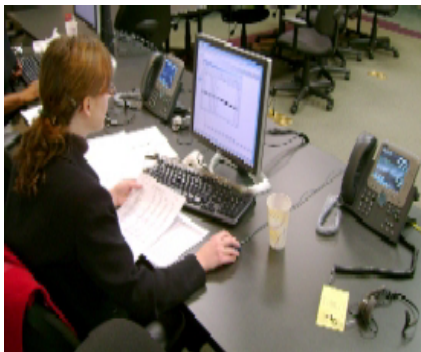


## MASC Partners with ACOG for Disaster Recovery Plan

**F**or nearly 70 years, the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) has represented and served the state's incorporated municipalities, providing research and education, legislative services, insurance options, payroll, and many other services vital to our hometowns. Their newly implemented disaster recovery plan ensures that they can continue serving the towns that depend on them, even in the event of a disaster at their Columbia headquarters.



MASC worked with technology partner, VC3, to develop a Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan designed to get the Association up and running if a devastating event such as a tornado or fire incapacitated the Columbia office. *Disaster Recovery* is a plan to quickly restore and access critical data and resources. *Business Continuity* ensures that the organization can continue to do business and carry out important functions.

The ACOG is proud to play a key role in the MASC plan by providing a location from which the MASC can run essential services. In the event of a

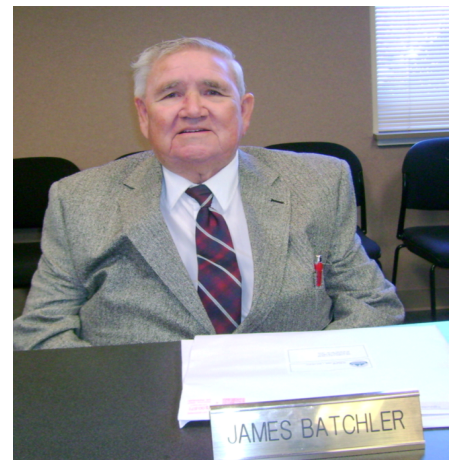
disaster in Columbia, the MASC will set up a temporary office in the ACOG board room. The quick transfer of operations relies on technology that allows voice calls using an Internet connection (VoIP), and software (such as VMWare) that allows access to data on an emergency server from any computer on the Internet. Key components are VC3's rigorous schedule of offsite data backups and MASC's carefully documented business procedures. VC3 coordinated a successful "dress rehearsal" in January for MASC at the ACOG location that showed how well the plan works.

ACOG will store ten computers and other equipment for MASC in Greenville. In return, MASC has offered ACOG the use of the equipment for training classes. This ensures that the equipment will be tested and updated when and if it is needed for a Disaster Recovery operation. MASC has also offered reciprocal use of their facilities in Columbia to ACOG in case of disaster in the Upstate.

Miriam Hair, MASC Deputy Executive Director, says she is very pleased that the ACOG is working with MASC on the Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan. It is an example of a successful partnership that can also be extended to other communities and replicated across the state. The MASC now offers Disaster Recovery Services to the municipalities it serves. Contact Miriam Hair for more information (mhair@masc.sc).



## James D. Batchler Bridge—ACOG Board Member Honored



Cherokee County Councilman and longtime ACOG Board member James Batchler was recently honored by a Resolution of the South Carolina General Assembly. Specifically, the Concurrent Resolution of the South Carolina House and Senate requested that "...the Department of Transportation name the bridge that crosses the Broad River along United States Highway 29 in Cherokee County the 'James D. Batchler Bridge' and erect appropriate markers or signs..."

State Senator Harvey Peeler introduced the resolution to honor Mr. Batchler's contributions to his community and the citizens of Cherokee County. Mr. Batchler has served on the Appalachian Council of Governments Board for more than 17 years.

### *Did You Know?*

Cherokee County was formed in 1897 from parts of Spartanburg, Union, and York Counties.

## National Nutrition Month® 2007

**F**or National Nutrition Month® 2007, the best path to fitness and health is to be *100% Fad Free*. Diet fads come and go, and some may help you lose weight—in the short term. For National Nutrition Month® 2007, the American Dietetic Association says the most effective long-term way to achieve a healthful lifestyle is to be *100% Fad Free*.

“You can lose weight on virtually any diet,” said registered dietitian and ADA spokesperson Roberta Anding. “If you eat less, you will lose weight. The question is, can you maintain a healthy lifestyle over the long term—your life? The real key to reaching long-term goals is to focus on your overall health.”

Through National Nutrition Month, created in 1973, the American Dietetic Association promotes healthful eating by providing practical nutrition guidance and focusing attention on making informed food choices and developing sound physical activity habits. National Nutrition Month also reminds consumers that registered dietitians are their most valuable and credible source of timely, science-based information.

Anding encourages everyone to keep in mind these National Nutrition Month key messages to enjoy a *100% Fad Free* lifestyle:

- **Develop an eating plan for life-long health.** Too often, people adopt the latest food fad, rather than focusing on overall health. Get back to basics and use the new *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *My Pyramid* as your guide to healthy eating.
- **Choose foods sensibly by looking at the big picture.** A single food or meal won't make or break a healthful diet. When consumed in moderation and in appropriate portions, all foods can fit into a healthful diet.
- **Learn how to spot a food fad.** Unreasonable or exaggerated



**One size doesn't fit all.** MyPyramid Plan offers you a personal eating plan. Go to the USDA web site at [www.MyPyramid.gov](http://www.MyPyramid.gov) to pick a plan.

claims that eating (or not eating) specific foods, nutrient supplements or combinations of foods may cure disease or offer quick weight loss are key features of fad diets.

- **Find your balance between food and physical activity.** Regular physical activity is important for your overall health and fitness, plus it helps control body weight, promotes a feeling of well-being, and reduces the risk of chronic diseases.
- **Food and nutrition misinformation can have harmful effects on your health and well-being,** as well as your wallet. Registered dietitians are uniquely qualified to communicate current and emerging science-based nutrition information and are an instrumental part of developing a diet plan that meets your individual needs.

During this month, learn more about the community-based nutrition programs offered through the Appalachian region by local Councils on Aging. These programs provide nutritious, healthy meals to older adults, and also link individuals to community services that allow them to remain independent. Learn where these programs are located in your community so that you can share this information with many older adults and caregivers who are not aware of this invaluable service.

## Arlene Young Joins ACOG Staff



Arlene Young has joined the staff of the Appalachian COG as **Project Manager in the Grant Services Department**. Arlene has worked in local government for more than 27 years – 13 years as Grants Administrator for Anderson County and 14 years as the Community Development Coordinator for the City of Clemson. She has spent most of her life in Anderson County, but has also lived in Georgia, Florida and Maryland, and France.

Arlene has two grown children, Blair and Brooke, and lives on Lake Hartwell with her Labrador Retriever, Max. Contact Arlene at 864-242-9733, or email her at [young@scacog.org](mailto:young@scacog.org)

## Changing the Status Quo

By the year 2020, it's predicted that there will be over 52 million older adults, representing about 16% of the population. Out of these 52 million, one-fourth will reside in rural areas and will comprise at least 15% of the total rural population. The aging process, along with geographic distances, higher unemployment, lower literacy and the lack of medical treatment, are all current challenges facing people living in rural areas. When asked, rural Americans often assess their health as being only fair or poor, with more than 50% of them reporting to have at least one disability. This number greatly in-

*(Status Quo continued on page 5)*

## WorkLink Workforce Forum

**T**wenty-eight people from Anderson, Oconee and Pickens Counties—representing a mix of industry, community, education and government sectors—attended a working forum on February 20 hosted by WorkLink to discuss information that will be helpful in building the next Southern workforce.

This forum, co-sponsored by Clemson University and held at the Madren Center, was the only one of its kind conducted in the Upstate and only one of a handful to be held this year in South Carolina. The forum was actually one of many to be held in the South this year, based on a model created by the Southern Growth Policies Board—a non-partisan public policy think tank based in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. Formed by the region's governors in 1971, the Policies Board develops and advances visionary economic development policies through forums such as this one. Once the annual information is collected from communities in 13 Southern states, it is funneled into an annual report. Last year's report can be viewed at [www.southern.org](http://www.southern.org)

Holly Matheson, President of 10-x Group, and Lou Robinson, of Clemson University, facilitated the forum. Initial conclusions were drawn from breakout sessions during the half-day session, where attendees brainstormed about **three important workforce development topics and established goals for each.**

### Industry

- Industry should list skillsets that they need from employees
- WorkKeys\* can help industry identify these skillsets and help candidates train for the skills to qualify them for these jobs
- WorkKeys should tie in to high school exit exams
- WorkKeys is not just for technical schools
- Businesses should focus more on the long-term—such as apprenticeships

and job shadowing, that have been successful elsewhere

- Need to identify transferable skills
- Industry should take the lead in industry/education programs, such as encouraging opportunities for students and teachers to learn more about different industries' processes and opportunities, and possibly implement a two-week hands-on program where educators perform the actual jobs in different sectors

### Workforce Traits

- Flexibility and teamwork are important to retain employees; these traits should be fostered and taught earlier in schools
- Flexibility should also be stressed—in that people should be willing to engage in life-long learning/training to adapt to the changing workforce climate
- More mentors are needed
- Parents and students should be educated regarding opportunities in business and industry well before the student is a high school senior
- Communication should be stressed in schools

### Education

- To decrease the high school dropout rate, there should be a focus on home environment; data shows that the strongest predictor of high school completion is the mother's education level
- Soft skills and communication skills should have more emphasis, including active listening and self motivation; businesses should identify that these are important for jobs
- Look for innovative incentives for learning; an example is Kershaw County giving laptops to all ninth graders, which has shown to directly lower the dropout rate
- WorkKeys should be an emphasis for both educators and industry; there should be one organization—such as

(WorkLink continued on page 6)

## Transit Coordination Planning

**T**he South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), in partnership with the Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG), recently held the second public input meeting in development of the Regional Transit



Coordination Plan for the rural 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. SCDOT is working with COGs across South Carolina to develop these regional coordination plans.

During the meeting, SCDOT's consultant presented findings on issues identified in previous meetings and surveys, along with potential strategies to address those issues. Stakeholders from area transit providers and users attended and provided feedback to the issues identified and draft strategies presented. Issues identified by the consultant included reducing administrative barriers that inhibit resource sharing; modifying existing operations plans to better share vehicles and driver resources; and looking forward to identify emerging service needs that might not be met by existing efforts. Attendees agreed with the overall issues and strategies identified, and asked that SCDOT and the ACOG consider the next steps to develop specific actions for implementing the strategies.

Completion of the Transit Coordination Plan for the Appalachian region is expected in the fall of this year. Following completion, local transit providers will have recommenda-

(Planning continued on page 6)

## Ombudsman Corner



*Which facility is the best one for your loved one?*

Whether considering an assisted living community or a nursing home community, there are a number of areas to explore, including the size of the community, the ownership, past and present surveys, the staff, the residents, etc. The list could go on and on.

What do you do when you have the need to place your loved one in an assisted living community or a nursing home? Do you choose a small or a large community? When choosing a community for your loved one, visit at least three similar communities. Take notice if the facility is part of a corporate structure or individually owned and operated. Whether 44 beds or 144 beds, compare apples to apples, not apples to oranges! Is the community close to your home or far away? Are the communities you are evaluating close in pricing and is the square footage of the rooms similar?

Walk through the facility after 5:00 p.m. Use your senses. Is it fresh and clean or are there unpleasant odors? Do the TEAMS (staff members) greet you with an enthusiastic “hello” and a warm smile? Does the staff take pride in what they are doing, whether giving care or mopping floors and taking out trash? Are the residents clean, well-groomed and heavily involved in activities? When the residents call for help, are they being assisted? Wait, watch and observe for about five minutes to see if anyone comes to the aid of the

residents requesting help. When speaking with residents, do they speak highly of the community? Also, note the exterior of a community; is it well maintained? Is the lawn mowed and are the shrubs manicured? Is the community free of trash? After conducting such an evaluation, the community that had been a top choice for your loved one could actually drop to last!

Speak with the administrator and discover how knowledgeable he or she is about their community. Does the administrator have attributes of compassion? Has he or she been at the facility for less than a year? Has the administrator position at the facility changed frequently? How long has the administrator worked in the industry? It is valuable to know the administrator and his or her background, especially if they have been responsible for the care of another loved one in years prior. If your loved one received great care under that leadership, then one can surmise that the care should remain constant. Ask specifically for the number of residents that the community can accommodate. Ask to see the facility’s most recent survey (www.medicare.gov). Were their past surveys good or bad? Has a friend referred you to a specific community? Positive referrals from others who have had loved ones in the facility are an invaluable tool when evaluating facilities.

Does knowing the owner-operator of a community make a difference? How long has the owner-operator/administrator been in control of a specific community? Has it been for five years or greater? Are they vested in the community? Is the community fancy or not? Does it really matter anyway? The bottom line is whether it is evident that the residents are receiving proper care. Take time to speak with the staff, and do not hesitate to ask questions. Assess their knowledge of the medications that they administer, as well as their knowledge of elderly health issues and disease states.

*(Ombudsman continued on page 6)*

## City Council Retreat— Belton Takes Time to Plan



The Belton City Council stands in front of ACOG after their all-day planning retreat in January.

Planning makes the difference between watching things happen and *making them happen*. The City Council of Belton conducted its fourth annual all-day Saturday strategic work session in January at ACOG’s Greenville office. Council worked to resolve a number of technical issues and to establish a set of long range plans for the community. The meeting provided Council with an opportunity to think proactively and look past the day-to-day business of running a small city.

The retreat was facilitated by ACOG staff. Council members discussed growth, annexation, economic development, traffic problems, land use planning, existing problem areas and possible development opportunities. The council established both short and long term goals and objectives for their community, prioritized them and planned strategies to accomplish them.

Belton participated in ACOG’s Small Towns Technical Assistance program, which is funded in part by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). ACOG has very recently facilitated planning sessions with city councils from **Pickens, Easley, Mauldin, Inman, Gaffney, and Williamston**. ACOG has also facilitated retreats and training sessions for a number of special purpose boards and commissions.

Please contact Joe Newton or Donna Kazia for further information on retreats and training.

## Development Corporation News

**T**he demand continues to be high for the Appalachian Development Corporation (ADC) to participate in local projects. The ADC, due to its multiple funding sources, is able to meet the general needs of both borrowers and primary lenders. The staff has the expertise to use the ADC's sources to provide applicants with the lowest-cost loan program that best fits the project's requirements. If you are aware of a project that could benefit by having low-cost, fixed-rate financing, contact the ADC at 864-242-9733.

### Recently Approved Projects:

A request of \$589,000 has been approved for Lawrence Fabrication Land, LLC for funding through the SBA 504 program, made in conjunction with an \$815,000 loan through First National Bank of the South. These funds are for the purchase of production facilities and equipment located in Simpsonville.

Planet Compact, Inc., was approved for \$298,000 through the SBA 504 program, to be used with \$365 million in funding from Community South Bank & Trust. The project funds are for real estate and equipment purchases in Boiling Springs.

The Board has approved a \$210,000 SBA 504 loan for Steppin' Out Dance Studio. This loan, along with a \$250,000 loan from Community South Bank & Trust, will be used to purchase land, construct a new studio, and fund equipment in Anderson.

The Board recently approved a loan request, in the amount of \$200,000, for Castle Industries, LLC to consolidate an overseas operation with its Greenville facilities. The consolidation involves purchasing and moving equipment from Isle of Man to South Carolina and installing it for production here in Greenville. Castle Industries is engaged in transfer printing and the powder bonding on non-woven fabric.

Also recently approved was a request of \$100,000, made in coopera-

tion with First National Bank of the South's loan package of \$505,000, for a new salon in downtown Greenville. This spa is owned by Dreama Kees, who currently owns and operates Ivy Salon and Spa in the Thornblade area of Greenville. The new company will operate as an Aveda Lifestyle Salon, featuring Aveda products produced by the Estee Lauder Company. The funds will be used for equipment, leasehold improvements, and working capital.

### Recently Funded Projects:

**Tewell Industries** – The ADC, as agent for the Community Reinvestment Fund, secured \$1,352,000 in funds to assist this existing company with re-financing. Tewell Industries, doing business as Sierra Custom Doors, is a manufacturer of wood cabinet doors, panels, and cabinets for residential and commercial applications in the Greenville and Greer areas.

**Carolina Medical Center** – The ADC participated with Greer State Bank in a recently funded project to provide working capital and equipment financing in the total amount of \$500,000. Carolina Medical Center is an internist and medical specialist practice located in Greenville.

**Innovative Odor Solutions** – The ADC participated with A/R Funding and Bank of America to fund a total project cost of \$1,265,502 that provided for working capital. The project involves a start-up marketing, sales and distribution enterprise in Duncan that provides solutions to odor and corrosiveness inherent in the wastewater industry.

*(Caregiving continued from page 2)*

creases among the elderly adults who are enrolled in rural minority care management programs. They report having at least two or more disabilities. Older Americans are one of the only groups to have health care insured as an entitlement, yet why are so many of the

rural elderly and physically challenged having such a hard time receiving care? One reason is due to the fact that rural seniors receive lower Social Security payments than their metropolitan counterparts, mainly because they didn't earn as much when they were working, so they are unable to pay for health care now. Another reason is because Medicare tends to pay less for the same services in rural areas, as compared with urban and suburban areas, so the rural elderly tend not to utilize Medicare as often as those who reside in metropolitan areas.

In order to meet the ever-growing health and social needs of rural America, health care not only needs to be accessible, but it also needs to be more affordable. The unfortunate truth exists, however, that the government is only recently beginning to do studies and to take a serious look at what rural caregivers and their loved ones need.

### Rural Long-Term Care Issues:

- \* The integration of long-term care along with other needed non-medical social services in rural areas.
- \* Strengthening the collaboration among government, private corporations and local community organizations in order to meet the health care needs of rural seniors and their caregivers.
- \* Department of Veterans' Affairs should begin to seriously consider offering more long-term care options with so many combat veterans living in rural areas.
- \* Rural advocates must begin to research and evaluate where future financing will come from for long-term care services, and how these services will be implemented.
- \* Include the term "rural" in the distribution of federal dollars for long-term care services and integrate any implications of policy decisions or changes on rural elders in all policy debates.
- \* Create a rural, long-term care task force that will address the existing and future problems of the increasing number of elderly in rural America.

*(Status Quo continued on page 6)*

# VIEWPOINT

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

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*(Planning continued from page 3)*

tions from which to work, for the purpose of implementing strategies from the plan. SCDOT and the ACOG will work with area agencies to facilitate implementation of the recommendations and strategies. The next meeting scheduled for stakeholder input on the draft plan will likely be in July. Notices will be sent out to all stakeholders previously identified. If you would like to be added to the invitee list, or for more information, please contact Phillip Lemmon at the Council of Governments at 864-241-4645.

*(WorkLink continued from page 3)*

WorkLink—leading this charge; it has been proven nationally and elsewhere in South Carolina

The three sessions showed some commonalities—including support for WorkKeys, industry and education linkages such as mentoring, apprenticeships and on-the-job programs for educators and students.

The information collected during this meeting will be added to the other participating states in the South. Ultimately, these meetings' results will be combined in a report from the Policies Board showing how the region can build a better workforce, to be presented June 2007.

*(Ombudsman continued from page 4)*

Assess the stability of the current staff at a specific facility. Have most been there five years or greater?

In conclusion, after reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of three similar communities, you should have the information necessary to discern which facility is right for your loved one. All in all, the fact remains that finding the best facility for your loved one is going to take **time and energy!** Although your loved one will miss the warmth and love of their own home, there is a new-found adventure in the community you choose. Place your loved one in a community filled with love, compassion, and new friends! It is your right and responsibility to know the community you have chosen for your loved one! Will you find the right community?

*(Status Quo continued from page 5)*

\* Evaluate Medicaid and Medicare reform options to include the expansion of affordable, accessible, and available long-term care into rural America.

For more information regarding current senior issues, go to [www.caregiver.com](http://www.caregiver.com). This article was written by Jennifer Wilson, Staff Writer for *Caregiver Magazine*.