Impact Report Details Contributions of State's Councils of Governments

In September 2003, the S. C. Association of Regional Councils (SCARC) introduced *South Carolina's Councils of Governments: Partnerships, Progress & Promise,* a report detailing the COGs' contributions to our state's economy and quality of life. The report was initiated by the President of SCARC, Easley Mayor Chris Christopherson. Production of the report was led by ACOG Board member Eddie Wynn.

Over the next five months, *Viewpoint* will showcase excerpts from this first-ever COG Impact Report. Copies of the report may be obtained by writing the Appalachian Council of Governments, P. O. Box 6668, Greenville, SC 29606.

South Carolina's Councils of Governments: Partnerships, Progress & Promise

Part I

An Introduction:

Meeting Needs: Exceeding Expectations

Launched more than three decades ago by visionary state leaders, the earliest missions of South Carolina's Councils of Governments focused on regional planning, keeping track of all types of statistical information, obtaining and administering grants and supporting regional economic development.

Today, the Councils still do those things – and so much more.

Thanks to local initiatives and statewide cooperation, we are taking better care of our elderly, training our work force, improving transportation, making loans to growing businesses, expanding basic infrastructure, enhancing the environment and responding to unique regional challenges as new conditions and trends develop.

When the Councils of Governments were created, few could have foreseen the profound and positive impact these new "COGs" would ultimately have on South Carolina's prosperity and quality of life. More than 30 years later, the story of the COGs is a story of Partnerships, Progress and Promise – one that continues to unfold and impress.

A Uniform Geographical Framework

The story began in 1967 when South Carolina Governor Robert E. McNair signed legislation dividing the state into ten official planning districts, marking the birth of the Palmetto State's Councils of Governments.

As the Governor officially introduced the state's citizens to this new regional concept of cooperation among counties, he described new entities created to provide a "uniform geographical framework within which the planning, programming and delivery of services by state, federal and local governments might be undertaken with maximum efficiency and effectiveness."

SCARC Meeting Highlights COGs' Impact

Dr. Fred Carter is welcomed by SCARC President Chris Christopherson.

The September 10 meeting of the South Carolina Association of Regional Councils (SCARC) served as the

Jane Goolsby shares thoughts from Senator Graham

backdrop for showcasing the recent SCARC publication *South Carolina's Councils of Governments: Partnerships, Progress & Promise.* The docu-

Liberty Adopts Comprehensive Plan

On August 18, 2003, the City Council of Liberty adopted the *City of Liberty Comprehensive Plan* at second reading. The adoption of this ordinance is a culmination of nearly a year's effort by the City Planning Commission and City Council. The Appalachian Council of Governments assisted the City of Liberty with the development of the plan.

A series of well-attended public meetings was held to solicit information from the citizens of Liberty. Information obtained from these meetings, in addition to current Census data, was used to identify the existing conditions of the City. The Planning Commission worked to identify strengths and weaknesses of the city as well as opportunities for and threats to the community. Identified strengths and opportunities were used as building blocks to develop strategies based on positive conditions within the city, while opportunities and threats were used to develop mediation-based strategies aimed at eliminating or reducing negative conditions within the city.

The City of Liberty's downtown corridor, identified as a strength of the city, was used to develop implementation strategies building on the positive conditions of downtown.

The Comprehensive Plan addresses seven elements as required by South Carolina Law, including: *population, economy, natural and cultural resources, community facilities, housing and land use*. The Planning Commission performed a thorough examination of each element by compiling an inventory of existing conditions, developing a statement of needs and goals, and developing implementation strategies with time frames to accomplish the objectives of each element in the plan.

The plan must be reviewed at least once within five years, and a new Comprehensive Plan must be completed at least every ten years.

Two Faces

South Carolina Family Caregiver Support Program
SC Aging Network
Supporting Caregivers

Since it's beginning, the **Family Caregiver Support Program** has been instrumental in assisting those caregivers who care for seniors over the age of 60 with health issues. This is the most prominent "face" of the program. The other "face" is the part of the program that offers the same services: information, assistance, support, training, counseling, respite and supplemental assistance to those grandparents rearing relative's children under the age of 18 in their homes.

For the first time ever, the 2000 U.S. Census tracked the number of grandparents raising grandchildren. The recently released figures indicate that about 3.4 percent of all South Carolina households — about 100,000 homes — have grandparents raising grandchildren. Many times they are doing this on their own, often networking with other grandparents in this endeavor. There are many difficulties in taking on the care of a grandchild, not the least of which is often that the grandparents do not have legal custody and find it difficult to negotiate without the rights they would have as legal guardians. Despite these hurdles, many thousands provide excellent care and nurturing to their young charges.

If you know of a grandparent over the age of 60 raising one or more grandchildren in their home, please encourage them to call the **Family Caregiver Support Program** at 1-800-925-4077. The Appalachian region works with Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg Counties. There are a variety of resources available to assist grandparents in this worthwhile undertaking.

ment shows how the COGs have had significant impact on the economy and quality of life in South Carolina. It constitutes the first-ever attempt to quantify, collectively, the contributions of all ten regional councils.

On hand for the publication's launch were Governor Sanford's Chief of Staff, Dr. Fred Carter, and State Director for Senator Lindsay Graham's Office, Ms. Jane Goolsby. Luncheon keynote speaker Dr. Carter said the COGs were positioned "to play a pivotal role in regional and state economic leadership," and challenged the Association to step up and take full advantage of their opportunity. Ms. Goolsby commended SCARC for its initiative in defining the benefits of regionalism and intergovernmental cooperation, and said that Senator Graham and his staff firmly believed in and supported those concepts.

Partnerships, Progress & Promise was the brainchild of Easley Mayor Chris Christopherson, currently the President of SCARC; and the committee overseeing work on the project was chaired by long-time Pickens County ACOG Board member Eddie Wynn. Congratulations on a job well done go to these two dedicated proponents of the regional spirit.

InfoMentum Receives EDA Grant for On-Line Mapping

The *InfoMentum* team at ACOG recently announced the award of a $35,000 grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to develop a web-based interactive mapping system that will provide site consultants, economic developers and investors with the ability to display, query, and analyze maps and information about the 10-county Upstate. This interactive web-based tool will be an extension of services provided through *InfoMentum*, a decision support system that aids regional marketing, industrial recruitment, and economic development in the Upstate.

Currently, the full regional database and GIS functions are only available on stand-alone PC's, accessible in the offices of the economic developers. The new Internet application would allow users to interactively view, manipulate, and print maps and attribute information for the 10-county Upstate from anywhere in the world. The web-based mapping application will use Environmental System Research Institute's (ESRI) Arc Internet Map Server (ArcIMS) technology. This software application enables high-end GIS display, query, and analysis, as well as other mapping functions such as pan, zoom, feature identification, and display. Map layers displayed on this site will include county boundaries, municipality boundaries, census features, water bodies, transportation features, existing industries, topographic data, and available industrial buildings, sites, and parks. Users will also eventually have access to tools that create custom demographic reports and detailed searches of the industrial properties database.

The grant will allow ACOG to accelerate the development of the tool by outsourcing programming assistance from ESRI specialists. It will also cover the purchase of additional software and offset personnel time devoted

to the project. The data and IMS tools will be served out from equipment and software at the ACOG offices, accessible to users through www.infomentum.org and links from the websites of county economic developers, the Upstate Alliance, and other regional partners.

The new on-line mapping solution will enhance decision-making capabilities of potential investors in the region and provide Upstate counties an edge on the competition for new and expanding industries. It will be an effective tool that will provide investors instant access to quality, up-to-date information.

Even in their formative years, the state's new Councils of Governments did not disappoint. Today, even as COG missions and programs have broadened to address today's challenges, the founding principle remains the same: to work cooperatively with local governments in all 46 counties, enhancing their capacity to guide growth and development and improving the quality of life for all South Carolina residents. The early charge to achieve "efficiency and effectiveness" still lies at the heart of the COG mission and has become the defining hallmark of all ten Councils.

WMD/Terrorism Awareness Training For First Responders — October 29th

Upstate first responders familiarize themselves with the military M256A1 chemical detection kit.

ACOG is continuing to provide Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)/Terrorism Awareness training to Upstate law enforcement, fire, EMS and emergency response personnel. The next half-day class is scheduled for Thursday, October 29, 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Classes are conducted at ACOG, utilizing a U.S. Department of Justice lesson plan. Instruction consists of lecture and hands-on demonstrations covering chemical, biological and radiological threats and responses. All participants receive Department of Homeland Security training certificates. More than 400 emergency personnel have received this particular training in the past year.

Training is provided at no cost to first responders. Enrollment is limited and sign-up is first-come, first-served. E-mail Joe Newton at newton@scacog.org or telephone (Greenville) at 241-4642 for further information or to register.

SC Choice: Governor Launches Plan in Spartanburg

Senior citizens and disabled people in Spartanburg, Union and Cherokee counties will be offered more freedom to choose the services they receive in a program announced by Gov. Mark Sanford. Sanford came to Mountainview Nursing Home in Spartanburg to launch the program, called **SC Choice**.

Under **SC Choice**, elderly and disabled residents will be able to choose whether they want to remain at home under family care, have in-home services, or move into a full-time care facility. Patients will hire (and fire) their care providers and decide for themselves the level of service they need. The patients will then authorize the Department of Health and Human Services to use their Medicaid funds to pay the salaries of healthcare workers or order equipment for them.

SC Choice will provide each patient with a care advisor to help them make decisions and choose providers, and will handle payroll for any service providers. "This is about choice, independence and flexibility," said Robbie Kerr, Director of the S. C. Department of Health and Human Services. "We're confident people want to take care of themselves and they know how to do it."

The program is the first of its kind in the nation, and South Carolina received a waiver from the federal government to implement the program. Sanford and Kerr hope the program will allow senior citizens and disabled residents to stay in their homes and with their families longer, rather than moving to nursing homes.

"If you look at an individual's choice to go to an institution or receive in-home care, it's about quality of life," Sanford said. "It has a whole lot to do with flexibility. Too often, programs are locked in a way that doesn't consider quality of life or financial concerns."

Spartanburg, Union and Cherokee counties were chosen because of the demographics of the elderly and disabled population, Kerr said. The program will be expanded to other counties in the next few months, and will be implemented statewide by next year. Anyone who is served by Community Long Term Care, a division of the state Department of Health and Human Services, will be eligible to enroll in the **SC Choice** program. Kerr expects the program will delay the entry into a nursing home for many people, but doesn't expect the number of current residents to dramatically decrease.

State officials expect the program to be "budget neutral," meaning the Department of Health and Human Services won't pay any more to operate it than it currently spends for its Community Long Term Care program. But state officials do predict that the money will go further when it's put in the hands of the patients.

After Sanford's announcement of the program, two local residents signed up for **SC Choice** – Roberta Rentz and Darrell Plumley. Plumley, 45, has a nurse assistant who comes to his home twice weekly to help him with shopping, laundry and other things he can't do on his own. He hopes **SC Choice** will give him and his nurse greater freedom to decide what services he needs. "It's a more versatile program," he said. "I feel like I have more control over the situation."

SC Choice is a new program to provide senior citizens and disabled residents more choice in how their healthcare dollars are spent.

To participate in **SC Choice**, patients must be:
√ 21 years or older and a resident of Spartanburg, Union or Cherokee counties
√ Eligible for Medicaid
√ Receiving services from Community Long Term Care (the Elderly/Disabled waiver)
√ Willing to participate in the decisions and planning of **SC Choice**

√ Not currently enrolled in hospice care

For more information or to enroll in **SC Choice**, call 587-4707 or 1-888-551-3864.

(Reprint of an article by Bridget B. Winston appearing in the *Spartanburg Herald*, September 4, 2003.)

Development Corporation News

The Appalachian Development Corporation wants to remind all small businesses of an immediate tax advantage that exists for the investment in equipment. Between 2002 and 2006 the "Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003" increases the amount of money small business owners can deduct from their taxes for investment in new equipment and machinery, including computers.

The amount of investment qualifying for this immediate deduction increases from $25,000 to $100,000 beginning in 2003. This immediate deduction will begin to phase out with investments in excess of $400,000 (up from $200,000) to restrict the tax advantage to small businesses. This allows small, profitable businesses to add equipment and to expense a larger portion of the purchase against current earnings, thus lowering the tax burden.

To assist in equipment funding, the Appalachian Development Corporation has loan programs that can be used to assist in funding up to 90 percent of the purchase price. These loans are fixed interest rate loans normally secured by the assets being purchased. Persons interested in learning more about the tax savings should consult with their accountants. Parties

Long Term Care

Requesting a Meeting with the Nursing Home Administrator: A Few Good Tips

Before allowing situations to become a major problem, schedule a meeting with the facility's Administrator, Director of Nursing, Social Worker and anyone else that is directly related to the problem. What you should AVOID doing is simply catching the administrator in the hall and expecting to have their full attention.

In preparation for the meeting to discuss a problem, it is important to think about the **result you are seeking.** In addition, you should take some time to consider the following questions:

Are there other people with the same concerns? You may not be able to speak for other families, but if you are having a problem, others likely have similar concerns. If the issue involves food or dining problems, the resident council may have discussed this in the past.

Have you personally observed the problem? Have you recorded the times and dates when it occurred? Have you recorded the attempts you have made to get the problem solved? Times, dates, and person you spoke to? Can you state the problem objectively, focusing on the effect and outcome for the resident's needs and not what YOU want? Simply talking about what "they" did or didn't do will only put staff on the defensive.

Are you familiar with the regulations or resident's rights that may apply to this problem? Prior to the meeting you may want to speak with the Ombudsman's Office for appropriate regulations (864-242-9733). While it is not necessary to quote regulations, it is helpful to demonstrate your knowledge.

Will the people who can solve the problem be at the conference? Try to ensure that the individuals who are in a position to solve the problem will be present and that enough time has been allotted to sufficiently discuss the problems.

During the Meeting…

Establish a sense of cooperation and inclusion. Assume that staff do value satisfied customers and thus will want to know about and fix the problem.

Hear the staff out, but don't lose sight of your goal: the resident's well-being. Even with your best communication style, staff are likely to put up their guard. The administrator may blame the aides who call in sick, regulation that entail too much time-consuming paperwork, or reimbursement rates that are too low. REMEMBER: these circumstances are their management problems, not yours. Your role is to advocate for good care for the resident.

Offer solutions about the problem's cause and its solution. If your family member has a particularly agitated reaction to an event, explore what may have caused the response. Ask staff whether they tried to anticipate what provokes these symptoms. For example, people with diminished mental capacity often refuse to shower because they greatly fear what, to them, seems like an unknown and dangerous experience.

Don't leave the meeting without a clear understanding of what you can expect. Know what you should do if the problem continues. Also be confident that staff know how you would like the problem handled. It's a particularly good idea to follow up the meeting with a note of thanks, reviewing the problem and summarizing how the nursing home has agreed to handle it.

(Information gathered from: Nursing Homes…getting good care there. Burger, Fraser, Hunt, Frank, 2001)

ARC Conference in Virginia

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the State of Virginia are hosting a conference entitled **Telecommunications and the Future of Appalachian Communities.** The conference will take place on October 15-16 in Abingdon, Virginia, at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center.

Telecommunications is one of the biggest influences on the way companies and governments do business today. The use of the Internet and related technology is helping communities everywhere become more competitive, create and retain jobs, and foster economic growth. Many Appalachian communities are already participating in the Information Age through the use of e-commerce, distance learning and workforce development, and telemedicine. It is critical that all Appalachian communities be able to fully take advantage of the opportunities telecommunications provides.

This conference will address the range of information technology applications available today and how they are transforming the way business is done. Topics include *E-Commerce Models and Applications, The Role of Information Technology in Economic Development Strategies, Networking in Community Development Strategies, and Resources and Tools for Information Technology.* The conference will also showcase successful projects involving E-Government, E-Commerce, Telemedicine, Distance Learning, E-Tourism, and Workforce Development in the Appalachian region. Speakers include ARC Federal Co-Chair Ann Pope, Virginia Governor Mark Warner, and U.S. Rep. Rick Boucher.

For more information, or to register, contact Dirk Reis at the ACOG or go to the ARC Web site at www.arc.gov and click on "Events."

VIEWPOINT

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Pendleton WIB Makes Award

The Pendleton District Workforce Investment Board and the One-Stop Management Team named Ms. Joyce Smith as the recipient of the 2003 Pendleton District One-Stop Award. This award is presented annually to a group or individual in recognition of outstanding work, performance, or customer service. Ms. Smith was given a plaque and a check for $100 from the Pendleton District Workforce Investment Board.

Ms. Smith is the Oconee County Area Director for the S. C. Employment Security Commission Seneca Local Office where a Pendleton District One-Stop Satellite Center is located. She was nominated for her dedication, diligence and involvement. She has played an active, vital role in the development and daily operations of the Seneca One-Stop and the partnerships within the Pendleton District One-Stop system.

In all of her involvement, educationally, professionally and in community service, her dedication to

serve is evident to all who have the pleasure of knowing her. Her involvement with the Chamber of Commerce, the PACE Board, and the Personnel Association has served to fulfill the Workforce Investment Board's mission.

Ms. Smith is truly an asset to the Pendleton District One-Stop System. Congratulations to Ms. Joyce Smith!

(ADC continued from page 4)
interested in equipment financing should contact the Appalachian Development Corporation at 864-242-9733.

ADC transactions occurring during September included:

A loan of $160,000 to Bernhardt House of Violins of Greenville was closed and funded, allowing Joyce Miller to open with the new school year. The business offers rentals, repairs, and lessons for stringed instruments.

A loan of $75,000 was closed and funded to Marcus D. Brown Funeral Home, Inc., in Anderson. Marc Brown is nearing completion of his new facility on South Main Street and funds were needed for furniture, fixtures, and equipment for the new business.

An ADC loan to Superior Machine locating in Seneca was funded in the amount of $150,000. The ADC funding was done in conjunction with the purchase of the building. An approved SBA loan was also closed and is in the process of being funded in the amount of $505,000.