



ARTS Newsletter

May 2009

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This newsletter is part of an ongoing effort of the Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) to share information about transportation issues and activities with the citizens of the metropolitan area.

Lower Savannah Council of Governments Staff Accepts Award from Secretary of Transportation

The staff of the Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG) travelled to Washington, D.C. this past March to accept an award from Ray LaHood, Secretary of Transportation. The LSCOG was nominated by James R. Griffith, Executive Director of the Edgefield County Senior Citizens Council and chosen from a nationwide pool of nominees to receive the **2008 United We Ride Leadership Award**. The award was given through the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination, which functions through a cooperative agreement between the Community Transportation Association of America and the Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation.

The **United We Ride** initiative was created to achieve the goals of providing more rides for the same or fewer assets, streamlining access to transportation resources, and improving customer service. The LSCOG achieved these goals through their Allendale Scooter and Bamberg County Handy Ride projects, by the design and implementation of a model regional transportation coordination and mobility center, and by years of work with local transportation providers and the employment of a mobility manager in their center. During the same award ceremony, the LSCOG was also recognized as a **Mobility Services for All American Round Two Recipient**.



In his nomination letter, Mr. Griffith wrote that “the LSCOG has worked with a large group of local stakeholders, including transportation providers, human service agencies, consumers, and local elected officials and other community representatives. We believe that they are an excellent example of high quality planning and implementation of coordination.”

Other recipients of the **United We Ride** award included the Maricopa Association of Governments, Middlesex County Transportation, Mountain Empire Older Citizens Transportation, and the Texas Department of Transportation. The Camden County Workforce Investment Board and the Paducah Area Transit System were also recognized as **Mobility Services for All Americans Round Two** recipients.

FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS:

GDOT Area Office—Augusta
(706) 855-3466

GDOT District 2 —Tennille
(478)-552-4601

Augusta Engineering Department (706) 796-5040

Augusta Traffic Engineering Division (706) 821-1841

Columbia County Road Construction Department
(706) 447-7600

Columbia County Traffic Engineering Department
(706) 868-4223

Augusta Public Transit
(706) 821-1721

Aiken County Transit (Best Friend Express) (803) 648-6493

Economic & Community Development (North Augusta)
(803) 441-4221

Air Quality Initiatives

The CSRA Air Quality Alliance met on Wednesday, April 1, 2009 at the Julian Smith BBQ Pit in Augusta. Over 70 Alliance members were in attendance. The Alliance includes a wide range of stakeholders from throughout the Augusta-Aiken metropolitan area. The purpose of the Alliance is to implement local and regional initiatives to improve air quality in a cooperative, proactive manner.

The meeting agenda included information on designation recommendations for ozone nonattainment affecting the Augusta-Aiken area, the potential impact of nonattainment on industry and transportation, updated air quality data and funding opportunities under the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act. For more information about the CSRA Air Quality Alliance contact Marya Moultrie at the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission. Phone (706) 821-1796 or e-mail mmoultrie@augustaga.gov

The CSRA Air Quality Alliance has developed a new website with useful and timely information related to air quality and links to other websites. Please check our website at: <http://www.csra-airquality-alliance.com/>

Related Air Quality Links:

[Clean Air Campaign](http://www.cleanaircampaign.com/) – link to <http://www.cleanaircampaign.com/>

[Georgia Environmental Protection Division \(EPD\)](http://www.gaepd.org/Documents/index_air.html) - link to http://www.gaepd.org/Documents/index_air.html

Georgia Department of Natural Resource Air Protection Branch—link to <http://www.georgiaair.org>

[South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control](http://www.scdhec.net/environment/baq/pm.aspx) –

link to <http://www.scdhec.net/environment/baq/pm.aspx>

[U. S. Environmental Protection Agency](http://www.epa.gov/air/particles/index.html) – link to <http://www.epa.gov/air/particles/index.html>

Augusta Public Transit Development Study

In October 2008, Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA) out of Columbia, South Carolina was hired to complete a Transit Development Plan. To date, surveys have been conducted within the community and on-board Augusta Public Transit buses. Public meetings have also been held to solicit community input. Additional outreach has also included broadcasts on Comcast Connect Live and the Mary Morrison Show. WSA is also working closely with Fort Gordon, neighborhood associations, the Augusta Downtown Development Association and the Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce. WSA is also helping to secure a grant that will, among other things, pay for the purchase of a hydrogen fuel bus. The Transit Development Plan is scheduled to be completed by August of 2009.

Freight Study Update

The ARTS Regional Freight Study is complete and will be published and distributed soon. The study marks the culmination of an 18-month process to profile freight movement in the region, assess freight needs and deficiencies and identify projects to improve freight movement in and through the area. The final report highlights several projects to improve the safe, efficient movement of freight, some of which are already in the ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan. The report recommends projects to improve intercity connectors between the Aiken-Augusta area and Macon, Savannah, Charleston and Greenville, enhance safety and warning devices at high-volume at-grade rail-highway crossings, enhance safety on roads that have a high number of accidents involving trucks, and to plan for increasing air cargo volumes as passenger service grows at Augusta Regional Airport.

Clean Air Campaign

The CSRA Air Quality Alliance is making strides in their partnership with The Clean Air Campaign to improve air quality throughout the area by providing tools to change commuting habits and other smog-reducing strategies.

With assistance from The Clean Air Campaign's local support team, the goal of this green initiative is to help create options for all personnel commuting in Augusta, such as vanpooling, carpooling and other alternatives to driving alone. In order to motivate more personnel to use clean commute alternatives, The Clean Air Campaign makes financial incentives available, including:

- \$3 a day to current drive-alone commuters who make the switch to a cleaner alternative
- \$40- \$60 in monthly gas cards for carpools of three or more people
- \$25 cash prizes to commuters who continue using alternatives

Since 2008, Augusta commuters have eliminated over 1,000 commute trips, kept more than 75 pounds of pollution out of the air we breathe, and saved nearly \$17,000 on commute costs. ~ *continued in next column*



continued~ Throughout the year, The Clean Air Campaign holds transportation fairs and speaking engagements in the CSRA. Registration information for people that live and/or work in Georgia is available at www.logyourcommute.com/CSRAAQA.

About The Clean Air Campaign

The Clean Air Campaign is a not-for-profit organization that works with Georgia's employers, commuters and schools to encourage actions that result in less traffic congestion and better air quality. To accomplish this goal, The Clean Air Campaign, along with its associate organizations, partners with more than 1,600 employers statewide to create custom commute options programs; and annually helps thousands of commuters find commute alternatives that work for them, providing financial incentives to get them started. The Clean Air Campaign also protects public health by distributing Smog Alerts and empowers students, parents and teachers to play a positive role in reducing traffic and cleaning the air through a multi-faceted education program reaching elementary, middle and high schools.

Each day, these programs reduce 1.2 million miles of vehicle travel and keep 600 tons of pollution out of the air we breathe.

Time to Care Fair



The Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) staff set up a booth at the downtown Augusta Time to Care Family Fair held on April, 25th, 2009 in the Augusta

Common. This provided the ARTS staff an excellent opportunity in a festive atmosphere to inform the public about planned transportation projects, and to seek public comment on amendments made to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. These amendments addressed the recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funds that have been allocated for use by Aiken County, Augusta Public Transit and Aiken County Public Transit.

In addition to public outreach on transportation projects, the staff also made available information on Air Quality Initiatives within the ARTS study area. Informative brochures were passed out on various topics such as native plants, air quality preservation, and Earth Day activities. Free items such as balloons, pencils, erasers, key chains and coloring books were also available to the public.

Aiken County News

- Aiken County is slated to get \$1,481,712 in American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funding. Half of the allocation will go toward projects for the City of North Augusta and the other half for the City of Aiken. The types of projects in North Augusta include resurfacing and drainage projects along various surface streets. The projects in Aiken include improvements along Whiskey Road from Ola Hitt Road to Talatha Church Road which will be performed in five phases. Final approval of the projects will probably go to the SCDOT Commission some time in May.
- Aiken County ARTS staff recently attended a CSRA Planners Group meeting held in Augusta, which focused on flood plain management; served on the City of Aiken's selection committee for the North Side Traffic Study; attended a SCDOT Transportation Enhancement workshop; participated in the Safe Routes to Schools workshop hosted by the City of Aiken and SCDOT; attended a stakeholders meeting for the Augusta Public Transit's transit development plan; and attended a stakeholders meeting on Air Quality hosted by Georgia EPD, SCDHEC, and the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission (ARCPC).
- Aiken County ARTS staff is collaborating with the ARCPC ARTS staff, GDOT, and SCDOT to update the Long Range Transportation Plan to the year 2035.

North Augusta Offers Lawn Mower Exchange Program



North Augusta is a member of the CSRA Air Quality Alliance. Alliance members are working hard to promote programs that result in cleaner air for the protection of public health and to improve environmental quality in our area. Beginning May 10, 2009, the city is kicking off a new clean air initiative and introducing a lawn mower exchange program. The city has teamed with SCDHEC to offer a discount on the purchase of a new cordless electric lawn mower. If you are in the market for a new lawn mower, consider a cordless electric mower. They are great for small yards (up to $\frac{3}{4}$ acre) and have an optional second battery to extend the operating time if needed. The city and its partners are offering coupons to save \$140.00 for the mowers with free shipping. With the coupon you can purchase a 14" cut for \$289.00 (retail price \$399) or the 19" cut for \$389.00 (retail price \$499). The program ends December 31, 2009. North Augusta or Aiken County residents can order a mower on line or by phone and it will be delivered free to your home. To learn more about the program visit www.northaugusta.net and click on the *Clean Air Initiative* LOGO or contact:

Tanya Strickland at (803) 441-4246 or tstrickland@northaugusta.net.



Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission
525 Telfair Street
Augusta, GA 30901

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US POSTAGE

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UPCOMING ARTS MEETINGS

May 2009

CAC/TCC– No meeting scheduled.
Policy Committee- No meeting scheduled.

June 2009

CAC/TCC- June 4th, 10:00 A.M.
Policy Committee- June 4th, 11:00 A.M.

July 2009

CAC/TCC- No meeting scheduled.
Policy Committee- No meeting scheduled.

ARTS Committee Meetings are usually held on the 8th Floor of the Municipal Building at 530 Greene Street, Augusta, GA. Please call the ARCPC (706)821-1796 to verify time and place.

The ARTS Staff

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<http://www.augustaga.gov/index.aspx?nid=680>