available to assist in eco-

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Upstate Schools Make the Grade

The State Department of Education has developed a performance goal stating that, by 2010, South

Carolina's student achievement will be ranked in the top half of all states nationally. It is recognized that to achieve this goal, we must become one of the fastest improving systems in the country. Improving school or district performance begins with understanding the conditions, successes, and challenges of each school and district.



The South Carolina Annual School and District Report Cards provide information to build that understanding.

The 2004 Report Cards were released in November, providing a comprehensive overview of the "educational health" of individual schools, school districts, and the state as a whole. The reports give each recipient an "absolute" (or overall) rating and an "improvement" rating ranging from "unsatisfactory" to "excellent." Among the issues addressed is student performance on PACT, HSAP, and SAT testing. In addition to assessing overall test performance, scores were also assessed based on factors such as gender, race, disability, migrant status and English proficiency. Other areas of evaluation included dollars spent per student, student attendance, dropout rates, and teacher salary and educational level.

Of the 16 school districts in the Appalachian COG region, 14 districts received an absolute rating of "Good" or "Excellent" in 2004. Graduation rates ranged from 71.2 percent in Anderson District 3 to 88.5 percent in Spartanburg District 4. Spartanburg District 3 reported the highest annual

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Development Corporation News

The ADC Board approved a loan of \$200,000 for Fire Protection Services. This Greenville based company designs and installs sprinkler systems and sells and services fire suppression equipment. The ADC funds will be used for working capital to allow the business to install sprinklers in some of the school projects in Greenville County. Thirty-six jobs will be retained or created.

The ADC Board approved financing to Premier Garage of the Upstate in the amount of \$54,000. These funds will help this Anderson-based business begin operations to remodel garages throughout the Upstate. Three to four jobs are expected to be created.

The ADC Board approved financing to McLaughlin Systems, LLC, in the amount of \$580,000. These funds will allow current management to purchase the assets of the existing business from the estate of the former owner. Fifty jobs will be retained because of this financing.

A loan of \$600,000 was approved by the ADC Board for financing of a new Zaxby's restaurant that will be located in Gaffney. The principals own three Zaxby's in Spartanburg presently. This expansion will create in excess of 20 job opportunities.

A loan of \$200,000 was approved for Genesis Coordinated Systems as part of a \$1,300,000 financing package. This new business plans to locate in Greenville and be an incoming-only telephone call center. The potential exists for 50 or more jobs to be created.

The \$136,000 loan approved for Brightwater Digital has been closed and funded, allowing the company to purchase its facility in Greenville. The business has seven employees, who will all be retained.

The loan approved for Flamingo, LLC, and Tried and True, Inc., in the amount of \$110,000 was closed and funded, allowing the businesses to complete the real estate purchase of

property in Simpsonville that houses this consignment shop business. Five jobs are to be created or retained.

The \$100,000 loan for IDC Trim and Upholstery, Inc., has been closed and funded to allow this business to locate in their new building in Duncan. Ten jobs will be created or retained with this project.

Step Ahead Learning Center's approved \$16,000 loan has been closed and funded. This day care center is located in Gaffney. Four to five jobs are to be created because of this project.

Rock Creek Accessories' loan for \$50,000 has been approved, closed, and funded. This new business will supply bandannas to retailers throughout the United States from its location in Mauldin. Two to four jobs will be created because of this project.

The loan approved to Partners in Textiles Innovations for \$200,000 in funding has been closed and funded using \$40,000 in ADC funds, allowing the principals to purchase a building in Piedmont where they finish fabric for sale to the home furnishings industry. The project will help retain ten jobs with an additional five jobs to be created.

The ADC closed a loan in the amount of \$200,000 for emedia Group, Inc., along with an SBA loan for \$705,000, to purchase equipment for their new printing company. emedia Group, Inc., will retain or create 37 jobs.

The ADC has approved a \$680,000 loan for completion of a new building in Pickens County Industrial Park for Integrated Manufacturing Company. The project should create in excess of 30 jobs at the location.

The \$100,000 loan to Palmetto Custom Film of Piedmont has been closed and funded. This quickly growing company has created more jobs than originally projected as sales have exceeded expectations. The seventeen jobs that have been created to date will be retained with the potential for another four or five jobs.

Happy Holidays!

The holiday season can bring on its own type of stress and bad days...now add caring for an Alzheimer's patient and it's a whole new ball game! As caregivers (both in the home and in a facility), we need to remember to care for ourselves too. If you are having a bad day, week or month...try these tips:

- * Cut yourself some slack. No one is perfect or patient 100 percent of the time. Decide that tomorrow will be better!
- * You can change your actions and reactions to stress. Start by taking slow, deep breaths and/or walk away from the situation for a minute or two.
- * Count your blessings. Use your faith or belief for extra strength. Remind yourself of the good parts of each day or what's good in your life.
- * Find a quiet hideout at work, at home, or in your head ~ a place, view, picture, fountain, plant, tree, or memory that calms and soothes your spirit or makes you smile.
- * Give friends or co-workers a pat on the back if they do something nice. They will do the same for you when you need it.
- * Use creativity. Do not let an old hobby or craft project just sit in the closet.
- * Rediscover your sense of humor.
- * Say "no" and mean it if you are at your limit. Too much work is bad for the soul.
- * Get enough sleep, good food and exercise.
- * Preserve real friendships.
- * Say, "I will not let this get to me. I will go with the flow."
- * Get a massage, a facial, a manicure...have a day of pampering and relaxation!!
- * Never lose sight of your big dreams; they make life seem bigger.

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VIEWPOINT

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conomic development efforts. The Board gained valuable information to aid in setting future economic development goals and in maximizing utilization of resources in the Pendleton District region.

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expenditure per student of \$8,464, while Spartanburg District 2 reported the lowest expenditure of \$5,776 per student. Spartanburg Districts 7 and 5 reported the lowest student/teacher ratios, each having 19.2 students to each teacher, as compared to the Oconee District, which reported the highest ratio of 26.1 students to each teacher.

The Information Services Department includes this and other education-related information in the *InfoMentum* Fact Finder database, which is accessible via the web at www.infomentum.org. To review complete 2004 Report Card information on schools in the region, visit the State Department of Education web site at www.myschools.org,

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Remember that being a caregiver is the most amazing job anyone can do, whether it be at home or in a facility. Also remember, that those loved ones and/or residents are counting on you...so please take care of yourself and enjoy the Holidays! May the New Year bring all of you happiness, health and prosperity!