

## Growth Continues in Greenville's Apartment Market

**T**here appears to be no slow down in sight for multi-family construction in Greenville County, according to ACOG's 2007 Greenville County Multi-Family Housing Survey. The recent survey revealed that all areas of the county are experiencing a significant degree of new project activity, including developments that are already under construction, as well as others in the planning stage.

Since 1999 the inventory of townhome and condominium units reported in the survey has more than doubled, thanks in part to continued low mortgage interest rates and the tax benefit of home ownership. Although development remains strong in suburban areas of the county, in recent years this trend has included the development of numerous upscale projects in the vicinity of Greenville's central business district. Most of these high-end units carry a list price in excess of \$200,000. New projects under construction or planned in this area include Ridgeland at the Park (42 units), Pendleton West (22 units), The Edge on North Main (50 units), and The Elements (19 units). A wealth of cultural and recreational amenities such as the Peace Center for the Performing Arts and the Reedy River Falls Historic Park, together with abundant downtown dining and entertainment options, have contributed to this trend.

In contrast to several years of minimal activity in the development of new conventional rental properties, the 2007 survey revealed new life in this sector of multi-family housing. Con-



*The Edge on North Main is one of many multi-family housing developments presently under construction in Greenville County.*

secutive increases in the occupancy rate of conventional units were reported in the 2005 and 2006 surveys, and the current construction and planning of new conventional developments indicates a renewed confidence in the demand for these units. A total of ten conventional properties were either under construction or planned at the time of the survey, for an astounding total of 3,396 units!

The survey also reports on rental units having some correlation between residence eligibility or the amount of rent paid and the tenant's income. Due to limited funding, development of new "income-dependent" properties has not seen the same degree of activity. Nevertheless, two such properties – ForestView Apartments and Belle Aire Apartments – were under construction in 2007, providing a total of 122 new units for the county's low-income residents.

*(Apartments continued on page 3)*

## ACOG Elects New Board Officers



*Newly elected ACOG Chairperson Judy Gilstrap shown receiving the chair's gavel from the previous chair Marion Lyles.*

At the March 2008 ACOG board meeting, the full membership elected new board officers to serve for a one year term. Greenville County Council Member Judy Gilstrap was elected Chairperson, Belton City Council Member Wallace Shaw was elected Vice-Chairperson and Mr. Ed Elliot, from Cherokee County, was elected to the Secretary position.

The previous chairperson, Oconee County Council Member Marion Lyles, is looking forward to serving with ACOG for the remainder of this year, whereupon he will possibly retire from public life. Mr. Lyles, a longtime board member, stated that he has always enjoyed working with his colleagues from the six counties of the Upstate, but that it is nice to now be out of the "hot seat."

Judy is eager to take on the challenges of heading South Carolina's premier regional government agency. She has served with the Council of Governments for many years and has held the positions of Board Vice-Chair

*(Board Officers continued on page 2)*

## Volunteer Program Gets A New Name

**I**n August 2005, South Carolina's Long Term Care Ombudsman Program began a pilot program for volunteers, called the South Carolina Volunteer Ombudsman Program. The program asks volunteers to visit nursing homes and assisted living facilities to become the voice for those who have none. The program is a gateway for providing a better quality of life to those residents who have no one to speak out for them.

The program has accomplished a lot in just over two years. Dozens of South Carolina's caring citizens have joined as volunteers, and more facilities are joining the program every day. Initial feedback from some facilities indicated that, since staff ombudsmen serve as investigators, there was a concern that volunteer ombudsmen would also be in the facilities looking for problems. Last November, in an effort to clearly convey the true meaning and purpose of the program, the Volunteer Ombudsman Program got a facelift and a new name.

The program was officially renamed "The South Carolina Friendly Visitor Program," which more accurately describes the mission of the volunteers who participate in the program.

Volunteers do not seek out complaints or serve as investigators. They are exactly what the name conveys: "Friendly Visitors" who visit those facility residents who have few or no family members or friends to help empower them.

The new name was selected from more than a dozen suggestions submitted from across the state of South Carolina. The winning submission was the brainchild of Gwen Coath, Regional Ombudsman for Region 10, which is composed of Beaufort, Jasper, Colleton, and Hampton Counties.

At the October 17, 2007, Volunteer Coordinators quarterly meeting, one of the big agenda items was the newsletter name. "The Friendly Visitor," submitted by Gwen Coath won by a landslide vote by her peers.



*ACOG's Jessica Arnone (center front) shown with some of the many wonderful volunteers who look out for long term care residents in the Upstate.*

When asked how she came up with the name, Coath said "I thought about the duties and the purpose of the volunteers, and the name "Friendly Visitors" came to mind. When I accompany our volunteers in the facilities, one of their attributes is the friendliness they show to the residents."

Coath continued, "When volunteers are in the facilities, they and the residents address each other by name, as friends would do. They stop and chat in the hallways. The volunteers address concerns, but they do it as friends of the residents." For further information on the volunteer ombudsman program, please contact Jessica Arnone at the Appalachian Council of Governments.

*(Board Officers continued from page 1)* and Chair of the ACOG Finance Committee. She has frequently expressed a desire to serve not only her Greenville County constituents, but the one million residents of the Upstate in any way that she is able.

### **Did You Know ....**

*The first predecessor of the Appalachian COG was known as the South Carolina Appalachian Advisory Committee, formed by Governor Robert McNair in 1965.*

## ACOG Welcomes Our New Receptionist



The new voice you hear when you call the Council of Governments is Lori Brown. Lori, a Greenville area native, previously worked ten years as an administrative assistant for a local communications company. She is very excited to be a part of the Council of Governments team and is looking forward to serving you!

## Williamston City Council Retreat



*The Williamston Town Council at their April planning retreat in Greenville.*

In April the mayor and council of the Town of Williamston met at ACOG offices in Greenville to conduct their annual strategic planning retreat. The Williamston Council is one of several in the Upstate who take the time to get beyond potholes and missed trash pickups to plan for more strategic needs and issues. These public-minded elected officials made good use of a Saturday and represented their citizens well.

## New Federal Ozone Standard Impacts Upstate



On March 12, 2008, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) significantly strengthened its national ambient air quality standards for ground-level ozone, the primary component of smog. EPA is revising the 8-hour ozone standard to a level of 0.075 parts per million (ppm). The previous standard, set in 1997, was 0.08 ppm. On March 14<sup>th</sup> the ACOG co-sponsored a Regional Air Quality Forum with the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) to discuss the new standard, the implications for our region, and what strategies needed to be implemented to meet the new standard.

Presentations by staff from SCDHEC and the EPA indicated that the majority of monitors for the Appalachian region exceed the new standard. They also explained that non-compliance with these standards would cause the region, or portions of the region, to be designated as a non-attainment area. That designation would bring additional permitting requirements for new industry and roads, along with a potential loss of federal funds for roadway projects that could deter future development.

These regulations will not go into effect until the spring of 2010. However, the air quality conditions measured between today and 2010 will determine where non-attainment areas are designated. States must make recommendations to EPA no later than March 2009 for areas to be designated attainment or non-attainment. EPA will

issue final designations of attainment status no later than March 2010.

The Council of Governments will continue to work with representatives from DHEC and each of our counties to identify strategies for improving our air quality in order to achieve attainment designation before 2010. The groups will also look into developing an agreement with EPA that would allow a deferment of the effective date of additional regulations, provided the region meets certain deadlines for complying with the new ozone standard. For additional information on air quality, contact Chip Bentley at ACOG.

*(Apartments continued from page 1)*

Independent living multi-family units for the elderly are also addressed in the survey. This subcategory is divided into "conventional" and "income-dependent" units. One income-dependent property – the AHEPA #242 Apartments – was under construction in 2007, providing 48 new units for low-income residents, age 62 and older. For the first time in ten years, new conventional projects were also in the works to address the housing needs and wants of the county's aging baby boomers. New projects on the horizon include The Cascades Verdae (160 units), The Woodlands at Furman (148 units) and a new phase at Rolling Green Village (100 units).

The Appalachian Council of Governments produces this one-of-a-kind survey annually for Greenville County and biennially for Anderson and Spartanburg Counties. This unique report contains an inventory and analysis of all known conventional and "income-dependent" apartment properties with 40 or more units, and all townhouse and condominium properties with 15 or more units. For more information, or to purchase a copy of this publication, please contact the Information Services Department at 242-9733. This report is also available for online purchase at [www.scacog.org](http://www.scacog.org) by clicking on the "Publications" link.

## Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Project

The Appalachia Area Agency on Aging, in partnership with the S.C. Department of Social Services and the Department of Agriculture, will be issuing free coupons to individuals age 60 and older who are on limited income. The coupons can be used to purchase produce at designated local farmers' markets from June through October 15, 2008. The Area Agency on Aging provides assistance in issuing the coupons in Greenville and Spartanburg Counties.



Individuals with a monthly income of \$1,574 or less who receive SSI or food stamp benefits are eligible for the coupons. In order to receive the coupons, individuals must provide a legal form of identity and proof that they reside in the county where they are applying for the program.

This program is intended to supplement the diets of seniors with fresh, nutritious produce while supporting South Carolina's small farmers. South Carolina is one of several states that received USDA funds to operate the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

As a result of recently reduced grant funding, Pickens and Cherokee counties do not participate in the program.

Sign up will be held in June. For sign up locations and times in each county contact:

- ⇒ □ Oconee - United Way of Oconee County (864) 882-9743
- ⇒ □ Anderson - Anderson County Recreation Department (864) 231-2237
- ⇒ □ Greenville and Spartanburg - Appalachia AAA (864) 242-9733

## City of Belton Housing Rehabilitation

**T**he City of Belton recently completed the last house in the Washington Street Area Housing Rehabilitation Project. The project – funded with federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME, and USDA Ru-



*A Belton family has moved into this safe and affordable home, constructed using a combination of grant and loan funds.*

ral Development funds, in addition to funds from the City of Belton – was administered by the staff of the Appalachian COG Grant Services Department.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on April 17 at the new home of the Gunnells on Mahaffey Street, representing the completion of the project. This new home replaced a dilapidated house and was constructed using \$40,000 in CDBG funds and a \$27,500 loan to the homeowner from the USDA Rural Development program.

The entire Washington Street Area Housing Rehabilitation Project resulted in the rehabilitation of 12 substandard homes and the demolition and replacement of 2 dilapidated homes, benefiting 29 low-to-moderate income persons.

## “FREE” Grant Writing Training!



The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) will conduct a two-day grant writing training session for faith-based and community-based organizations on May 13 & 14, 2008, at the DHEC Auditorium at 2600 Bull Street in Columbia.

Learn **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW** to prepare a successful grant application. Attendees will receive personal instruction from key HUD staff on becoming more competitive for federal grant funds, securing a 501c3 status, and establishing the organizational structure necessary to secure government funds. The information will prepare participants to apply for public funds, as well as corporate and foundation funding. Workbooks and Certificates of Completion will be provided.

Two-day workshop topics will include:

- Grant proposal writing techniques
- How to access government funds
- HUD programs available to nonprofits
- HUD common factors for award
- Performance measurements
- Working with local governments
- Organizational development
- Coalition and capacity building
- Ten commandments of grant writing
- Legal do's and don'ts

If you wish to attend, please register at:  
[http://www.hud.gov/event\\_registration/index\\_2.cfm?eventID=910](http://www.hud.gov/event_registration/index_2.cfm?eventID=910),  
or call (803) 765-5592

## WorkLink Youth Job Fair



WorkLink plans to host its second annual WorkLink Youth Job Fair on June 3 at the Anderson Fusion Warehouse from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event – held for area companies searching for seasonal, part-time employees – targets youth ages 16-21 and will feature companies in WorkLink's coverage area of Anderson, Oconee and Pickens Counties.

The fair will offer special amenities not typically seen in career fairs such as:

- Designated interview areas
- Workshops on topics such as resume writing tips
- Internet access
- Fashion show: “What to Wear, What Not to Wear”
- Local celebrities
- Door prizes
- Employer Lounge

More than 75 companies are expected to exhibit — recruiting workers for restaurant, service, warehousing, distribution and light industrial jobs. More than 300 youth attended last year's job fair, and this year's goal is 500.

Cost for companies to exhibit is \$25 per booth. For more information, contact WorkLink at (864) 224-2833, (864) 646-1515 or log on to [www.worklinkweb.com](http://www.worklinkweb.com).

## The Chronic Disease Self-Management Workshop



*ACOG staff members (from left) Glenda Manigault, Debra Brown and Vickie Williams are recent graduates of a course in chronic disease management.*

Three members of the ACOG's Aging Division attended a four-day training workshop on Chronic Disease Self-Management, teaching participants to better cope with or delay the effects of hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis and other afflictions. Students learned "self-management" practices and were further instructed on training techniques. As graduates of this series of classes, they are now eligible to give these presentations throughout the Upstate. The course was developed at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California.

## Need a Meeting Speaker?

The Family Caregiver Support Program works with individual caregivers to help provide support as they care for their loved ones, and ACOG is anxious to spread the word that there is help for those who help others.

ACOG's Caregiver Public Information Program focuses on four general areas:



- ⇒ Outreach Community Education: presentations to local area agencies or groups to identify potential caregivers
- ⇒ Participation in Community Events: presentations at exhibits, community fairs, senior conferences and other gatherings
- ⇒ Publicity Campaigns
- ⇒ Involvements in Resource Development and Planning

If you or someone you know would like for a Family Caregiver Advocate to speak at your next meeting or gathering, please contact the Appalachian Council of Governments at (864) 242-9733 and ask for Sam or Debra.



## Seeking Medicare Counseling and Referral Volunteers

The Appalachia AAA (Area Agency on Aging) is seeking volunteers to be trained as I-CARE (insurance counseling assistance and referral for elders) volunteers to assist Medicare beneficiaries and caregivers with Medicare matters, including the Medicare Prescription Drug Program. Volunteers are needed for each county in the region. Volunteer training sessions will be held each Tuesday from May 13 – June 17,



10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Appalachia AAA offices, 30 Century Circle, Greenville. For additional information about volunteering or to register, contact Beverly Allen at (864) 242-9733.

## Development Corporation News



This month we will provide some insight into an area of small business lending that has become more popular over the last several years – The New Markets Tax Credit program. The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program permits taxpayers to receive a credit against Federal income taxes for making qualified equity investments in designated Community Development Entities (CDEs). Substantially all of the qualified equity investment must in turn be used by the CDE to provide investments in low-income communities.

The credit provided to the investor totals 39 percent of the cost of  
(ADC continued on page 6)

# VIEWPOINT

**Appalachian Council of Governments**  
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the investment and is claimed over a seven-year credit allowance period. In each of the first three years, the investor receives a credit equal to 5 percent of the total amount paid for the stock or capital interest at the time of purchase. For the final four years, the value of the credit is 6 percent annually. Investors may not redeem their investments in CDEs prior to the conclusion of the seven-year period.

The ADC, through its association with Community Reinvestment Fund (CRF), has the ability to provide this type of financing on certain qualified projects. This program is only available to certain qualified census tract areas that meet a number of "economically distressed" criteria. For a project to be eligible, it must be located in an area of great economic distress, so the potential use for funding is very restrictive.

Under the CRF program, the project must be located in: 1) a designated economically distressed census tract; 2) loan must be for real estate purposes, with the funds going for

construction, acquisition and substantial renovation; 3) substantial renovation only; or 4) take-out, permanent financing on any of the above situations. If the borrower does not meet one of the four eligible uses shown, then the borrower must document the primary tenant (51% utilization of total square footage of project real estate) is a "Qualified Active Low Income Business."

In addition to the above criteria, a borrower must document compliance with one economic factor: 1) poverty rating > 30%; 2) median family income < 60%; 3) unemployment rates at least 1.5Xs the national average; or two geographic factors: 1) located in a Federally-designated Empowerment Zone, Enterprise Community, or Renewal Community; 2) located in a SBA-designated HUB Zone; 3) located on a Brownfield Site; 4) encompassed by a HOPE VI Redevelopment Plan; 5) designated as a Native American Area; 6) designated as a distressed area by the Appalachian Regional Commission; 7) Designated as Colonias Area by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; 8) Federally-designated as a medically under-

served area; 9) located in an Economic or Housing Hot Zone; 10) located in a high migration Rural County as defined by IRC 45D(e)(5); or 11) located in a state or local increment financing district, enterprise zone, etc.), or a FEMA/Disaster factor. As is evidenced by the preceding, the program has had high demand, and as a result has been modified to deliver a greater impact by implementing more stringent targeting requirements.

The basic attraction under the NMTC program is the lower-than-market, fixed interest rate for the first seven years of a project. The program under CRF will revert to a market rate at the end of the seven-year period, or can be paid off and refinanced under another lender. The amortization of the loan can be up to 25 years. While not a program that is available on a universal basis, it does offer very attractive terms under specific circumstances and has been used effectively by the ADC in instances where the restrictions can be met. Contact Dave Mueller or George Long at the Appalachian Development Corporation for more information.