

# Economic Development Tools for 2009

**infoMentum**  
A Decision Support System  
for Upstate South Carolina

**Plan-A-Biz**  
Small Business Development Tool

**Radius Report Map for Haywood Mall**

Category	2000	2008	2013
Population	16,552	63,540	106,511
2008 Population	16,552	63,540	106,511
2013 Population	16,552	63,540	106,511
2000 Number of Households	6,411	35,736	62,355
2008 Number of Households	6,411	35,736	62,355
2013 Number of Households	6,411	35,736	62,355
2000 Number of Families	4,787	25,010	42,355
2008 Number of Families	4,787	25,010	42,355
2013 Number of Families	4,787	25,010	42,355

**infoMentum**  
A Decision Support System  
for Upstate South Carolina

**Public / Private Partnerships**

Partners include: Duke Energy, at&t, ReWa, Greer, Appalachian Council of Governments, Piedmont Natural Gas, Upstate Alliance, Cherokee County Development Board, Alliance Pickens South Carolina, USA, Anderson County Economic Development, and Economic Futures Group Spartanburg County.

*The Appalachian Council of Governments has partnered with governments, public entities and businesses across the Upstate to develop and share some of the most advanced economic development tools available anywhere.*



## Appalachian Council of Governments July – December 2008, Six-Month Highlights

The following are just a few of the projects and services provided by the Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) for the municipalities, counties and citizens of the Upstate of South Carolina. For more complete information, visit ACOG's website at [www.scacog.org](http://www.scacog.org), and read ACOG's bimonthly newsletter *Viewpoint*. Contact ACOG offices at 864-242-9733.



ACOG is providing administrative support for the CDBG-funded Hope Acres Habitat for Humanity Project in Gaffney.

### GRANTS

*ACOG makes a significant impact in the Upstate through better housing and improved infrastructure*

The Grants Services staff worked on the administrative activities for numerous Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for infrastructure projects throughout the region, including grants awarded to the Cities of Seneca, Pickens, and Wellford for sewer system improvements. Other CDBG-funded infrastructure projects included water system improvements or extensions in Cherokee County, Blacksburg, Pendleton, and Liberty.

Current CDBG projects for which administrative services are being provided include the Tri-County Telecommunications Master Plan for Anderson, Oconee,

and Pickens Counties, the Tri-County Technical College's QuickJobs Development Centers in Oconee and Pickens Counties, and the Cherokee County Habitat for Humanities Hope Acres development in Gaffney. Administrative activities include environmental reviews, procurement of engineering and/or construction services, compliance with Davis-Bacon construction labor acts, drawdown of funds, public hearings, and project close-out.

Four additional CDBG grants were awarded this period for infrastructure improvements. These include three water line extension projects in Anderson County (Starr-Iva Water District), Blacksburg, and Cherokee County, and a sewer upgrade project in the Town of Central.

Staff is also providing administrative services for CDBG-funded housing rehabilitation projects in Anderson County and the City of Easley. This work involves qualifying residents for assistance, inspection of houses to determine needs, developing work write-ups, obtaining bids for work, overseeing contractors, and approving invoices for payment.

The Grant Services Department worked closely with four local governments to submit applications to the State Department of Commerce for CDBG funding, all of which were approved. These projects include the demolition of abandoned school buildings in the City of Westminster and the Town of Blacksburg, the addition of two bays to the fire station in the City of Liberty, and the conversion of the Woodside Mill facility in Easley into 128 apartments.

Two applications for \$500,000 in ARC funds were approved this period. Each application requested \$500,000 to construct a new elevated water storage tank to serve new and existing businesses – one by the Greer Commission of Public Works and one by the Powdersville Water District.

The Grant Services staff continues to work with Anderson County and the City of Belton to undertake activities related to the HUD-funded HOME Consortium.



# Strategic Planning / Council Retreats



**GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION**  
*ACOG guides local governments to better serve their people*

The Appalachian Council of Governments provides extensive technical assistance and public administration to governments and communities in the six-county service area of Anderson, Greenville, Cherokee, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg Counties. The Council's objective is to assist our local governments in their efforts to increase and improve public services, to improve opportunities for economic development, and to improve the overall health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the six-county ACOG region.

**Council Planning.** ACOG facilitated ten council retreats and board orientations in 2008.

Local governments have always counted on ACOG for advice and support. In the last six-month period, ACOG's Governmental Services Department received over 300 requests for information, advice and hands-on assistance. ACOG assisted the City of Woodruff with the recruitment and selection of a new city manager. ACOG secured a grant to conduct a three-county (Anderson-Oconee-Pickens) wireless telecommunications study and has been working with county representatives to oversee the study. ACOG has conducted a review of the Spartanburg County Library System's mobile services and has made recommendations to improve efficiency and save tax dollars. ACOG works with small jurisdictions on a daily basis providing expertise and services that they could not otherwise afford.

In the last six months, staff conducted strategic planning retreats and goal-setting sessions for the town councils of several Upstate municipalities, including Belton, Williamston, Gaffney, Woodruff, Easley and Mauldin. ACOG-facilitated retreats focus on the development and prioritization of both long term and short term council goals and objectives.



**Management Training.** ACOG conducts a program of training specifically tailored to South Carolina's city and county governments.

ACOG hosted remote live-transmission training sessions for municipal council members, in cooperation with the S.C. Municipal Association and S.C. Educational Television. Sessions have included land use planning, public information, budgeting, housing and building codes and other technical topics. Two different Distance Learning sessions were held over the last six months, instructing new and veteran council members from more than a dozen different municipalities on the basics of local government.

ACOG facilitated two seven-week basic management/supervisory training programs for more than 40 first-time supervisors. ACOG also provided training to employees of the cities, counties and local special purpose districts on sexual harassment, customer service and communication techniques.

ACOG staff provided information and technical assistance to a number of jurisdictions on personnel and wage-related issues under the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

**PLANNING**  
*Upstate communities receive help and guidance to ensure healthy growth*

In the second half of 2008, ACOG provided technical assistance on planning matters to communities throughout the region, including Belton, Honea Path, West Pelzer, Walhalla, Westminster, Easley, Central, Liberty, Pickens, Six Mile, Mauldin, Travelers Rest, Chesnee, Inman, Pacolet and Woodruff. The assistance included updating zoning maps; developing new ordinances; resolving administrative procedure disputes; and planning education.

ACOG staff helped complete development of several plans and ordinances for communities. Staff helped



The Mauldin City Council meets twice a year to conduct strategic planning and goal setting.



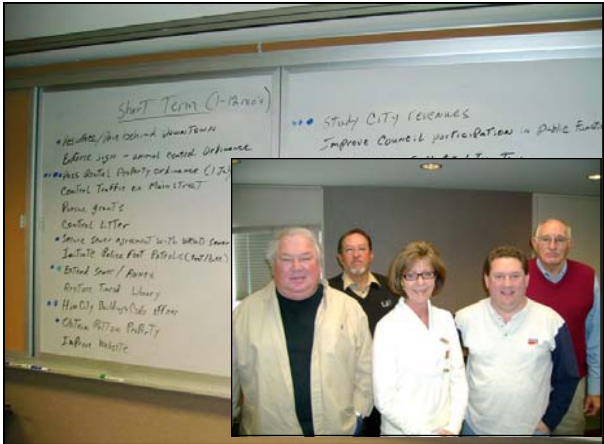
The Easley City Council began utilizing ACOG to facilitate its strategic planning sessions five years ago.



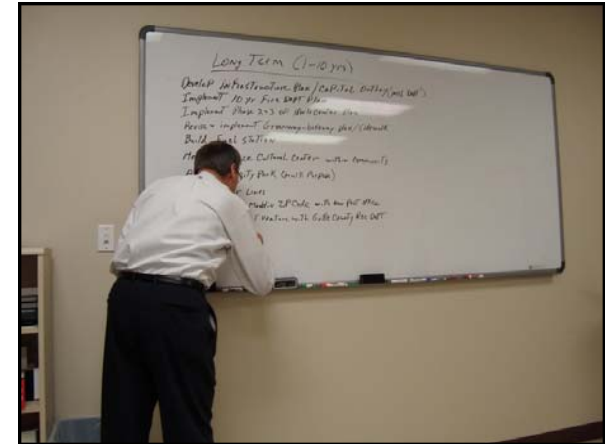
The Belton City Council has met annually since 2002 to communicate and plan.



The Town Council of Williamston has held annual strategy sessions at ACOG for the last three years.



The Woodruff City Council has utilized COG services for their last five planning retreats.



Experienced ACOG facilitators conduct retreats, strategic planning and orientations for Upstate governments.

## WORKFORCE/ EMPLOYMENT

*Resources to help Upstate job seekers gain employment*

### **One-Stop Centers**

The three WorkLink One-Stop Centers served 24,569 individuals from July 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008. There were 60,627 visits to the One-Stops for services such as job search, resume preparation, labor market information and workshops. During that same period, 1,402 adults, 570 dislocated workers, and 241 youth received services using Workforce Investment Act funds.

Participation in the WorkLink One-Stop System increased among adults and dislocated workers. A new process was piloted in the Anderson One-Stop in July 2008 and was implemented in all three OneStops by October 2008. The new process has reduced the number of days that participants must wait to complete the intake process.



**Jobs and Training.** WorkLink's primary mission is to bring employers and workers together. WorkLink serves Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties.

Because of the viability of the OneStop-On-the-Go Program, the Board approved the purchase of another system and the hiring of two staff to operate it. They should be in place in early 2009. Two vans will be reclaimed from Gateway to College at Tri-County Technical College to serve as the means of transporting the OneStop-On-the Go units.

### **WorkLink Staff**

WorkLink is adding staff to meet the increasing needs of the growing ranks of unemployed. Sharon Crite, youth services coordinator, began work on August 1. Additionally, OneStop coordinator, Jennifer Kelly, and business services representative, Jimmy Pennell, both joined the staff on September 29. These individuals bring unique talents and great enthusiasm to the agency, and they work as a team to build a stronger bridge between the providers, participants and communities served in Oconee, Pickens and Anderson Counties.

### **Training**

WorkLink staff, Board members, and service providers received training on the roles and responsibilities of the Workforce Investment Board and WIB staff. WorkLink staff received additional training on how to conduct effective financial and program monitoring to ensure that tax dollars are effectively spent.

### **Youth Service Providers**

Palmetto Youth Connections began eligibility certification for their youth applicants in October 2008.

**SC Appalachian Council of Governments,**  
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to amend the junk yard ordinance for Cherokee County. Staff also continued work on development of Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance updates for the Town of Honea Path and the City of Easley. The Town of Pacolet also enlisted the services of the Planning Department to complete their Zoning Ordinance, which uses a new approach called "form based code". Other local planning initiatives include providing ongoing planning administration services to the Cherokee County Planning Commission and Board of Appeals.

ACOG continued its role in assisting the new Anderson HOME Consortium partnership. Staff prepared the year end CAPER report and worked on the Analysis of Impediments for the partnership between the City of Anderson, Anderson County, and City of Belton. Staff also facilitated the selection of residents who will receive housing rehabilitation assistance and are coordinating the start up of the housing rehabilitation projects.

ACOG provided planning education training for 75 planning officials and committee members in the second half of 2008. Staff also partnered with SCDHEC to organize Regional Air Quality meetings to discuss the ramifications of new federal air quality regulations and their impact on transportation planning, economic development, and quality of life in the Upstate.

Work on several transportation planning efforts continued. Staff, in their role as the Regional Transit Coordinator, facilitated the distribution of applications for the 5310, 5316, and 5317 transit grant programs. Additionally, ACOG staff worked to improve on their new transportation project ranking system, implemented as part of legislation passed in 2007. The Long Range Transportation Plan was also amended to include a new Interchange project in Cherokee County at Sunny Slope Road. ACOG also serves on the GPATS and SPATS Technical and Study Committees, and also provides staff support to the Pickens County Transportation Planning Committee.

ACOG also developed Community Needs Assessments for Anderson County, Cherokee County, and the Towns of Liberty and Blacksburg. These needs assessments support applications for Community Block Grant (CDBG) funds for community improvements for water and sewer infrastructure improvements. Over \$1,500,000 was awarded to fund projects supported by ACOG needs assessments and applications.

During the first six months of 2008, ACOG staff reviewed ninety 208 Water Quality permits for conformance with the Appalachian Regional Water Quality Plan.

## AGING/SENIOR SERVICES

*Upstate seniors count on ACOG for support and services*

In the first half of 2008, the Area Agency on Aging/Aging and Disability Resource Center initiated several new programs, including the launch of the Aging and Disability Resource Center's mobile unit. The unit, a 33-foot renovated recreational vehicle, provides a one stop information and resource center for seniors, adults with disabilities, and caregivers and their families to access programs, resources, public/private benefits and medication assistance programs. The ADRC unit makes pre-scheduled stops region-wide at senior centers, local and state offices, health care facilities and senior/disabled housing complexes. Over 1500 individuals have been given direct assistance and information since the unit went on the road in July.

Another program – South Carolina's Healthy Connections Choices – was launched in July. Developed in partnership with the S.C. DHHS office in Columbia and Maximus Incorporated, this program provides counseling to Medicaid members who need to make a choice between joining a managed care plan or



**Planning Education.** SC law requires that members of planning commissions and boards of zoning appeal must complete technical training. ACOG provided expert instruction for 75 planning officials in the last six months of 2008.



**Seniors and Disabled.** ACOG's Aging and Disability Resource Center mobile unit has been delivering services to clients in their own communities.

remaining on a fee-for-service plan. Thus far, the Healthy Connections Choices counselor has educated and/or enrolled over 500 Medicaid members.

In August of 2008, the AAA/ADRC, in partnership with the S.C. Lt. Governor's Office on Aging, ACOG applied for a Systems Transformation Grant offered by the Centers for Medicaid/Medicare services. The \$1.3 million grant, submitted as "Connections for Community Living", was one of six applications approved nationwide. Connections for Community Living allows for the development of a program linking high risk vulnerable seniors being discharged from an acute hospital setting to supportive services and resource coordination. Seniors can then remain in their homes. This initiative includes partnerships with Spartanburg Regional Medical Center, Community Long Term Care and other agencies serving disabled adults.

ADRC staff have responded to 1,063 calls for information and assistance; worked with 435 seniors on issues related to insurance, Medicare Part D, and Medicare fraud; financially assisted 808 caregivers of seniors and 57 grandparents raising grandchildren; responded to 439 intakes related to complaints of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation against vulnerable adults residing in long term care facilities; conducted 307 consultations; made 25 in-service presentations to facility staff; and made 97 volunteer ombudsman visits.

Through contracted ACOG aging funds, regional aging service providers assisted 8,769 senior adults in the region. Services included:

- 502,550 miles of transportation
- 57,202 group dining meals
- 56,808 home delivered meals
- 2,019 hours of health promotion/disease prevention classes
- 6,819 hours of in-home chore and housekeeping activities
- 3,679 hours of care management
- 3,360 hours of adult day care
- 714 hours of legal assistance.

**Information Systems/ Economic Development:  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

*ACOG provides economic developers with tools for bringing new jobs to the region*

ACOG staff provided data and application updates for **InfoMentum** and **InfoMap**, a decision support system for the Upstate. ACOG provided technical support and training to research personnel from each county economic development office, Anderson County Library, and the Upstate Alliance. **InfoMap** is the on-line, interactive mapping application linked to each county economic development website, showcasing the available industrial properties and offering a wealth of information about population, labor market, and economic climate.

The EDIS Partnership welcomed the **Greer Development Corporation** (GDC) as a returning investor. The EDIS Partnership oversees the **InfoMentum** work program and budget, and develops policies and procedures. GDC was one of the original members, and executive director, Reno Deaton welcomed the opportunity to bring GDC back into the group after a hiatus of several years. The GDC is primarily focused on recruitment and retention of businesses involved in manufacturing, commercial, and office activities. GDC is also responsible for coordinating the recruitment activities for historic downtown Greer. ACOG looks forward to the renewed partnership with this organization.



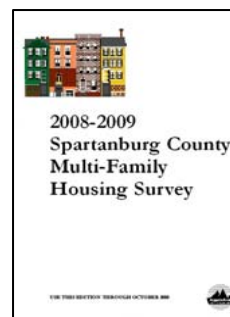
Staff from ACOG's Information Services and Planning departments assisted with research and planning for the **Upstate Reality Check**, a regional planning exercise to be held in April 2009. Reality Check is a collaborative regional visioning process, developed



**Medicaid Counseling.** ACOG counselors have been providing advice and assistance with South Carolina's Medicaid program for children and qualified adults.

and supported by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and sponsored in the Upstate by Upstate Together and ULI South Carolina. Leaders from the ten Upstate counties will meet to begin building consensus about how they want the region to look in 2030 and how they can work together to manage the opportunities and challenges of growth. ACOG staff designed and created the table-sized maps that form the centerpiece of the planning exercise. The maps show population density and important economic and cultural landmarks for each county in the context of the 10-county Upstate region for the purpose of long-range planning.

**DATA SERVICES:**



ACOG responded to 384 requests for statistical information and map data for the region. Examples of services included preparation of demographic reports for numerous small business for needs assessments, and compilation of income data for several towns.

Staff collected county consumer data for the quarterly **ACCRA Cost of Living Index**, in coordination with the Greenville Area Development Corporation and the Greenville Chamber of Commerce. Staff also completed research and production of the **2008-09 Spartanburg County Multi-Family Housing Survey**, which is an inventory and analysis of the local apartment and condominium markets. Copies of these and other ACOG publications are available at ACOG and online at [www.scacog.org](http://www.scacog.org).

**GIS TRAINING:**

Authorized ESRI Instructor Amy Wright Webber, provided ArcGIS training for professionals from Greer CPW, Greer Development Corporation, Spartanburg County, and Pickens County over the past six months. ACOG offers introductory and advanced ESRI ArcGIS training classes at the ACOG building, or on-site around the region. This is a cost-effective opportunity to take the same courses offered at the ESRI regional offices, but at a substantial savings in tuition and travel costs. ESRI software is used extensively throughout the region for essential services such as E-911, transportation planning, and economic development. Course descriptions, can be found online at <http://training.esri.com>. To schedule a class or to obtain additional information regarding a course, please contact Authorized ESRI Instructor Amy Wright Webber [webber@scacog.org](mailto:webber@scacog.org).



**Technical Training.** ACOG provides convenient and affordable training for local government geographic information systems technicians.

**APPALACHIAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

*ADC plays a vital role in Upstate small business start-up and expansion*



**Business Loans.** In the last six months of 2008, the ADC board approved over \$7 million in local business loans.

During the second half of 2008, the Appalachian Development Corporation (ADC), experienced a heavy demand for its business loan programs. During the last six months of the year, the ADC approved and/or closed a total of \$7,246,269.

This figure is comprised of eleven loans from the ADC loan pool totaling \$1,312,031, three Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 loans totaling \$2,472,299, and four Rural Business Cooperative Services Business and Industry (B&I) loans totaling \$3,461,939. The impact on the local community includes an increase in the local tax base and a number of new jobs to be created over the next two years.