

2011 NADO Innovation Awards



2011

NADO Innovation Awards

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) annual Innovation Awards program has been acknowledging the creative approaches to regional community and economic development since 1986. Since the program's inception, more than 1,300 projects have been honored.

The 2011 Innovation Award winners are making a difference in their regions through a variety of program areas. These include business and community development, energy, green infrastructure, industry cluster support, sustainable development, technology, and workforce development programs. The award winners' projects are profiled according to various categories; contact information for each awardee can be found in the project descriptions.

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Cover photos (clockwise from top left):

Land-of-Sky Regional Council - Linking Lands and Communities in the Land-of-Sky Region

Atlanta Regional Commission - Innovation Crescent

Upper Savannah Council of Governments - Saluda Teacher Apartments Project

Central Mississippi Planning and Development District - The Rebirth of Downtown Pelahatchie

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**National Association of Development Organizations and
the NADO Research Foundation**

400 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 390
Washington, DC 20001
202.624.7806

Info@nado.org | www.NADO.org

AGING

The **Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments** partners annually with the Parks and Recreation Departments within the five-county region of northeastern North Carolina to sponsor a day of **Adaptive Events** for residents of long-term care facilities. The Adaptive Events are a day-long series of events for persons living in long-term care facilities or participating in adult day care. Participation in the games gives participants an excellent opportunity to be part of a community activity and to foster fellowship with others. Last year, 140 people participated in the Adaptive Events. Each facility provided the necessary staff and personal supplies, while the Parks and Recreation Departments contributed staff support and equipment for the events. The Area Agency on Aging facilitated registration, sign-in and lunch. Holding the Adaptive Events promotes equal participation opportunities for residents in long-term care settings for whom the Senior Games would not be an appropriate venue to display their special talents. For many of these long-term care residents, this is the only time that they are engaged in the community.

Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments

Contact: Jody Riddle

Wilson, NC; 252.234.5956

jriddle@ucpcog.org; www.ucpcog.org

BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT

In 2008, the **Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission** received a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct environmental site assessments (ESAs) across the six-county region. Since the start of the **Community-Wide Brownfield Assessments**, 12 Phase I ESAs have been conducted for hazardous materials and three for petroleum sites. Seven Phase II ESAs have been conducted for hazardous materials and five for petroleum sites. A Phase I ESA identifies potential or existing environmental contamination, while a Phase II is a more detailed investigation involving physical and/or chemical analysis. Conducting these ESAs has allowed the Commission to apply for, and receive, an EPA clean-up grant on behalf of Pike County. Another clean-up grant application is pending. The Commission is working to leverage other sources of financing for the demolition and clean-up of two additional sites. Two other assessments have allowed a local Community Action Agency to leverage funds to redevelop a building for senior citizen housing. The public was able to follow the project's progress on the Commission's website.

Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission

Contact: Thomas Mosley

Ferdinand, IN; 812.367.8455

tom@ind15rpc.org; www.ind15rpc.org

The **Northern Kentucky Area Development District (NKADD)** began the **Regional Brownfield Program** to remediate and redevelop all known brownfield sites within the eight-county region. The NKADD serves as the project manager for the program, and collaborates with various community partners to complete it. The overall program includes an inventory of brownfield sites, hazardous and petroleum assessment programs, remediation planning and redevelopment of the sites. NKADD is implementing the earliest stages of this project, beginning with the Licking River Greenway (LRG) Brownfield Coalition Petroleum Assessment Project. Less than one year into this project, over 40 sites have been identified, and ESAs have commenced

BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT

on multiple sites. Having created partnerships and compiled a comprehensive list of brown-field sites, the NKADD moved forward with developing a region-wide program. Although this program is still in an early phase, funding has been sought for all programs. This includes a workforce program to hire local skilled environmental professionals, as well as a Revolving Loan Fund Program to assist in the cleanup of these sites.

Northern Kentucky Area Development District

Contact: Elishia Chamberlain

Florence, KY; 859.283.1885

elishia.chamberlain@nkadd.org; www.nkadd.org

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The **Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District** prepared the **BizNet Business Resource Network** to help identify and assist companies at risk of closure or layoffs as well as those with opportunities for growth. Buckeye Hills developed the network through a \$250,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Development. The network also includes a regional software tracking system and brand presence for ongoing use. State and local workforce and economic development partners can use the early warning network to identify resources and implement strategic solutions for companies in financial trouble as well as those with growth potential. Each business identified by Buckeye Hills received customized recommendations and support for the needs identified to sustain their business and position them for growth. The existing economic development offices within the district were paid for making initial and follow-up visits to businesses.

Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District

Contact: Charmel Wesel

Marietta, OH; 740.374.9436

cwesel@buckeyehills.org; www.buckeyehills.org

The **Gateway Area Development District (GWADD)** represents a region that previously depended heavily on tobacco crops and has struggled as former tobacco growers attempt to diversify their farms and regain economic stability. The **Kentucky Market Pavilion** was created by GWADD to provide year-round marketing and sales of Kentucky-made products. The project is the final phase of the Bath County Agriculture Education and Marketing Center project which began in the late 1990s. GWADD partnered with the Bath County Agricultural Development Board to help secure a funding package and provide project administration for the construction of a retail store facility. The Market Pavilion is an enclosed structure that allows for year-round retail sales of goods produced in Kentucky, including crafts, meats, cheeses and candies, and also includes a bakery and deli area that sells locally-grown produce. The Center, with the exception of the Retail Store, was completed in 2005. Along with the newly constructed Market Pavilion, the Center includes a covered farmers market, a processing kitchen, a meeting facility, and the Bath County Cooperative Extension offices. An online marketing center is also in the works, and is expected to be instrumental in promoting thousands of local projects on a national level.

Gateway Area Development District

Contact: Cindy Kincaid

Morehead, KY; 606.780.0090

cindy.kincaid@ky.gov; www.gwadd.org

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The **Middle Georgia Regional Commission (MGRC)** was designated by the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services as a Regional Center for the Immigrant Investor (EB-5) program in March 2011, a status that will advance economic development and increase skilled jobs in the area. This program encourages foreign investment for the expansion of existing businesses in the U.S. or the establishment of new businesses. Under the **Middle Georgia Regional Center EB-5** program, foreign investors that make a minimum qualifying investment in a new or expanded commercial enterprise receive expedited visa processing. The minimum investment is \$1 million in most areas and \$500,000 in the more rural Middle Georgia region, and the project must directly or indirectly create at least 10 full-time jobs. In exchange for the investment, foreign investors who have applied for permanent residency benefit from priority processing of work visas for themselves and their dependents. The benefit of this project is the availability of new capital for economic development projects and the creation of new permanent full-time jobs in Middle Georgia. The MGRC is targeting industries in construction, transportation/warehousing, professional and scientific services, heavy manufacturing, energy and real estate for these investments.

Middle Georgia Regional Commission

Contact: Laura Mathis

Macon, GA; 478.751.6160

lmathis@mg-rc.org; www.middlegeorgiarc.org

The **Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG)** developed the **Business Assistance Center (BAC)** to provide small and home-based businesses with technical assistance, technology, business planning and space to grow their business. The BAC provides complimentary services to individuals and entrepreneurs wishing to start a business, owner/operators seeking assistance with business or marketing plans and business owners who want to become better managers and ensure their business is sustainable in the long term. NACOG collaborated with Yavapai Community College, the Yavapai Local Workforce Investment Board and Systems Technology and Staffing for a variety of services related to the BAC. To date, the BAC has assisted over 3,000 business representatives, created 192 job placements and mentored 35 entrepreneurs wishing to start or expand a business. The BAC represents a regional collaboration and a value-added asset that supports starting or maintaining a small business in rural northern Arizona.

Northern Arizona Council of Governments

Contact: Teri Drew

Flagstaff, AZ; 928.774.1895

tdrew@nacog.org; www.nacog.org

The **Sonoma County Economic Development Board** uses a highly visible program to highlight the beneficial community and employment contributions local long-time entrepreneurs have made, often as a family business. The **Business Hall of Fame** is a joint venture with the local countywide museum that has been in operation since 1997. Each year, the Board seeks nominations for businesses that have made a positive impact on the local community and contributed to the business, civic and cultural life of Sonoma County, California. These nominations are reviewed by an impartial group of judges to select finalists for the Hall of Fame. Following the selection, a ceremony is held at the county museum. The goal of the awards and subsequent ceremony is to recognize the positive contributions local long-time entrepreneurs have made in

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

terms of employment, community causes and general economic development in Sonoma County, and to provide role models for younger entrepreneurs.

Sonoma County Economic Development Board

Contact: Ben Stone

Santa Rosa, CA; 707.565.7170

bstone@sonoma-county.org; www.sonoma-county.org

The **Southern Oregon Angel Investment Conference** was formed by **Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc. (SORED)** to encourage new business ventures in this region. SOREDI held a conference in which 31 entrepreneurs presented startup ideas to a group of investors and competed for funds to realize their proposals. The project connected and activated local private investors more directly than SOREDI had ever previously experienced. The event educated the community of high net-worth individuals and prepared them for ongoing outreach, and allowed entrepreneurs to present their concepts in front of a live audience of 160 people. This level of exposure led to some investors to pursue potential business ventures with some of the finalists. The winner of the grand prize, Folium Partners, won \$155,000 in prize money to develop their idea, with the possibility for the investment level to climb to \$300,000. Additional outcomes included local press attention, the participation of corporate sponsors and a raised profile for the entrepreneur community and economic development activity in the region.

Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc.

Contact: Ron Fox

Medford, OR; 541.773.8946

ron@soredi.org; www.soredi.org



SORED - Southern Oregon Investor Network

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Pelahatchie, Mississippi is a town of about 1,600 people located 25 miles east of Jackson on Interstate 20. **The Rebirth of Downtown Pelahatchie** was initiated by Pelahatchie's mayor, Knox Ross, as he recognized the need to preserve and revitalize the town's historic center to attract new businesses. The City partnered with the **Central Mississippi Planning and**



CMPDD - Pelahatchie Downtown Rebirth Library (Before)



CMPDD - Pelahatchie Downtown Rebirth Library (After)

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CMPDD - Pelahatchie Downtown Rebirth Open Space (Before) CMPDD - Pelahatchie Downtown Rebirth Open Space (After)

Development District (CMPDD) to explore innovative ways to fund and carry out the needed improvements. CMPDD and the City's search for funding possibilities led to successful upgrades of the Police Station, Community Center, Library, City Hall and Fire Department, and the addition of a splash pad, large water fountain feature, trash receptacles, benches, streetscaping, decorative lighting, and Wi-Fi accessibility to the downtown. Webcams were installed throughout the downtown area so that residents and others could see the progress as construction proceeded.

Central Mississippi Planning and Development District

Contact: Mitzi Stubbs

Jackson, MS; 601.981.1511

mstubbs@cmpdd.org; www.cmpdd.org

The older adult population of Georgia has grown rapidly in the last decade and this growth is expected to continue, especially in the Coastal Georgia region. The **Coastal Regional Commission of Georgia** developed a plan for the region to address this demographic shift, titled **Coastal Communities for All Ages**. This document, the first of its type in the state, represents shared agreements for specific achievable strategies among primary stakeholders, governmental agencies and community groups. Its purpose is to provide a map for the region's future and match key issues with tangible solutions. The plan prescribes a series of "livability principles" that communities should strive to achieve: connectivity, pedestrian access and transit, neighborhood retail and services, social interaction, a range of dwelling types, healthy living, and environmental and sustainable solutions. Together these principles facilitate personal health, independence and engagement in community life for older residents. The plan includes guiding principles, specific implementation strategies and performance standards for livable communities to aid local governments in effectively planning for the demographic change.

Coastal Regional Commission

Contact: Lupita McClenning

Brunswick, GA; 912.262.2800

lmcclenning@crc.ga.gov; www.crc.ga.gov

Established in 2005, the **Community Enhancement Grants Program** provides reimbursement grants to help municipalities, counties and nonprofit organizations enhance public spaces such as gateways, parks, trails, waterfronts and business districts with funding from the **Houston-Galveston Area Council**. Eligible enhancements must be part of a plan or strategy to improve the area, stimulate reinvestment and commercial activity, restore and preserve the historic character of the community and improve the appearance of downtowns and gate-

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

way areas. The program requires a one-to-one match for each dollar given, and is funded by servicing fees generated by the Houston-Galveston Area Local Development Corporation, a 501(c)(3) organization that manages one of the largest Small Business Administration loan portfolios in the State of Texas. Since 2005, the program has invested \$1.1 million to support 56 projects in 40 communities. Projects include improving streetscapes, replacing sidewalks, installing signage, restoring historic facades and theatres, installing street lighting, planting trees and creating public parks. The grants have also supported disaster recovery efforts via reforestation of hurricane-damaged parks and seed monies for a small business loan fund. The matching grant program funds up to 50 percent of the estimated project cost with a maximum award of \$25,000 per project.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

Contact: Chuck Wemple

Houston, TX; 713.993.4514

Chuck.Wemple@h-gac.com; www.h-gac.com

The vision of the **Pattern and Place Charrette Workshops** was to give local governments the knowledge and skills necessary to find creative solutions to problems faced by their communities. The **River Valley Regional Commission** held four workshops for community stakeholders in south central Georgia to think more creatively and identify opportunities and assets within their own community. The workshops included community stakeholders from throughout River Valley's sixteen-county region, and provided a forum for people who might not otherwise meet to discuss local and regional issues. Each workshop focused on a different issue related to community design and was held in a different community. The topics covered included an overview of typical town design, identifying assets and opportunities within the community, streetscapes and pedestrians and creating financial action plans to execute redevelopment efforts. The workshops were held in sequence so that attendees of all four were able to take advantage of cumulative knowledge. The feedback from the charrettes will be used to propel community involvement in redevelopment and improvement efforts throughout the River Valley region.

River Valley Regional Commission

Contact: Courtney Grunninger

Columbus, GA; 706.256.2910

cgrunninger@rivervalleyrc.org; www.rivervalleyrc.org

CRIME PREVENTION

In 2010, the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, in partnership with the Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPCs), began work on a statewide community-based youth gang prevention project. The **Youth Gang Activity Assessment of the 25th North Carolina Judicial District** was conducted by the **Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG)** to provide an analysis of the extent and characteristics of youth gangs within North Carolina's 25th Judicial District. The Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba County JCPCs pooled resources and selected WPCOG to complete the assessment because of the organization's experience in cooperating with multiple agencies in the region. The completed analysis yielded mixed indications of the status of youth gangs in the 25th Judicial District.

CRIME PREVENTION

Youth gangs appear to be widely present in schools, but consistent, direct control of local gangs by national entities has not yet formed. The JCPCs in each county are currently using the results of the report to formulate strategies for further youth gang prevention and intervention.

Western Piedmont Council of Governments

Contact: Tom Bell

Hickory, NC; 828.485.4234

Tom.Bell@wpcog.org; www.wpcog.org

DISASTER MITIGATION

The **Bi-State Regional Commission** initiated the **Quad City Interoperability Communication Network (QCICC)** in order to construct a fiber optic network connecting all Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in the Quad Cities area (parts of eastern Iowa and western Illinois), in order to ensure reliable emergency communications. The network consists of approximately 40 miles of existing and newly laid fiber optic cables located completely underground, except at bridge crossings. In 2005, a collaboration of seven municipalities and two counties jointly applied for and were awarded U.S. Department of Justice Interoperable Communications Technology Program funds. The \$2.1 million federal grant and more than \$700,000 in local funding were used to construct a fiber optic network connecting all PSAPs in Scott County, Iowa and Rock Island County, Illinois. The QCICC acted as the steering committee for the design and construction of the network. Now known as the Quad Cities Interoperable Communications Network, the network was completed and became operational on September 30, 2010.

Bi-State Regional Commission

Contact: Denise Bulat

Rock Island, IL; 309.793.6300

dbulat@bistateonline.org; www.bistateonline.org

The **Catawba Regional Council of Governments** initiated the **Lancaster County Search and Rescue Geographic Information Systems (GIS)** Program in response to the need for a more efficient method of tracking tactical search and rescue team locations during deployment. During missions, Lancaster County's Specialized Tactics and Resources (STAR) Team would utilize paper maps to approximate locations of search team members. Creating these maps took at least 30 minutes and covered only a limited geographic area. Precise team locations could not be plotted accurately on the maps and if the search moved to an adjacent geographic area, additional maps would have to be printed. The creation of a GIS-based application by Catawba Regional COG allows the STAR Team to see the precise location of search teams and to plot points derived from a variety of resources including handheld GPS units and cell phone GPS applications. The digital maps include all of Lancaster County's base mapping as well as data from adjacent counties. The GIS program also allows for the notation and GPS location of key evidence and creates a timeline of search efforts, including timestamps for every point logged. The result is a far more efficient and effective method of tracking search teams in the field. Additionally, the program has expanded to evidence location logging in crime scenes.

Catawba Regional Council of Governments

Contact: Cole McKinney

Rock Hill, SC; 803.327.9041

cmckinney@catawbacog.org; www.catawbacog.org

DISASTER MITIGATION

The **Central Florida Regional Planning Council** conducted the **Regional Economic Analysis and Disaster Resiliency Study** to document existing conditions in five central Florida counties and review implications of a catastrophic event respective to regional economic impacts. The study developed an itemized inventory for DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Okeechobee and Polk Counties detailing traffic analysis zones, employment, critical infrastructure and other vital information, and used that data to provide an economic analysis of the effects of a catastrophic event on each county. Two recovery scenarios are provided: first, a normal recovery based on research of recovery experiences under similar situations; and second, accelerated recovery rates based on \$1 billion of direct federal funding to each of the five counties. Study findings will be utilized by local governments in the region to improve decisionmaking and preparation before, during and after future catastrophic events, and will assist in maintaining continuity planning to ensure businesses can recover as quickly as possible from a disaster. If these areas can become more resilient and better prepared, less economic damage may be incurred and the recovery period may be shorter for future disasters.

Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Contact: Jennifer Codo-Salisbury
Bartow, FL; 863.534.7130
jcodosalisbury@cfrpc.org; www.cfrpc.org

Florida's 11 regional planning councils, through the **Florida Association of Regional Councils**, cooperated to develop the **Statewide Regional Evacuation Study Program**. An Evacuation Study was completed in 2010 for each region in Florida. A statewide behavioral survey was undertaken to collect data from every county about evacuation. Storm Surge Inundation was mapped utilizing updated SLOSH model results provided by the National Hurricane Center and newly flown LiDAR elevation data. A state-of-the-art Evacuation Transportation Model was created providing each region with data on vulnerable populations, evacuating clearance times and shelter demand. Cutting-edge software tools were created during this process as well. One is the TIME (Transportation Interface for Modeling Evacuations) tool, which provides a user-friendly method to model evacuations using their own unique parameters to determine the effects on evacuation within a county or region. Most importantly, through intense coordination at the federal, state, regional and local level, Florida has an accepted, consistent Evacuation Study for the entire state. Several state agencies achieved a methodology and study that was consistent and applicable across multiple disciplines—emergency management, transportation and growth management.

Florida Association of Regional Councils
Contact: Brian Teeple, Northeast Florida Regional Council
Jacksonville, FL; 904.279.0880
bteeple@nefrfc.org; www.nefrfc.org

The **Rutland Regional Planning Commission** provided support for a series of exercises known as the **Disaster Tabletops – Rutland Region Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)** to address hazardous material reporting in the Rutland County, Vermont region. Rutland County is a rural region of 27 towns and one city; most of the region's 62,000 residents rely on all-volunteer fire departments and rescue squads for first response. The LEPC's tabletop exercises are hour-long discussions focused on a specific, plausible and dangerous scenario and fill the critical need of introducing community leaders to one another before an emergency arises. The exercises have evolved into a forum of disaster preparedness and emergency

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planning with a broad scope and consistent outreach. Participants include town government officials, road foremen, firefighters and police officers, school leaders and industrial facility managers—individuals who would never otherwise meet to contemplate potential disasters. Representatives of every organization are encouraged to offer their perspective and highlight action items for collaboration going forward. Since 2005, exercises have included workplace violence, school shootings, propane truck collisions, train derailments, water contamination and dam failures. These tabletop scenarios are inexpensive to organize, serve as valuable exercises for volunteer responders and emphasize transferable skills and community partnerships.

Rutland Regional Planning Commission

Contact: Philip Picotte

Rutland, VT; 802.775.0871

ppicotte@rutlandrpc.org; www.rutlandrpc.org

South Plains Association of Governments (SPAG) created **In the Line of Fire**, part of the South Plains Disaster Recovery Fund, as a mechanism for citizens to donate to wildfire relief efforts in the 16-county area covered by SPAG. Recent wildfires in the South Plains have caused widespread destruction and exhausted the limited resources of local volunteer fire departments. Because the State of Texas did not receive a Presidential Declaration of Disaster following the fires—and the funding that comes with that designation—citizens of the South Plains joined forces to provide the financial resources to support area fire departments. Area banks, businesses, nonprofit organizations and individuals have contributed to the recovery fund, and donations can be made online. Funds collected are earmarked to replace damaged or destroyed equipment and to cover unexpected expenses related to fighting the wildfires, so that local fire departments are well prepared for future emergencies. SPAG partnered with the Lubbock Area Foundation to distribute the funds based on individual communities' needs.

South Plains Association of Governments

Contact: Elena Quintanilla

Lubbock, TX; 806.762.8721

equintanilla@spag.org; www.spag.org

ENERGY

The **Ely Energy Action Plan** is a pilot project in the City of Ely, Minnesota sponsored by the **Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC)**.



The plan lays out a broad-based, long-term approach for Ely to become a leader in energy independence through maximum energy efficiency and the use of renewable and local energy resources, leading to sustainability and economic prosperity. The plan will guide energy projects that benefit homeowners, local businesses and the city, helping to save money and increase energy security. Between April and August 2010, ARDC facilitated three meetings



Arrowhead RDC - Ely Energy Plan

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with a broad group of local stakeholders to draft a vision, goals, strategies and action steps for the plan. Members of the focus group included representatives from the City of Ely, Energy Efficient Ely, Ely Alternative Energy Taskforce, Vermilion Community College, Ely Area Development Association, U.S. Forest Service, local business owners and additional consultants in renewable energy and economic development. The plan was submitted to City Council for their review and a public hearing, and was officially added to the City's Comprehensive Plan in November 2010.

Arrowhead Regional Development Commission

Contact: Bonnie Hundreiser

Duluth, MN; 218.529.7527

bhundreiser@ardc.org; www.ardc.org

The **Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG)** developed the **Energy Efficiency for Local Units of Government** project in order to reduce energy consumption among local governments in the region, save taxpayer dollars and create economic opportunities for Michigan's energy industry. In its first year, NWMCOG allocated \$40,000 to each county to support energy audits of county-owned buildings and to create a plan for energy efficiency improvements. The audits identified over \$1.8 million in energy savings. These "no cost" improvements could help each county achieve between \$12,000 and \$35,000 in additional annual savings if implemented. Finally, many of the improvements are eligible to receive rebates from utility companies as part of the state-mandated energy optimization program. The project's second year will include a competitive sub-grant process to select 10 additional units of government to receive \$40,000 for audits and retrofits. All participants will designate at least 50 percent of these savings for future energy improvements.

Northwest Michigan Council of Governments

Contact: Jaclyn Sanborn

Traverse City, MI; 231.929.5046

jaclynsanborn@nwm.cog.mi.us; www.nwmcog.org

The **SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG)** is providing project management and technical assistance to the Borough of New Berlin, Pennsylvania to identify energy consumption and achieve energy savings within the community and identify alternative fuel sources and community-based alternative energy projects that will increase the community's ability to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels. The first



SEDA-COG - New Berlin Energy Initiative

phase of the **New Berlin Energy Independence Initiative** focused on engaging all sectors of the community, eliciting the involvement of outside partners and creating tools to leverage resources and implement energy reductions in future phases. Through community-wide energy conservation planning and implementation and local use of energy generated from alternative fuels, New Berlin and other communities can become less dependent on costly fossil fuels, decrease greenhouse gas emissions, attain greater energy security, retain wealth within the

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region and create new jobs and businesses in support of next generation energy. SEDA-COG will document the process, costs and benefits of this project to enable it to serve as a replicable pilot project for other small communities.

SEDA-Council of Governments

Contact: Stacy Richards

Lewisburg, PA; 570.524.4491

srichards@seda-cog.org; www.seda-cog.org

The **Landfill (Methane) Gas to Electricity Project** is a program initiated by the **Three Rivers Solid Waste Management Authority**, an arm of the Three Rivers Planning and Development District. In 2009, the Authority installed a landfill gas collection system to collect and destroy methane gas produced by the decomposition of waste contained in a local landfill. The system is able to collect and sell “carbon credits” measured as the landfill gas is captured and destroyed before it can reach the atmosphere. In 2010, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), in conjunction with a local power distributor, Pontotoc Electric Power Association, announced the Generation Partners Program (GPP). Under GPP, the Authority qualified to utilize the landfill’s methane gas as a renewable energy source for electrical generation. In late 2010, the Authority signed a ten-year contract whereby TVA will buy up to 999 kilowatt hours of electricity (at 3 cents over the TVA retail price) generated from the landfill gas—enough to power approximately 1,000 homes. In 2011, the Authority will invest approximately \$2 million in capital funding to purchase and install the electrical generation equipment that will begin to produce electricity for sale in October 2011.

Three Rivers Planning and Development District

Contact: Ronnie Bell

Pontotoc, MS; 662.489.2415

rbell@trpdd.com; www.trpdd.com

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Linking Lands and Communities in the Land-of-Sky Region was initiated to engage a diverse group of leaders and scientists to develop a regional framework for conservation and development using a green infrastructure planning approach. The **Land-of-Sky Regional Council** worked with a multi-disciplinary group of leaders from four western North Carolina counties to identify the region’s most valuable natural and cultural resources, devise ways to interconnect them into a network and produce useful conservation and development tools for decision makers. With a team of conservationists and mapping experts on board, the project aggregated data from public, private and nonprofit sources. The products of the effort included a series of maps, datasets, documentation and other tools that local leaders can use to guide land use decisions across the landscape.

Land-of-Sky Regional Council

Contact: Linda Giltz

Asheville, NC; 828.251.6622

lindag@landofsky.org; www.landofsky.org

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The New River Valley region of southwestern Virginia depends on natural and cultural assets for over \$200 million in annual revenue from agricultural and forestry goods as well as tourism revenue. These valuable resources are under stress due to the region's rapid population growth. Since 2000, the population in the New River Valley has grown by 13 percent, while losing over 25,000 acres of farmland. In 2006, the **New River Valley Planning District Commission** began to identify and conserve the natural and cultural resources of four southwestern Virginia counties and the independent city of Radford. The **New River Valley Green Infrastructure Network** began with a series of educational community meetings and has included a process to map the region's assets. With finite resources and limited state and local budgets, the Network focuses its conservation efforts on the most significant areas with the greatest positive impact. The current planning process has focused on identifying ecologically important areas by relying on the input and guidance of a diverse group of local professionals.

New River Valley Planning District Commission

Contact: Kevin Byrd

Radford, VA; 540.639.9313

kbyrd@nrvpdc.org; www.nrvpdc.org

HEALTHCARE

The **Brazos Valley Council of Governments** sought to offer low-cost healthcare benefits for uninsured small business employees by splitting the cost between the employer, the employee and TexHealth. Most regional health and social services providers work together locally to leverage whatever resources they have to help the uninsured gain access to care. However, many of the resources available to the uninsured only address certain barriers in accessing care and provide relief for only a part of the access issue. In 2007, the United Way of the Brazos Valley assembled the Health and Safety Matters Committee to discuss, among other concerns, addressing the needs of the uninsured. The group reviewed best practices from across the nation, embracing the idea of developing a multi-share healthcare coverage program in the Brazos Valley, and appointed a task force to determine whether the implementation of such a program would be supported in the Brazos Valley region. The group's efforts have culminated in the establishment of the **TexHealth Brazos Valley Multi-Share Plan**, a community initiative led by the Brazos Valley Council of Governments. After successfully completing pre-implementation activities, BVCOG launched the program in October 2010.

Brazos Valley Council of Governments

Contact: Anthony Moore

Bryan, TX; 979.595.2800

amoore@bvcog.org; www.bvcog.org

Rural Kemper County in eastern Mississippi had not had a local hospital since the 1970s, forcing residents to travel elsewhere to seek primary and emergency medical care. The **East Central Planning and Development District** worked with the county, the Economic Development Authority and citizens on the **Healthcare for Rural Areas**



ECPDD - Healthcare for Rural Areas

HEALTHCARE

project to bring a community hospital to Kemper County. ECPDD assisted with approval of a certificate of need from state and federal officials, and recruited Rush Health Systems to serve as the medical provider. As a result of their efforts, the 45,000 square foot John C. Stennis Memorial Hospital opened in the town of DeKalb in March 2011. The facility offers inpatient and outpatient care, rehabilitation, 24/7 emergency care and a helicopter landing pad where patients needing additional care can be quickly transported to hospitals in Jackson or surrounding areas.

East Central Planning and Development District

Contact: Jenifer Buford
Newton, MS; 601.683.2007
jbuford@ecpdd.org

HOUSING

The Inn – Neighborhood Stabilization Project aimed to re-purpose a foreclosed motel in Russell Springs, Kentucky into transitional, post-disaster and temporary housing and demolish adjacent dilapidated properties for redevelopment into detached single-family homes. **Lake Cumberland Area Development District** led the Russell County Fiscal Court, the local Emergency Shelter Board and Habitat for Humanity in the project. The group secured funding to purchase the vacant motel and two dilapidated single-family residential properties to provide housing for families and individuals in crisis. The single-family properties were demolished and sites prepared for construction of Habitat for Humanity houses, creating permanent homes for two families and significant neighborhood improvement. The bank-foreclosed motel was renovated into seven apartments available for rent as transitional housing, a manager's apartment and three transient rooms for short term, emergency use. Residents of this facility, named "The Inn," need assistance for a limited period of time. In order to qualify as tenants, residents must be actively working toward solutions to the problems which put them in crisis, and work with Emergency Shelter Board members and managers at "The Inn" to manage their finances. This newly renovated facility, along with the clearance of two dilapidated structures in the neighborhood, has contributed to the neighborhood's revitalization in addition to meeting emergency shelter needs.

Lake Cumberland Area Development District

Russell Springs, KY; 270.866.4200
Contact: Donna Diaz
donnad@lcadd.org; www.lcadd.org

The South Carolina Department of Commerce recently developed the framework for a pilot workforce housing program to create affordable rental housing for teachers in rural communities. The program was initiated because rural school districts across the state were losing teachers to communities with more affordable housing. The **Upper Savannah Council of Governments** applied to participate in the first round of these projects in the state on behalf of the Town of Saluda, where teachers often left the district due to a lack of local affordable housing options. The owner of a downtown building agreed to pursue a matching bank loan to renovate a vacant floor into apartments, creating the **Saluda Teacher Apartments Project**. The Saluda School District entered into an agreement with the owner to market the units to their eligible teachers. The Town of Saluda received a \$148,500 Community Development

HOUSING

Block Grant in December 2008 that was the catalyst for the building's renovation, supplemented by the owner's \$150,000 investment and the Town's \$13,864 contribution. Today, five of the six one-bedroom apartments are occupied by Saluda District 1 teachers who are able to live near their schools instead of commuting every day from adjoining cities, allowing them to be more involved with their students and the community. The project also contributed to the Town's effort to revitalize its downtown, added new residents and increased the local tax base.



Upper Savannah COG - Saluda Teacher Apts

Upper Savannah Council of Governments

Contact: Ruth LaForge

Greenwood, SC; 864.941.8052

rlaforge@uppersavannah.com; www.uppersavannah.com

The purpose of the **Foreclosure Prevention-Neighborhood Stabilization Project** is to reduce the number of residential foreclosures occurring in a region struggling with long-term high unemployment. The **Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG)**, working with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the North Carolina Commissioner of Banks and the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, began providing foreclosure prevention counseling and financial assistance for eligible homeowners in 2007. The loss of furniture, textile and fiber optic cable jobs left the Western Piedmont region with one of the highest unemployment rates in North Carolina. As these unemployed workers look for job opportunities or return to community colleges to learn new skills, their hopes of continuing homeownership diminish. WPCOG added four new staff members to their housing counseling program for first-time homebuyers in response to these conditions; these staff members assist residents with foreclosure prevention loan modifications. When North Carolina was selected to receive \$251 million to prevent home foreclosures through the U.S. Treasury's Hardest Hit Fund in 2010, WPCOG was selected to partner with the NCHFA to implement this new program. Over 600 homeowners received counseling assistance in 2010, and in the first four months of 2011, a total of \$619,000 in mortgage assistance payments was distributed to 37 homeowners.

Western Piedmont Council of Governments

Contact: Sherry Long

Hickory, NC; 828.485.4251

Sherry.Long@wpcog.org; www.wpcog.org

INDUSTRY CLUSTER SUPPORT

The **Innovation Crescent** is a public-private partnership intended to retain and expand life science industries in a corridor stretching from the Atlanta metropolitan area to Athens, Georgia. Organized by the **Atlanta Regional Commission** and developed in partnership with the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, the Innovation Crescent brings together regional

INDUSTRY CLUSTER SUPPORT

commissions, economic development organizations, and government and educational partners to nurture the 13-county area as a hub for the life science industry, especially in specific areas, such as the development and commercialization of next-generation medical devices. Since 2007, more than 45,000 individuals in the Innovation Crescent have earned certificates through the Work Ready training program and five counties have earned community certification. To ensure a workforce pipeline, Atlanta Regional Commission, Georgia Bio and secondary educators developed a curriculum for high schools and bioscience tasks for middle schools. Currently, more than 1,100 students in 23 high schools are enrolled in the program. Post-secondary institutions are involved in outreach and recruitment efforts for both colleges and a high school outreach program composed of summer teacher academies, equipment loans and teacher support throughout the region.

Atlanta Regional Commission

Contact: Mary Margaret Garrett

Atlanta, GA; 404.463.3100

mgarrett@atlantaregional.com; www.atlantaregional.com



Atlanta RC - Innovation Crescent



Atlanta RC - Innovation Crescent

The **Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA)**, a regional public/private economic development partnership, led efforts to create an urban/rural diversification strategy in response to the loss of 600 military and civilian jobs from the region. GFDA formed a coalition with rural and tribal economic development partners, Sweetgrass Development (a five-county economic development district) and Cascade County to collaboratively identify competitive market opportunities in agricultural processing, energy development and entrepreneurship. The **Great Falls Regional Diversification Project** also included an assessment of the regional workforce and development of strategies to support entrepreneurship in Great Falls. The project used these findings to target industry cluster efforts in agri-processing and energy development, focused first on electric transmission capacity and alternative energy generation. New entrepreneurial efforts including the creation of the Great Falls Angel Network, new gap financing loan funds and refocusing small business technical assistance. In three years, these efforts have attracted over \$1.5 billion in renewable energy investment, two agri-processing expansions and one new processing plant and over a dozen entrepreneurial start-ups.

Great Falls Development Authority

Contact: Brett Doney

Great Falls, MT; 406.771.9020

bdoney@greatfallsdevelopment.org; www.gfdevelopment.org

INDUSTRY CLUSTER SUPPORT

Community leaders in north central Kansas have long recognized that the ability to visualize patterns of local and regional development would enable them to better understand and serve the needs of the business sectors involved. This objective was formally achieved with the **Regional Industry Cluster Analysis and Innovation Networking**, sponsored by the **Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations**. The project produced a dynamic mapping technique founded on Google Earth technology to illustrate both the location and type of regional assets across identified jurisdictions. The project drew a distinction between traded (external market) and non-traded (internal market) clusters in its output since conventional traded clusters are generally weak or absent at the rural county level even though business clustering does occur. In drawing that distinction, the project showed that traded clusters do exist in rural places, but as components of supply chains functioning in “virtual” regions or networks encompassing disconnected geographies. The analysis further defined and illustrated regional communities through the examination of daily commute patterns and revealed social networks through interviews with area economic development, bank and business leaders. Such information, when coupled with cluster mapping, enables regional developers to transcend the arbitrary nature of administrative bounds and to more easily justify resource investment in projects offering the greatest regional impact.

Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations

Contact: John Cyr

Beloit, KS; 785.738.2218

jcyr@nckcn.com; www.ncrpc.org

In 2005, the **Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD)** identified arts as one of the top five economic clusters within the Columbia River Gorge region. With its history of prioritizing cluster development, MCEDD became an important part of the process that created the **Columbia Gorge Arts and Culture Alliance (CGACA)**, a regional collaboration of cultural and economic development interests to brand the Gorge as an arts and culture destination and strengthen like-minded organizations. MCEDD has provided grant writing, project development and fiscal management services to support CGACA. The result of these efforts is a strong coalition of arts and culture organizations across five counties and two states. Products to date have included long-lasting branding materials and the designation of May as Arts and Culture Month in the Gorge by the governors of Oregon and Washington. Tourists and Gorge residents alike have benefited from learning about local cultural opportunities. More importantly, arts and culture organizations have an ongoing mechanism to provide mutual support and sharing of ideas and to collaboratively promote the region’s cultural assets.

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

Contact: Amanda Hoey

The Dalles, OR; 541.296.2266

amanda@mcedd.org; www.mcedd.org

INFRASTRUCTURE

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) 2005 had a significant impact on Fort Knox and the **Lincoln Trail Area Development District (LTADD)** region, bringing the net gain of 4,600 personnel, including contractors and civilians, more than \$236 million in payroll and over \$600 million in planned, new construction on Fort Knox. Further, more than 12,000 new residents

INFRASTRUCTURE

including roughly 1,800 new school children had a significant ripple effect on the region's economy. The local elected leadership in the region, using the governing and operational framework of the LTADD, developed **Fort Knox Realignment Infrastructure/Transportation Support** through the One Knox Policy Council (OKPC). The OKPC is a separate policy entity of the LTADD whose mission is to deal exclusively with changes at Fort Knox. The OKPC operates through local dollars, support from the LTADD and much-needed funding from the Office of Economic Adjustment (Department of Defense). In addition, the LTADD Water Management Planning Council and the in-house metropolitan planning organization supported the Governor's Base Realignment and Continuation Task Force and the Kentucky General Assembly by prioritizing transportation and infrastructure development projects for \$250 million in economic development bond funds to be used in the impact region.

Lincoln Trail Area Development District

Contact: Wendell Lawrence

Elizabethtown, KY; 270.769.2393

wendell@ltadd.org; www.ltadd.org

Identifying lack of broadband access as an economic development hindrance, **Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission, Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District, and Ohio Mideastern Governments Association** worked with regional partners to support Horizon Telecom, Inc. in its efforts to construct a state-of-the-art fiber optic network in 34 counties. The **Connecting Appalachia Middle-Mile Fiber Optic Network** project involved the expansion of the existing fiber optic network (connecting health care facilities across 13 southern Ohio over a network of over 1,100 miles) another 1,960 miles over 21 more counties. Horizon was awarded \$66 million for Connecting Appalachia through the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) and provided matching funds of \$29 million for a total project of \$95 million. Connecting Appalachia began construction in May 2011 and will serve approximately 600 regional community anchor institutions, including 212 health care facilities, 25 community colleges, 15 universities, 231 K-12 schools, 34 county public safety answering points, 32 state telecommunications towers and 34 industrial parks.

Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission

Contact: John Hemmings

Waverly, OH; 740.947.2853

jhemmings@ovrdc.org; www.ovrdc.org

Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District

Contact: Misty Casto

Reno, OH; 740.374.9436

mcasto@buckeyehills.org; www.buckeyehills.org

Ohio Mideastern Governments Association

Contact: Greg DiDonato

Cambridge, OH; 740.439.4471

director@omegadistrict.org; www.omegadistrict.org

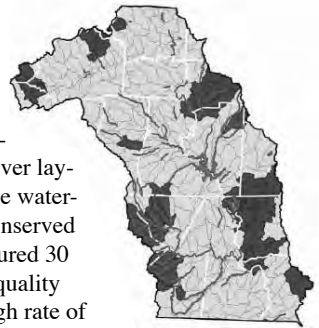
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Many rural communities in the **First Tennessee Development District (FTDD)** have significant stormwater management issues that are often overlooked but have important environmental and economic consequences. The purpose of this project, **Identifying Green Stormwater Infrastructure Needs in Rural Communities**, was to identify stormwater management issues in and develop an implementation plan for rural communities in the region. FTDD staff met with each rural city and county in the district to develop a list of potential problem sites for the project. Site visits were also made to each of the potential sites. FTDD hired an environmental consultant with expertise in stormwater management emphasizing “green” technology to refine the list and develop a Stormwater Management Implementation Plan with cost estimates. Sixty-two sites were identified as problem areas throughout the district. This is the first effort in the region to survey problem stormwater management areas in rural communities. The Implementation Plan includes specific Best Management Practices (BMPs) for each site with an emphasis on “green” technology.

First Tennessee Development District

Contact: Christopher Craig
Johnson City, TN; 423.928.0224
ccraig@ftdd.org; www.ftdd.org

The **Piedmont Triad Council of Governments** conducted the **Yadkin-Pee Dee River Basin Priority Watershed Assessment** in order to rank the 232 12-digit Hydrologic Unit Codes within the North Carolina portion of the Yadkin River Basin both for their conservation potential and their stress vulnerability. GIS technology was used to rasterize land use and land cover layers, as well as other relevant data, to predict stressful or pristine watershed conditions. The top 10 percent most-stressed and best-conserved watersheds within the river basin identified by this model captured 30 percent of the impaired watersheds and 47 percent of all high quality watersheds within the river basin. This novel method has a high rate of success in identifying watersheds for protection and restoration efforts. The Yadkin-Pee Dee River Basin Priority Watersheds Atlas is intended to give stakeholders guidance in prioritizing water quality issues and in leveraging resources and funding to support watershed planning and implementation efforts.



*Piedmont Triad COG -
Yadkin Pee Dee River*

Piedmont Triad Council of Governments

Contact: Malinda Ford
Greensboro, NC; 336.294.4950
mford@ptcog.org; www.ptcog.org

REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Region Five Development Commission implements a **Coordinated Government Service Delivery** approach to stabilize government services despite extreme budget constraints. Region Five Development Commission coordinated quarterly county administrator meetings that led to joint purchasing, joint training of county staff and later led to delivery of income maintenance services and trail development across county lines. They also convened cities within each county at “City Visits” to identify means to continue services. City Visits meetings incor-

REGIONAL COLLABORATION

porated “The Art of Hosting” community development techniques and addressed joint tourism marketing and multi-city volunteer recruitment. In addition, mutual aid agreements have been signed between small cities for fire, police, public works and city staff, and equipment lists are currently being prepared and shared among the cities with the intent to provide neighboring assistance to those communities hit hard by storms.

Region Five Development Commission

Contact: Cheryal Lee Hills

Staples, MN; 218.894.3233

chills@regionfive.org; www.regionfive.org

In western North Carolina, instead of selling locally, some 3,000 producers transport approximately 40,000 head of cattle 100 miles to an auction market with an excess cost of \$50 per head. Knowing that finding capital to establish a local facility would save \$2 million annually, the **Southwestern Commission, Land-of-Sky Regional Council** and **WNC Communities** worked together to develop the **WNC Regional Livestock Market**. Through the leadership of WNC Communities, a 501(c)(3), funds were acquired, a facility built and an operator contracted to operate the market for the benefit of family farmers and producers. In March 2011, a \$3.1 million, 44,500 square foot state-of-the-art facility opened with huge early success: more than 4,000 head of livestock sold for \$4 million in just eight weeks. This effort will result in an additional 15 full-time jobs at the market and 125 full-time equivalents in farm employment, and an education and training opportunity for farmers to increase production quality by implementing the NC State Beef Quality Assurance program to add value.

Southwestern Commission

Contact: Bill Gibson

Sylvia, NC; 828.586.1962

bill@regiona.org; www.regiona.org

Land-of-Sky Regional Council

Contact: Joe McKinney

Asheville, NC; 828.251.6622

jmckinney@landofsky.org; www.landofsky.org

WNC Communities

Contact: L. T. Ward

Asheville, NC; 828.252.4783

ltward@wnccommunities.org; www.wnccommunities.org

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The **Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG)** conducted an **Assessment of Growth and Development in the Capital Region**. The project entailed extensive data gathering involving regional partners and local governments concerning planned and approved developments and water data for actual contracted supplies and consumption. With this information, CAPCOG prepared GIS maps to show growth patterns, including current and future roads, water, and development. Mapping projected development showing where roads and water may or may not be available was powerful and lead to insightful analysis of the growth being experienced in this urban/suburban/rural region. CAPCOG prepared an

STRATEGIC PLANNING

assessment which lead to policy recommendations adopted by the Board. Work was done by CAPCOG staff and a committee appointed by the Board of primarily elected officials and two city managers.

Capital Area Council of Governments

Contact: Betty Voights

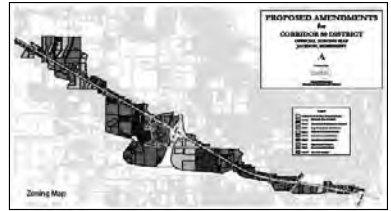
Austin, TX; 512.916.6008

bvoights@capcog.org; www.capcog.org

The **Central Mississippi Planning and Development District** developed the **Economic Development Strategy for the Highway 80**



Corridor to serve as a roadmap and guide for the City of Jackson to revitalize the struggling corridor. The strategy was developed in four volumes: Inventory; Land Use, Concept and Economic Development Plans; Thoroughfares Plan; and Marketing Plan. All recommendations were based on demographics, employment data, workforce development, established industries, and input from the community. The Inventory volume includes existing land use, businesses, and infrastructure in the corridor. The Land Use, Concept, and Economic Development Plan volume defines the vision for the corridor. Land use and zoning ordinance amendments featuring mixed-use developments were recommended, along with concept plans for sites along the corridor and financing strategies and recommendations. The plan also identified target business types to be attracted to the corridor and potential developers. Newsletters, a website, brochures, and a video presentation, among other marketing mediums, were provided to the City.



Central Mississippi PDD - Highway 80

Central Mississippi Planning and Development District

Contact: Gray Ouzts

Jackson, MS; 601.981.1511

gouzts@cmpdd.org; www.cmpdd.org

The **Mid-East Commission** convenes regional and local stakeholders to **Focus Community Assets** to address industry needs related to future growth. The organization provides assistance to the region's industries including foundational skills assessments for new hires, assessing risky behavior, analyzing skilled positions, writing job descriptions, implementing entry-level benchmarks, identifying potential workforce candidates and conducting workforce strategy sessions in order to determine skill level and performance criteria for new hires and the incumbent workforce. Mid-East Commission worked with the largest employer in Beaufort County to identify and transition more than 50 new hires using risky behavior assessment, foundational skills assessment, and job profiling. With the addition of these new services, the employer has seen a significant increase in retention and is now transitioning their incumbent workforce to utilize the foundational assessments for training and promotion. Mid-East Commission also assisted a new industry identify a skilled workforce for chemical processing jobs. This collaboration identified and transitioned 20 new hires in two months alone.

Mid-East Commission

Contact: Jennie Bowen

Washington, NC; 252.946.3116

jbowen@mideastcom.org; www.mideastcom.org

STRATEGIC PLANNING

E3 (Economy, Energy, Environment): Strengthening Manufacturing in North Carolina leverages resources from federal, state and local experts to work with manufacturers to enhance sustainability and competitiveness and spur job growth and innovation. The **Northwest Piedmont Council of Governments** assembled a team of experts to assess, compile and recommend improvements in a comprehensive strategic report including baseline data, improvement metrics addressing specific problems at hand, and costs savings for manufacturers. The program included workforce training with emphasis on empowerment, leadership skills and engagement. Energy resources were reduced, resulting in financial savings and reductions of the manufacturer's carbon footprint. Solid waste was also reduced, resulting in lower hauling costs and environmental benefits. Program sustainability is in place for ongoing outreach to manufacturers throughout the state.



NW Piedmont COG - E3

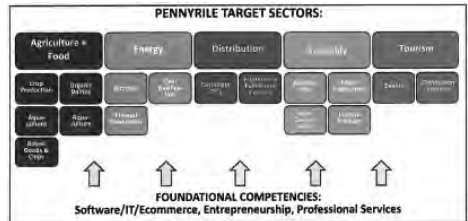
Northwest Piedmont Council of Governments

Contact: Lisa Hawk

Winston-Salem, NC; 336.624.8203

lhawk@nwpcog.org; www.northwestpeidmontworks.org

In May 2010, the **Pennyriple Area Development District**, in partnership with the West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, began a workforce and economic development strategic planning process called **Pennyriple Future**. The project team led a study of the nine-county region's economy and future potential. The findings culminated in a series of strategies aimed at creating a targeted and collaborative approach to economic growth, which may be found on the project website: www.pennyriplefuture.com. The resulting strategies call on regional leadership to heighten collaborative efforts around identified priority goals that will maximize the Pennyriple region's economic development. Also, as a result of this process, the region now has a new online tool to analyze its economy and workforce called Pennyriple Headlight. This website allows citizens, business and policy makers to create their own custom charts "on demand" for any county, industry, occupation and time period.



Pennyriple ADD - Pennyriple Futures

Pennyriple Area Development District

Contact: Jason Vincent

Hopkinsville, KY; 270.886.9484

jason.vincent@ky.gov; www.peadd.org

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Envision Utah and the **Bear River Association of Governments** developed the **Bear Lake Valley Blueprint** which captures a common dream for the future while respecting the private property rights of landowners. It enabled the region to contemplate how growth should unfold in the face of significant second home and recreation-oriented growth and modest increases in the permanent resident population. The process identified the following assets: neighborly communities, matchless recreation, agricultural heritage, unparalleled natural resources and a

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

willingness to work together to achieve a common vision. As the vision is implemented, the region could see the following outcomes in the next 50 years:

- An \$83 million reduction in local infrastructure construction and maintenance costs.
- An increase in walkable neighborhoods, with about 59 percent of new growth blending housing, services, and shopping.
- 37,000 fewer acres developed, compared with the baseline scenario.
- Reduced water demand and reduced impervious surface acreage.
- A reduction of local road construction from 225 miles to 73 miles, due to efficient growth patterns.

Bear River Association of Governments

Contact: Zac Covington

Logan, UT; 435.752.7242

zacc@brag.utah.gov; www.brag.utah.gov

The **Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy** is the first regional land use plan developed for the Merrimack Valley region in over 30 years. The strategy, which was developed by the **Merrimack Valley Planning Commission**, is a highly innovative and unique plan that identifies over 50 Concentrated Development Centers which are areas of existing concentrated development or areas suitable for future high density development. These areas are appropriately zoned as commercial, industrial or mixed-use and have existing infrastructure in place. The



Merrimack Valley PC - Growth Strategy



Merrimack Valley PC - Growth Strategy

strategy also suggests areas that should not be developed in order to preserve the character of the region and to protect environmental resources. It evaluates the suitability of the regional transportation network to serve the different land use patterns and recommends smart mobility improvements that will best serve present and future generations.

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

Contact: Michael Parquette

Haverhill, MA; 978.374.0519

MParquette@mvp.org; www.mvpc.org

The **Sacramento Area Council of Governments** has gone beyond its traditional transportation planning role to bring together a wide range of public and private stakeholders in the region to collaboratively develop economic strategies, white papers, plans and technical tools that will help agricultural producers, elected officials and others make decisions that grow the economy and protect the environmental assets in rural communities. The **Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS)** focuses on five areas: land use and conservation, the infrastructure

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

of agriculture, economic opportunities, forest management and regulations. To date, RUCS has yielded a crop map that gives parcel-level information about what is grown in the region. The team has also collected economic data on agricultural production that is used in land use modeling software to evaluate the impacts of urban and rural land use changes.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments

Contact: David Shabazian

Sacramento, CA; 916.321.9000

dshabazian@sacog.org; www.sacog.org

TECHNOLOGY

The **Bluegrass Area Development District** created a program utilizing ESRI's ArcMap platform to create a simplified method for reapportionment of magistrate districts, allowing committees to realign districts more efficiently and accurately. The **2011 Magistrate District Reapportionment** software allows for analysis of components within the district such as census blocks, individual residences, and infrastructure. This method of analysis enables the reapportionment committee to focus on results that better exemplify the characteristics of the individual communities instead of relying solely on numerical data. The nature of the results lends it to be readily accessible, thus providing a level of transparency to the citizens of the county.

Bluegrass Area Development District

Contact: Lenny Stoltz II

Lexington, KY; 859.269.8021

lstoltz@bgadd.org; www.bgadd.org

Recognizing the need to provide more uniform and increased levels of GIS-based technical service to local governments, Georgia's 12 regional commissions (RCs), entered into a **Regional Enterprise License Agreement (ELA)** with Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) for access to GIS software. Acting on behalf of its member RCs, the **Georgia Association of Regional Commissions** served as the conduit for the establishment and maintenance of a three-year regional GIS software ELA, the first of its kind in the U.S. Immediate benefits of the regional ELA include unlimited licensing by each RC to the full suite of ESRI's ArcGIS line of software and extensions, access to yearly ESRI certified instructor trainings, an allotment of online virtual campus training credits and complimentary tickets to the annual ESRI international conference. The state's 12 RCs are now better poised to deliver increased levels of GIS services to their respective regions and member local governments. In addition, the regional ESRI GIS software ELA promotes best practices in a very technical field by ensuring access to ongoing training and use of the latest and most current software versions.

Georgia Association of Regional Commissions

Contact: Brent Lanford

Macon, GA; 478.751.6160

blanford@mg-rc.org; http://garc.ga.gov

The **Kentucky Council of Area Development Districts** organized the cooperative efforts of water and wastewater treatment systems and local, regional and state agencies to develop the **Water Resource Information System (WRIS)** portal. It is used by these entities and provides much of the information needed for all aspects of water resource planning. The WRIS

TECHNOLOGY

includes GIS-based information on water resources, drinking water systems, wastewater systems, project development, emergency response, regulations and planning. It is composed of strategic plans, water resource maps and publications, systems management information, reporting and regulatory requirements, guidance and training documents, procedural guidance and forms for project implementation and funding, as well as internet links to support services. Interactive maps in the system support planning and regionalization efforts and facilitate drought monitoring and response and rapid response to contamination emergencies. The portal contains data for water and wastewater treatment facilities, water lines, water sources, storage facilities, sewer lines and a database of non-spatial systems information. The portal provides the fundamental data needed for statewide planning and emergency response activities. Using the GIS infrastructure data in computer models allows for cost-effective analysis of engineering alternatives, and facilitates the efficiencies needed to meet the needs of Kentucky's infrastructure development.

Kentucky Council of Area Development Districts

Contact: Donna Diaz

Frankfort, KY; 502.875.2515

donnad@kcadd.org; www.kcadd.org

The **Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)** developed the **Franklin County Location Based Response System (LBRS)** to maintain countywide digital centerline and address files of current road and address data for emergency response services, and for other road maintenance programs. The LBRS is a digital file that local communities edit through shared access. Partners funding the project included the transit authority, County 911, Ohio Public Safety, Ohio DOT, and MORPC. Before the LBRS, individual agencies and jurisdictions maintained their own files and manually submitted their data to county offices for integration into a countywide file. The files were released quarterly and current information was not available on-demand. Through the shared LBRS, many communities can add their data to a centralized file affording complete and current countywide data available quickly to local agencies—especially safety service agencies—for importing into their dispatching systems. This is critical for safety services as many safety departments have mutual aid agreements and need information across jurisdictional boundaries.

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Contact: Chester Jourdan, Jr.

Columbus, OH; 614.233.4101

cjourdan@morpc.org; www.morpc.org

The **Planning and Development District III** developed a user-friendly and cost-effective web mapping site that will incorporate GIS parcels in a database for counties, cities and the general public. The **District III Regional Web Service** combines satellite imagery and property information with customer service. Web-based technology allows staff to be more efficient by putting information on the web that is free to the public and allows them to do research such as property



PDD III - Regional Web Service

TECHNOLOGY

taxes, valuation, and zoning of a particular parcel. The implementation of a web-based service means that counter service will decrease and allow staff to focus on other tasks and be more productive. The District III Regional Web Service proved invaluable during recent Missouri River flooding. District III became a vital agency and provided GIS support for Yankton County Emergency Operations, the U.S. Army and the Dakota Dunes Emergency Task Force. The District III Regional Web Service was used to create detail maps for housing areas, and the site had over 60,000 hits in just a few days.

Planning and Development District III

Contact: Harry Redman

Yankton, SD; 605.665.4408

harryr@districtiii.org; www.districtiii.org

InfoMentum Online: Innovations in Online Mapping for Regional Economic Development empowers each Upstate South Carolina county to deliver data and visualize community resources for planning and economic development on many scales. This web mapping application combines satellite imagery, property information, local demographic data and a unique ability to manipulate maps according to a visitor's unique needs. **South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments** adapted its award winning regional "Property Navigator" to integrate state-of-the-art mapping and data technology into individual websites for all 10 counties of the Upstate region if they choose to participate. Each site focuses on the economic development assets of the county and reflects the unique graphic design of the host site. Innovative elements include drive-time analysis and expanded demographic reports. InfoMentum Online is accessible through links from six county economic development websites. An example is located at www.advance2anderson.com, under the "Certified Sites" map icon.

South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments

Contact: Carol Andersen

Greenville, SC; 864.242.9733

andersen@scacog.org; www.scacog.org

Georgia's Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation (BWEF) is responsible for monitoring and conduct trapping in more than 93 counties of cotton crops to ensure that an outbreak of boll weevils does not happen. **Southern Georgia Regional Commission** developed editing-enabled **Web Mapping Services to Support Georgia's Boll Weevil Eradication** that allows BWEF agents, with just an internet browser, to record field locations and acreages as the planting season kicks off. Field agents place boll weevil traps in fields and record their latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates with field devices. As the season progresses, these field devices are used to record trapping results, which are published to the BWEF web mapping application. Every three weeks, the web-based map data is refreshed until the cotton season concludes. The benefits of this project include immediate access to crop and trap data across GA by all BWEF agents, the creation of historic trap and crop data in a spatial context, and more efficient routing of field agents to monitoring locations. Furthermore, in the event of an outbreak, spatial data will be immediately available to BWEF so mitigation efforts can begin immediately to prevent crop damage and economic impacts.

Southern Georgia Regional Commission

Contact: Chris Strom

Valdosta, GA; 229.333.5277

cstrom@sgrc.us; www.sgrc.us

TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE

The Chestatee River Diving Bell is one of the most significant maritime archaeological finds of the 21st century, and is considered an important “missing link” between 19th and 21st century diving and underwater exploration technologies. The **Georgia Mountains Regional Commission’s Chestatee River Diving Bell Stabilization and Restoration Project** resulted in the establishment of Georgia’s first large-scale maritime conservation and research center. Since its re-introduction to the outside world, the Diving Bell has received widespread acclaim and has attracted the attention of researchers, scientists, and historians from around the world, including the National Geographic Society. It will be made available for further scientific research once it has been placed on display in downtown Dahlonega, Georgia’s Hancock Park. The Diving Bell is an educational learning tool that has the potential to bolster regional tourism and recreation strategies.



Georgia Mountains RC - Chestatee River Diving Bell

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
Contact: Chip Wright
Gainesville, GA; 770.538.2626
cwright@gmrc.ga.gov; www.gmrc.ga.gov

The Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm sought to increase tourism opportunities and foster economic development at one of the state’s more significant historic farms. **Northeast Georgia Regional Commission** staff worked to identify potential solutions to accommodate greater visitation with low operation and maintenance costs. The result was a self-guided **Shields-Ethridge Heritage Farm Interpretative Program** using a range of innovative, interpretative tools to attract and benefit national and international visitors. Through this project, the farm expects to draw in excess of 17,000 visitors to the site each year and countless others who will tour online.

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission
Contact: Jim Dove
Athens, GA; 706.369.5650
jdove@negrc.org; www.negrc.org

Coordinated by the **Northeast Michigan Council of Governments**, the **US 23 Heritage Route** program is a grassroots collaborative effort between multiple units of government, state and federal agencies, interested groups, local agencies and private business to promote the 200-mile six-county corridor along coastal Lake Huron as a regional tourism destination. NEMCOG works with six county teams and a Management Council to move projects forward along the route. The program has created six unified brochures highlighting recreational attractions along the route, a trademark US 23 logo, and a regional tourism website (www.us23heritageroute.org) which promotes over 1,000 attractions along the 200-mile corridor and gives users the ability to create their own itinerary and map based on their own interest areas or geographic choices. The highly successful website is a unique and innovative method of presenting information for the tourist in a comprehensive, user-friendly and detailed



TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE

manner. The US 23 program is currently working on “Telling the Stories of the Sunrise Coast” by implementing an interpretive program using the website, print media, logo signage and mobile devices to present written stories and video.

Northeast Michigan Council of Governments

Contact: Denise Cline

Gaylord, MI; 989.705.3730

dmcline@nemcog.org; www.nemcog.org

The **South Delta Planning and Development District** provided grant writing, administration and funding coordination assistance for the **B. B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center**.

The museum honors a native son and capitalizes on the “blues” as a tourist attraction for the Delta. Tourist traffic through the City of Indianola and the region has increased significantly since the opening of the B. B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center, and new restaurants, bed and breakfasts and gift shops have opened and are thriving. Craftsmen and artists of the area are invited to sell their wares at the Saturday Market, an open air market held on the museum grounds. The museum also holds special events almost weekly that help to draw more people to the museum. The state-of-the-art facility has become a focal point for the City of Indianola, the Delta and by way of the Mississippi Blues Trail, the entire State of Mississippi. The B. B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center is open for business seven days a week, and employs 15 people.

South Delta Planning and Development District

Contact: Allyson Denson

Greenville, MS; 662.378.3831

adenson@sdpdd.com; www.southdeltapdd.com

Ten years in the making, the **Ohr-O’Keefe Museum of Art - Gallery of African-American Art** celebrates the innovative, independent and creative spirit of its namesake Mississippi master potter, George Ohr. In 1999, organizers convinced world-renowned architect Frank Gehry to design the museum. Construction began in 2004 and was 50 percent complete when it was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. The future of the museum was at stake; however, the community and the leadership understood that

it would serve as a cornerstone to revitalize East Biloxi, restore tourism to the Gulf Coast and bring hope to a region that so desperately needed it. The museum, which opened in November 2010, represents the rebirth of the tourism industry and is drawing visitors from near and far.

Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District

Contact: Allison Beasley

Gulfport, MS; 228.868.2311

abeasley@smpdd.com; www.smpdd.com



NE Michigan COG - Heritage Route



S. Mississippi PDD - Ohr O'Keefe Museum

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments developed the **Summer Cruising: Teacher Enrichment Program** in order to link educators and economic developers. The two- to three-day program gives core and curriculum teachers industry tours to local businesses to get a firsthand look at well-paying jobs available in the region. Teachers then incorporate what they have learned at the different sites into their lesson plans. Approximately 70 teachers in five counties participated in the three-day program. Evaluations reveal that teachers were unaware of the modernization of manufacturing, and the broad scope of industries in the region.

Kerr-Tarr Regional Council of Governments
Contact: Vincent Gilreath
Henderson, NC; 252.436.2040
vgilreath@kerrtarcog.org; www.kerrtarcog.org

Based on the previous success of the Avondale Transition Center, which was opened to assist a 2,000-employee textile closure, the **Lower Savannah Council of Governments** replicated the services and partners in both Barnwell and Aiken Counties to develop **Workforce Transition Centers** to accommodate the large number of dislocated workers in those areas (1,700 and 1,400 respectively). The Barnwell Transition Center is serving individuals from three different manufacturing plants that all closed within a three month period in the rural county of Barnwell, but also impacts the rural counties of Bamberg and Allendale. The Aiken SRNS Transition Center, in partnership with Savannah River Nuclear Solutions and U.S. Department of Energy, is geared to serve engineers and others losing jobs in the nuclear energy industry.



Lower Savannah COG - Workforce Transition Centers

Lower Savannah Council of Governments
Contact: Sam Jordan
Aiken, SC; 803.649.7981
sjordan@lscog.org; www.lscog.org

The **Pennyriple Area Development District** and **West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board** assisted the City of Cadiz and Trigg County by responding rapidly to the devastating closure of Johnson Controls, its largest employer. Over 500 individuals were immediately affected. The WKWIB quickly rented a former restaurant and set up shop with various partners including the Hopkinsville Community College and the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The **Cadiz-Trigg County Career Solutions Center** provides a casual atmosphere for dislocated workers to receive all the services provided through the WKWIB and partner agencies including skill upgrading, retraining and assistance.

Pennyriple Area Development District
Contact: Chris Sutton
Hopkinsville, KY; 270.886.9484
chris.sutton@ky.gov; www.peadd.org

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Region 9 Economic Development District of Southwest Colorado designed the **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)** Internship Program to address the lack of STEM career preparedness. The unique program encourages businesses to work with students by providing a stipend to them for participating, and is community, not school based, with the businesses taking the lead in outreaching and training youth. The program fills the need for effective workforce development in the region, a two-fold endeavor: students to engage in hands-on training that teaches STEM applications in functioning, successful companies in their community, and employers contribute to meaningful workforce development and preparation by having the opportunity to connect with and mentor these students directly. Since the program's inception in January 2011, 11 students have been placed in STEM-related jobs throughout Southwest Colorado's rural region.



Region 9 EDD - STEM

Region 9 Economic Development District of Southwest Colorado

Contact: Ed Morlan

Durango, CO; 970.247.9621

ed@scan.org; www.scan.org

In 2010, the Southwest Colorado's Workforce Advisory Board recognized that their Board structure and duties did not promote networking and information sharing. The **Region 9 Economic Development District of Southwest Colorado** cultivated an informal independent network separate from the state system. This **Workforce Development Network (WDN)** is staffed by volunteers from the Workforce Center, Region 9 EDD, Chambers of Commerce and others with direction from the Workforce Advisory Board. Meetings are held following Board meetings, and include networking opportunities and presentations. Since the WDN's inception, presentations have included: listening to business survey results, federal bonding and tax credits, energy audits and others. The informality and autonomy of this network allows interested parties to move forward in a responsive, flexible manner to fill region-wide needs. The WDN has successfully increased the value and relevance of workforce meetings, improved the efforts and branding of the Workforce Center, engaged employers to identify training and workforce needs and increased collaborations.



Region 9 EDD - Workforce Network

Region 9 Economic Development District of Southwest Colorado

Contact: Ed Morlan

Durango, CO; 970.247.9621

ed@scan.org; www.scan.org

South Delta Planning and Development District (SDPDD) in collaboration with Mississippi Delta Community College, area employers and the Delta Workforce Investment Area (DWIA), managed by SDPDD, funded the **Electrical Lineman Training Program** in the Mississippi Delta. This program provided job skills training and career tract training for unemployed and underemployed adults and dislocated workers in the DWIA. Through this electrical lineman training program, SDPDD addressed issues of worker shortages in the energy sector, unemployment and underemployment while providing a trained workforce to fill jobs being vacated

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

by an aging workforce. Two 16-week classes were held this year. Ten WIA eligible participants completed each class. All 10 of the first class had jobs in the energy field within one month of graduation. Class two graduated recently and five of the 10 already have jobs to date. All training was provided at no cost to participants.

South Delta Planning and Development District

Contact: Mitzi Woods

Greenville, MS; 662.335.6889

mwoods@sdpdd.com; www.southdeltapdd.com

The **Southwest Tennessee Development District** developed the **REDI Digital Factory** to focus on the online economy and entrepreneurship as a solution for developing a 21st century economy approach to rural economic development. The Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) is a collaboration of 12 rural counties in West Tennessee whose goal is to create jobs, improve the educational attainment levels and improve the quality of life for our citizens. The Digital Factory features custom training developed specifically for the online job market.

The result is an industry-accepted, certificate-based program which leads to job creation. The center provides a place where displaced or unemployed workers can come, complete the short training program and get a job in this new online industry, all within a one-month time frame. The program is easy to implement, requiring only a building; REDI provides equipment and furnishings. The Digital Factory director recruits participants, conducts training and matches them with jobs. The goal of the center is to create 50 to 60 jobs in the first year with the potential for more in subsequent years.

Southwest Tennessee Development District

Contact: Lisa Hankins

Jackson, TN; 731.668.6450

lhankins@swtdd.org; www.swtdd.org



SW Tennessee DD - Digital Factory

2011 NADO Innovation Award

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