

Report Cards Show Room for Improvement

In November the S. C. Department of Education published 2006 Report Cards for schools and districts statewide. These reports are part of the state's education accountability system to provide schools and communities with information on their annual progress, measured against the 2010 goal of having our student achievement ranked in the top half of the states nationally.

Districts and individual schools are given both an "absolute" (overall) rating, as well as an "improvement" rating. The possible ratings encompass five levels of achievement, including "Excellent", "Good", "Average", "Below Average" and "Unsatisfactory".

In 2006, the region as a whole mirrored the state's overall decline in ratings. Of the sixteen school districts in the ACOG region, only Anderson District 1 and Spartanburg District 4 received absolute ratings of "Good". Thirteen of the remaining districts received an "Average" absolute rating, and one district received a "Below Average" absolute rating. Improvement ratings were even more discouraging, as thirteen of the region's districts received "Below Average" or "Unsatisfactory" ratings.

State officials said the downturn was due to a combination of factors that ranged from increasingly stringent state and federal requirements to spring 2006 student test scores that were flat compared to recent years. "These ratings clearly show the effect of our accountability system's performance tar-



gets that grow increasingly more challenging for schools to achieve," said State Superintendent of Education Inez

Tenenbaum. "The ratings demand that schools show more than their anticipated, normal one year's growth in academic progress. We can't be satisfied to reach a plateau at any point. Every year's test scores must improve significantly or these ratings decline."

The assessment of each district and school involves the consideration of a number of achievement measures, including student scores on various standardized tests, dropout rates, end-of-course passage rates and graduation rates. Additional statistics are also reported, including enrollment, attendance rate, dollars spent per student and student-teacher ratio, just to name a few.

Among the region's sixteen districts, Spartanburg District 7 reported the lowest student-teacher ratio of 16.8 to 1, while Anderson District 2 reported the highest ratio of 23.6 to 1. Spartanburg District 7 reported the highest expenditure per student of \$9,031, while Spartanburg District 2 reported the region's lowest of \$6,108 per student. Dropout rates in the region ranged from 4.7 percent in Anderson District 3 and Greenville District, to 0.1 percent in Spartanburg District 4.

These and other education statistics can be found in the *InfoMentum Fact Finder* database, which is main-
(Education continued on page 3)

Easley City Council Annual Planning Retreat

In November the City of Easley conducted its sixth annual Council planning retreat. Each year City Council members spend a day reviewing programs and establishing and prioritizing goals and objectives for the City government. Council members seek to take a little time away from routine problems and complaints to do longer term *strategic* planning for the betterment of Easley.



The Easley City Council and new City Administrator at their November planning retreat.

Six members of the City Council and the City's new Administrator mapped out plans and targets for improved facilities, services, recreation, transportation and overall efficiency. This retreat was also Administrator "Fox" Simons' first real opportunity to plan in depth with Easley's elected officials. ACOG staff facilitated the day's activities.



Long Term Care Facilities Recognized For Participation

The S.C. Appalachian Council of Governments' Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has implemented a program new to South Carolina: The Volunteer Ombudsman Program. Long-Term Care Ombudsmen advocate for the rights of residents in long-term care facilities. Volunteers serve as friendly visitors and lend a listening ear to residents.

Without willing facilities, however, the volunteer ombudsman program would not exist. On Wednesday, November 29th, facilities from across the Upstate were recognized for their participation in the voluntary program. Since the volunteer ombudsman program is not required for nursing homes and assisted living facilities, the volunteers can only go into facilities that have offered to participate in the program.

Currently, there are five facilities in the Upstate with volunteers making weekly visits and another seventeen on the waiting list to receive a volunteer. These 22 facilities are pioneers in the program and prove that they are truly trying to promote the best quality of care for their residents.

Facilities that currently have an active volunteer in their facility were invited for a reception in their honor at the Appalachian Council of Governments in Greenville. Facilities given awards of recognition for participation in the program were the Peachtree Centre in Gaffney, Magnolia Place in Spartanburg, Windsor House in Greenville, Mountainview in Spartanburg, and Richard M. Campbell Veterans Home in Anderson.

Michael Stogner, Aging Services Director for the Appalachian Council of Governments, spoke at the event and thanked all the guests for their dedication to the volunteer program.

Jessica Arnone, Volunteer



Back row, left to right: Lamar Bailes, Don Groezinger, Carol Groezinger, Autumn Cole, Joe Pollard, Celia Glenn, Nancy Rusinko, Nikki Stanton, Nancy Eaker, Nancy Hawkins, Audrey Huston; front row, left to right: Cindy Matthews, Jessica Arnone, and Norma Dillard.

Ombudsman Coordinator, said "I really appreciate these facilities stepping up and taking on our new program. It shows that they try to provide the best care possible and aren't trying to hide anything by preventing us from coming in and making the lives of their residents just a little bit better."

The Appalachian Council of Governments' Long Term Care Ombudsman Program covers six Upstate counties including: Greenville, Spartanburg, Anderson, Oconee, Pickens, and Cherokee. Volunteers are needed and welcome from each area.

For information on becoming a Volunteer Ombudsman (volunteers must be 21 years of age or older), or volunteering your Nursing Home or Assisted Living facility to be a part of this program, please contact Jessica Arnone, Volunteer Coordinator, at (864) 242-9733 or by email at jarnone@scacog.org.

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



SCDOT Enhancement Grants Almost in Season

With the start of the New Year, it is time to be thinking about the 2007 Transportation Enhancement Grant Program. Administered by the SCDOT, this program is part of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The program funds community improvement projects that have a relationship to transportation, including facilities for pedestrians and bicycles; roadway beautification and landscaping; preservation of abandoned railway corridors; and pedestrian safety and education activities.



Now is the time to start thinking about your projects and getting your plans together. Most recently, the Cities of Pacolet, Gaffney, and Pickens have used the grants for street, sidewalk, and pedestrian path improvements. An education program has been established by SCDOT to provide communities with the necessary information to apply for up to \$200,000 toward certain eligible transportation activities. A series of workshops will be setup soon in which representatives from SCDOT will distribute brochures and answer questions regarding the grant program. Applications are typically due in the early spring.

Look for more updates concerning enhancement grants in upcoming Viewpoint publications and SCDOT mailings. For more information concerning the Transportation Enhancement Program, contact Chip Bentley at

(SCDOT continued on page 4)

When Your Loved One Can No Longer Live Independently

As your loved one continues to live at home, you may have noticed yourself providing more and more assistance than you did in the past. As a family member or caregiver, there will come a time when you may need to discuss with your care receiver that they may no longer be able to live independently.

So how do you know when your care receiver or loved one can no longer live on his or her own? Sometimes an illness, injury, or even change in health will determine when a person needs to make a change. The need for change may also happen gradually over time. Always beware of certain signs that might indicate your care receiver is having difficulties on their own. These signs may include having difficulty eating, dressing, bathing, or even using the toilet. Also, be sure your loved one is taking their medication. Forgetting to take medications or taking too much may be a sign that your care receiver is having difficulties on their own. Noticing your loved one behaving in ways that could be harmful to themselves or to others is another red flag. An example of this would be forgetting to turn off the kitchen oven on a daily basis. Wandering from home and not remembering quite sure how they got there is also a sign. Beware of certain signs of memory loss that you have not noticed previously in your loved one.

How do you talk about making a change? Accepting change can be hard. As a caregiver, try being open and honest with your care receiver about all that you have observed with the care receiver living at home. Clearly state why you think independent living is no longer a good idea. Listen to the person's concerns. Reassure them that you will do what you can to address those concerns. Always include your care receiver when making decisions for the care of your care receiver.

What if your care receiver resists making a change? You will want to give the person time to get use to the idea. Encourage the person to talk about how he or she feels. Listen to the concerns your care receiver may have. Provide clear and honest answers. Try finding solutions to concerns together. Ask for help from friends, family, doctors or even professionals in the aging field. Ask the care receiver to agree to a trial period. If your loved one still will not accept their current situation, then you may want to seek professional help.

Once moving has been agreed to by all parties, is there such a thing as a positive move? Once your care receiver has moved, you may want to ask friends and family to visit as often as they can. Ask them to call when they cannot visit. Ask them to send cards when they cannot call. You may want to reassure your care receiver with positive reasons for the move such as security, comfort, companionship or professional care. Always allow your loved one to adjust.

If you or someone you know is a caregiver with difficult decisions to make and are looking for some support, contact a Family Caregiver Advocate with the Family Caregiver Support Program at (864) 242-9733.



(Education continued from page 1)

tained by the ACOG Information Services Department. To review complete 2006 report card information for each district and school statewide, please visit <http://ed.sc.gov/topics/researchandstats/schoolreportcard/2006/>.

ARC Again Collaborating with Oak Ridge National Lab

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) has announced that it is again collaborating with the U.S. Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, to provide a two-week residential hands-on learning institute focusing on math, science, and technology for high school students and teachers from July 7-20, 2007.

Twenty-six students and twenty-six teachers from throughout the 13-State Appalachian Region will come together to participate in a hands-on learning program that will focus on the application of math and science principles in the world of work. Student participants must be at least 16 years old by July 7, 2007, and all participants must be U.S. citizens.



The ARC/ORNL Institute is a unique opportunity for students and teachers to work with research scientists on relevant math and scientific topics facing the world in the 21st century. Students and teachers work in teams on research projects during the two-week institute, with each team being comprised of three to six students or teachers. The team approach provides an opportunity to conduct research activities and solve problems in a group setting. Examples of the research and other activities engaged in during previous Summer Institutes can be seen at <http://www.ornl.gov/arc2006>, <http://www.ornl.gov/arc2005>, and <http://www.ornl.gov/arc2004>.

(ARC continued on page 5)

U.S. DHHS Launches New Web Site To Promote Long Term Care Planning

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Assistant Secretary for Aging Josefina Carbonell has announced a new web site that will make it easier for consumers to get the information they need to plan for long-term care. The National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information web site provides comprehensive information about long-term care planning, services and financing options, along with tools to help people begin the planning process.

The clearinghouse web site is designed to increase public awareness about the risks and costs of long-term care and the potential need for services, and to provide objective information to help people plan for the future. The clearinghouse web site was designed by DHHS' Administration on Aging (AoA), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE).

"The National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information web site is an important step toward giving consumers the tools they need to take personal responsibility for planning for their future long-term care needs," DHHS Secretary Mike Leavitt said.

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 mandates that the Clearinghouse contain the following: objective information to help consumers decide whether to purchase long-term care insurance or to pursue other private market alternatives that pay for long-term care; information about states with long-term care partnerships under Medicaid; and information about the availability and limitations of coverage for long-term care under Medicaid. The Web site features a number of resources to help individuals start the planning process, including interactive tools such as a savings calculator, contact information for a range of programs and ser-

vices, and real-life examples of how individuals have planned successfully.

The National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information web site helps support the principles of the "Choices for Independence Initiative," included in the recently reauthorized Older Americans Act (OAA), signed into law by President Bush in October.

"The new OAA helps empower individuals and supports better planning, improved home and community-based long-term care options, and more flexible and consumer-friendly systems that allow Americans to remain vibrant and independent," Assistant Secretary Carbonell said.

The new Web site also supports the "Own Your Future" education campaign, a joint federal-state initiative designed to increase consumer awareness about planning for long-term care. DHHS recently announced new federal-state partnerships with several states designed to help Americans take an active role in planning ahead for their future long-term care needs.

"The National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information web site is an essential component of the 'Own Your Future' campaign," CMS Acting Administrator Leslie V. Norwalk said. "Users can easily find information about services, resources and finances to help them plan for future long-term care needs."

For more information about the "Own Your Future" campaign and the National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information, please visit www.longtermcare.gov.

(SCDOT continued from page 2)

the Appalachian COG at 864.242.9733, Cathy Rice with the SCDOT at 803.737.1953, or visit the SCDOT web site at <http://www.dot.state.sc.us/community/tep.html>.

Development Corporation News

The start of a new calendar year finds the Appalachian Development Corporation busy with securing funds for economic development projects, and funding projects that have been approved by the Board.

The Board has approved the following projects to be funded through the Appalachian Development Corporation's loan fund:

- Benore Logistics' expansion in Duncan is to be aided by \$750,000 in funds from ADC and the Community Reinvestment Fund
- A new Spa on Main Street in Greenville is to be assisted with \$100,000 in funds through ADC
- Castle Industries is consolidating a foreign operation into its plant in Greenville. The ADC is providing \$200,000 in funds to help the consolidation take place
- Champion Coach in Greenville has been approved for \$200,000 in funding for expansion of its facilities
- Innovative Odor Solutions is seeing its sales improve. The ADC Board has approved a loan of \$200,000 to help fund the growth of this Duncan-based business
- Tewell Industries, with plants in Greer and Greenville, has been assisted by the ADC through approval of \$1,352,000 in refinancing through the Community Reinvestment Fund

Approvals through the ADC's Small Business Fixed Assets program (504) include:

- AIM LLC, and Deels Transfer and Storage, approved for \$327,000 in permanent funding for a building in Spartanburg County
- Graham's Ice Cream, approved for a new Bruster's store on the East side of Spartanburg in the amount of \$339,000
- Hankins and Merrill, approved for

(ADC continued on page 5)

WorkLink Adds Youth Service Providers

WorkLink recently announced that Palmetto Youth Connection operated by Henkels & McCoy, Inc., is a youth contractor as of October 1, 2006. They will provide youth training services to at-risk youth within Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens Counties. Palmetto Youth Connection's model puts *Education First* and stresses the need to earn a credential and prepare for life-long learning. Students will have the opportunity to complete their basic educational goals through a variety of learning resources such as direct classroom instruction and web-based computer applications. Palmetto Youth Connection will also offer students vocational education opportunities in Computer Technology, Customer Service, Healthcare, and other areas, based on each student's need. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in paid Limited Internships and/or On-the-job training opportunities developed with local companies and community-based agencies. Currently, Palmetto Youth Connection also provides at-risk youth services to the Charleston and Rock Hill areas.

Palmetto Youth Connection will serve a total of 180 out-of-school youth in the three-county region. They have partnered with the four Adult Education Programs in Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens counties. Palmetto Youth Connection will have full-time career coaches at each adult education center, and will coordinate the provision of all academic remediation, GED preparation, high school diploma preparation, and computer applications training through Adult Education.

Palmetto Youth Connection's mission is to improve the quality, competitiveness, and productivity of South Carolina's future workforce by removing barriers and developing the skill sets of young adults in need. We are preparing South Carolina's youth for careers and future opportunities to grow!

Another **WIA** Youth Service Provider is Tri-County Technical Col-

lege's (TCTC) **GATEWAY TO COLLEGE**. This program was chosen by the Bill and Melissa Gates foundation as an exemplary educational model for helping our youth. The program serves at-risk youth, 17 to 20 years old, who have dropped out of school. The program gives students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma while achieving college success. Students simultaneously accumulate high school and college credits, earning their high school diploma while progressing toward a certificate or associate degree.

The **GATEWAY TO COLLEGE** concept originated from Portland Community College (PCC) six years ago. PCC was awarded a \$10.25 million grant from the foundation to replicate this program nationally. Currently, this nationally recognized program is being implemented at ten different college sites across the nation. This fall four more sites will be added. Ultimately, PCC would like to have seventeen sites up and running in the near future. TCTC implemented their Gateway to College in January 2006, and admitted their first 50 students in August 2006. With the collaboration of other community entities, this program looks to increase its enrollment in the immediate future.

For more information on these and other Youth Services in Anderson, Oconee and Pickens Counties, contact Juan Luvene at 864-646-1468.

(ADC continued from page 4)

\$542,000 in funding for a new Sonic in Clemson

- Skyline Exhibits, approved for \$295,000 for a new building and renovations in Greenville County.
- TW Enterprises, Inc., approved for \$485,000 for a new Pizza Inn in Boiling Springs
- Carolina Composites, approved for \$700,000 under the New Market Tax Credit Program, and \$560,000 under the SBA program; Carolina Composites does business as Pioneer Boats in Harleyville.

Recent loans closed and funded include:

- Country Crossroads Convenience Store, approved for \$130,000 for a new store in southern Anderson County
- Western Carolina Railway System, approved for \$200,000 for the purchase of a short line railroad in Anderson County
- 2AM Group, approved for \$200,000 for working capital for its business in Duncan
- Zaxby's, approved for \$619,000 through the SBA 504 program for a restaurant in Gaffney

If you are aware of a project that could benefit by having low-cost, fixed rate financing, contact the Appalachian Development Corporation at 864-242-9733.

(ARC continued from page 3)

The 2007 participants will be housed at a hotel in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, near ORNL and ORISE facilities. Student participants will be chaperoned 24-hours a day by experienced teachers who have worked with ORNL programs for several years. Participant teachers will not be responsible for chaperoning students.

All major expenses, including meals, lodging, transportation to and from the participant's home and local transportation, will be covered for participants. Teacher participants will receive a stipend.

The participants will spend most days in one of several ORNL research laboratories, but field trips to nearby industries, universities, and museums will be scheduled to enhance learning more about Appalachia and some of its unique characteristics.

Applications are submitted through the ARC Program Manager and must be received at ARC's offices in Washington, D.C., by March 1. For more information, or to obtain an application, please contact Dirk Reis at the Appalachian COG at 864-242-9733.

VIEWPOINT

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