



Appalachian Council of Governments July – December 2007, 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 and read ACOG's bimonthly newsletter *ViewPoint*. Contact ACOG offices at 864-242-9733.

GRANTS

The Grants Services staff worked on administrative activities for numerous Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for infrastructure projects throughout the region, including grants awarded to Anderson County and Pickens County for sewer improvements and to Cherokee County for water system extensions. Other projects included water system improvements in Blacksburg and West Pelzer and sewer improvements in Woodruff. New CDBG-funded infrastructure projects approved this period include water system improvements in Liberty and Pendleton, and sewer improvement projects in Wellford, Seneca, and Pickens. Administrative activities include environmental reviews, procurement of engineering and/or construction services, compliance with Davis-Bacon and related construction labor acts, drawdown of funds, public hearings, and close-out. These projects will enhance the lives of the area's residents and promote economic development activities.



ACOG worked with the City of Westminster to secure funding to upgrade their water treatment facility and construct a new 500,000-gallon elevated storage tank.

Staff is also providing administrative services for CDBG-funded housing rehabilitation projects in Anderson County and the municipalities of Belton, Honea Path, Easley, and Woodruff. 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 Oconee County, Pickens County and officials from Tri-County Technical College to submit applications to the State Department of Commerce for CDBG funding to construct workforce training centers in each county. Both projects were approved this period, and the Grant Services staff will also administer these projects.

Staff also worked with Donaldson Development Commission to secure \$1,000,000 in ARC funds to assist with upgrades to hangers utilized by Lockheed Martin at Donaldson Center, resulting in the retention of 1,000 jobs.

The Town of Pacolet, with assistance from ACOG, was awarded a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for \$475,000 to assist with sewer line construction to serve the downtown area of Pacolet.

Spartanburg Community College is nearing completion of the first general classroom building on their Gaffney campus, which received \$1,250,000 from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and \$500,000 from ARC.

The City of Westminster completed a project this period to upgrade their water treatment facility and construct a new 500,000-gallon elevated storage tank. This project was funded, in part, with \$1 million from the EDA and \$600,000 from ARC.

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

The Appalachian Council of Governments provides extensive technical assistance to governments and communities in the six-county service area of Anderson, Cherokee, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, and Greenville 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.



“Managing and Motivating” a popular seven-week basic supervisory course for local government employees is one of several classes taught by Donna Kazia, ACOG’s Training Coordinator.

In addition to ACOG’s technical assistance programs, the agency conducts a program of training specifically tailored to South Carolina’s city and county governments.

During the second half of the year, ACOG conducted a Human Resources/Personnel Management training class for municipal clerks and administrative personnel, discussing labor law, evaluations, pay issues, overtime and a number of other problem areas common to local 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. Three different Distance Learning sessions were held during the year instructing 40 new and veteran council members from 13 jurisdictions on the basics of local government.

ACOG facilitated two seven-week basic management/supervisory training programs for lower level and first-time supervisors. Approximately 60 Upstate students were trained.

ACOG provided formal training to public employees in the identification and implications of Sexual Harassment. ACOG trained 20 employees from the Town of Central and 40 from the Inman Fire District.

The agency conducted Customer Service training for 68 public employees from Cherokee County and the municipalities of Belton and Mauldin.

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). Staff also provided detailed assistance in the application of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

PLANNING

ACOG Planning staff has provided technical assistance on planning matters to communities throughout the region including Pendleton, Belton, Honea Path, Walhalla, Westminster, Easley, Central, Liberty, Pickens, Six Mile, Chesnee, Cowpens, Inman, Landrum, Lyman, Pacolet, and Woodruff. Assistance has covered issues from developing comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances, to developing grant applications, to assisting with technical questions and administrative issues.

ACOG staff has helped develop and implement several plans and ordinances for communities. Staff is working with the new Anderson HOME Consortium partnership between the City of Anderson, Anderson County, and the City of Belton as they implement strategies from their Consolidated Plan, which will bring \$750,000 to assist with community development efforts in these communities. Staff also developed an updated comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance for the Town of Williamston, a junkyard ordinance for Cherokee County, and a sign ordinance for the Town of Pendleton. Staff also conducted a series of public meetings for the City of Easley as part of their comprehensive plan update process.

Other local planning initiatives include providing ongoing planning administration services to the Town of Pendleton and providing staffing assistance to the Cherokee County Planning Commission and Board of Appeals. Staff helped facilitate a community planning charette with Spartanburg County for the Town of Reidville to help identify strategies to preserve the Town’s character. ACOG also provided planning education training for over 50 planning officials and committee members.

Staff worked with SCDOT to facilitate stake holder meetings as part of transit coordination planning efforts for the region. The completed plan was then used by ACOG staff to evaluate transit grant applications for Section 5310 (Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program), Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute Program), and Section 5317 (New Freedom Program) grant funds. This is part of ACOG’s new role in helping to facilitate regional transit coordination. ACOG staff also completed work on a Long Range Transportation Plan for the Appalachian region that established priorities for road improvements to be constructed



ACOG Planning staff have trained over 50 local planning officials in the second half of 2007 in compliance with a recent state planning act.

between 2007 and 2012 for the Region's rural transportation area. ACOG also serves on the GPATS and SPATS Technical and Policy Committees as well as providing staff support to the Pickens County Transportation Planning Committee.

During the second half of 2007, ACOG staff reviewed 117 Water Quality (208) permits for conformance with the Appalachian Regional Water Quality Plan.

AGING/SENIOR SERVICES

In the second half of 2007, the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) administrative leadership changed hands with the retirement of Michael Stogner and the hiring of his replacement, Vickie Williams. Two additional positions – the Ombudsman Program Intake Coordinator and the Information, Referral and Assistance Specialist – were also filled.

Nutrition staff monitored 6 congregate dining sites. I-CARE staff responded to 1403 calls for information, referral and assistance, hosted information sessions related to Medicare Part D Open Enrollment in each county and provided on-site assistance to 906 individuals during the 45-day open enrollment period for Medicare Part D. I-CARE staff also hosted a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid tour event in the Slater-Marietta area, developed and distributed Medicare Update Newsletters and new Medicare 2008 Booklets, and developed new 2008 Aging and Disability Resource Center Calendars.

The Family Caregiver Advocates assisted 579 caregivers of seniors with supportive in-home respite and supplemental services and 56 grandparents raising grandchildren. The FCSP also provided financial assistance to 191 caregivers, including gift certificates for grandparents raising grandchildren during the Christmas season.

Long Term Care Ombudsman received 420 intakes resulting in the investigation of 511 complaints with regard to residents of long term care facilities: 178 cases involved abuse, neglect and exploitation; 427 cases involved quality of care issues. Ombudsman provided 232 consultations, 55 friendly visits by Volunteer Ombudsman, 15 presentations to facilities, 2 Community Education events and 5 media events.

ACOG Aging contract funds assisted 9,877 seniors in the region through the provision of: 386,310 units (miles) of transportation; 9,422 hours of home care assistance; 1,080 hours of Adult Day Care; 984 hours of respite; 42,818 hours of health promotion/physical fitness; 192 health screenings; 5,449 hours of care management; 2,353 hours of medication management consultation; 744 hours of nutrition consultation; 66,857 group dining meals and 43,401 home-delivered meals; and 4,101 hours of residential maintenance.



Three of ACOG's very dedicated Area Aging services staff; (from the left) Sandy Dunagan, Siri Taylor and Barbara Jardno.

WORKFORCE/EMPLOYMENT

The WorkLink Workforce Investment Board contracted with three youth agencies and four Adult/Dislocated Worker Agencies to provide services to the citizens of Anderson, Oconee and Pickens Counties. There were ten Incumbent Worker Training Contracts written with area companies for over \$218,000 to train 522 current employees.

The three WorkLink One-Stop Centers served 18,039 individuals from July 1 to December 31. There have been 46,122 visits to the One-Stops for services such as job search, resume preparation, labor market information, and workshops. In that same period, 735 adults, 635 dislocated workers, and 250 received services using Workforce Investment Act funds.

WorkLink was the first in the state to sponsor a pilot project featuring video resumes for participants. Five individuals participated in using this new job search method. They received instruction from a speech coach prior to the taping of the resume. Given the great reception, this project will be repeated at the 2008 Job Fair in April and June. A template will soon be available for visitors to the One-Stops to create their own video resume.



Bob Brown of the S.C. Employment Security Commission provided a "State of the Workforce Report" at a November labor meeting attended by WorkLink staff.

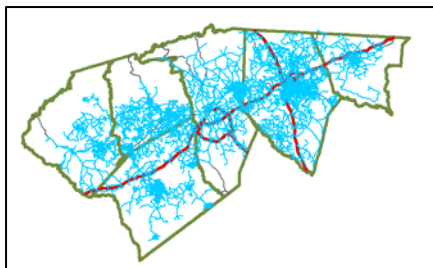
In early November, over 50 employers attended an informational breakfast held at Clemson University's Madren Center. Employers received a state of the workforce report from Bob Brown, Director, Labor Market Information, SC Employment Security Commission. Roger Powell, HR Manager, Reliable Sprinkler, provided a testimony regarding the services he has used. WIA's Julia Hoyle provided information on the types of employer services provided by WorkLink.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Appalachian Development Corporation (ADC), during the second half of 2007, continued to receive a large number of requests to participate with banks on various projects. During the last six months of the year, the ADC approved and/or closed loans totaling \$6,144,000. This figure is comprised of ten loans from the ADC loan pool totaling \$1,225,000 and seven Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 loans totaling \$4,919,000. The impact on the local community includes an increase in the local tax base and new jobs to be created over the next two years.



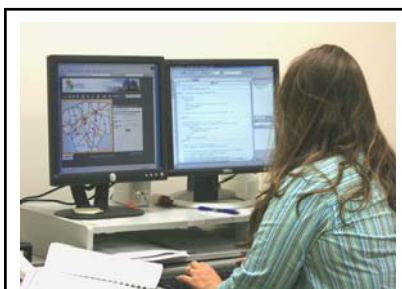
Also during this period, the ADC was granted an additional \$750,000 in new funding from USDA through their Rural Business and Cooperative Services Program. This money will be used in the ADC loan program to fund new loans.



INFORMATION SYSTEMS/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACOG staff coordinated with water and sewer service providers across the region to compile maps of over 7600 miles of water and sewer lines. This information represents an important section of a new statewide composite map created by the SC Department of Commerce to support economic development decisions by showing potential investors and developers that the Upstate has sufficient water and sewer infrastructure to support industry development and relocation, and ultimately create jobs.

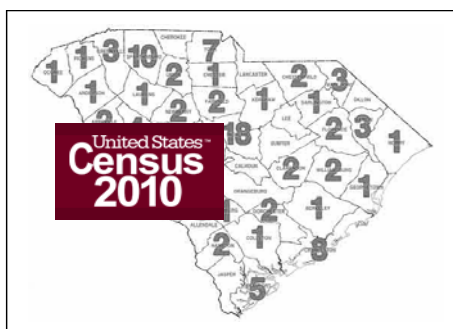
ACOG staff provided data and application updates for **InfoMentum** and **InfoMap**, a decision support system for the Upstate. We provided technical support and training to research personnel from each county economic development office, Anderson Library, and the Upstate Alliance. **InfoMap** is the 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.



Amy Wright-Webber, GIS Programmer at ACOG, develops the prototype for the new Upstate Alliance web mapping tool.

Upstate Alliance, in partnership with ACOG received a \$200,075 grant from AdvanceSC to create a state-of-the-art web mapping tool to enhance marketing and economic development in the SC Upstate region. ACOG staff began project design and technical development of a site that features the latest in mapping and data technology for use by potential site consultants or company executives.

DATA SERVICES



ACOG responded to 469 requests for statistical information and map data for the region. Services included providing maps and detailed socio-economic data to the Anderson City Fire Department and the City of Landrum to support grant applications. We also assisted the cities of Gaffney and Fountain Inn with strategies for implementing a Geographic Information system.

Staff coordinated the collection of 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 for the *2007-2008 Anderson County Multi-Family Housing Survey*, which is an inventory and analysis of the apartment and condominium markets. Copies of this and other ACOG publications are available at ACOG and online at www.scacog.org.

ACOG staff coordinated and hosted training and orientation meetings for the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program of the US Census Bureau. Participation from every county and municipality will ensure an accurate census count in 2010 and increase eligibility for federal and state funding.