



# ARTS Newsletter

April 2010

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## FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS:

**GDOT Area Office—Augusta**  
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**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

**Planning and Economic Development (North Augusta)** (803) 441-4221

*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.*

## CSRA AIR QUALITY STAKEHOLDERS MEET TO DISCUSS STRICTER AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

With new stricter air quality standards soon to be implemented by the US Environmental Protection Agency, the CSRA Air Quality Alliance Stakeholders met at the Misty Lakes SCE&G Recreational Facility on March 11, 2010 to discuss the implications of the new standards. The air quality stakeholders group consists of representatives from federal, state, and local government, industry, military, school boards, technical colleges and universities, economic development agencies, and health care among others.

The meeting was a highly productive event with presentations and updates from the US Environmental Protection Agency, Georgia Department of Natural Resources - Environmental Protection Division, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, the City of North Augusta, Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission, and the Savannah River Nuclear Site.

Presentations centered around the new EPA proposal to strengthen the 8-hour primary ozone standard, designed to protect public health, to .060 - .070 part per million (ppm) from .075 ppm. A seasonal “secondary” standard, which is designed to protect sensitive vegetation and ecosystems is proposed to be set within the range of 7-15 ppm-hours.

Subsequent presentations focused on the current regional air quality monitor readings and the prospect that some areas within the CSRA may have air quality that will fall below the new standards set by the EPA. If this occurs, those areas will be considered in non-attainment. A designation of non-attainment has implications for transportation projects and economic development.

Since any non-attainment designations are expected to be borderline or just below the new standards, area stakeholders are very interested in providing documentation of any current air quality initiatives in the CSRA to the EPA. Additionally, it is important to identify other air quality initiatives that can be implemented by area stakeholders. Initiatives that are currently in place include open burning restrictions during the high ozone season, the development of a Park and Ride facility by the City of North Augusta, and the construction of a bio-mass steam plant at the Savannah River Nuclear Site just to name a few.

The EPA deadline for the new air quality designations is March 12, 2011.

# 2010 Air Quality Awareness Week

April 26 - 30

This past April 26 - 20 was Air Quality Awareness Week, which was meant to remind us all that the power to improve our community is in each of our hands. Decisions you make on a daily basis have a big impact on the air we breathe, from how you choose to commute to work to what time of day you fill up your gas tank when there are high concentrations of air pollution present.

Consider this: in many areas of Georgia, half of all smog-forming emissions come from the tailpipes of cars. Can you imagine the impact we can make by driving less? It will take all of us working together to improve the air we breathe.

Here are some ways you can prepare for smog season, which begins May 1 and lasts until September 30:

Sign up for [Smog Alerts](#) to know when air quality is forecasted to be unhealthy and how you can prepare accordingly.

Check out the [Air We Breathe](#) section of our website. There's a wealth of information that can keep you informed about air quality in Georgia. We also provide tips for living a [better air lifestyle](#).

Get inspired by visiting our [video gallery](#) and watching stories about commuters who are taking action to reduce their contribution to air pollution in the region.

Most importantly, help us spread the word! Forward this message to your friends, family and co-workers and tell them what you're doing to help. Each day, the efforts of commuters like you are helping to keep 800 tons of pollution out of the air we breathe. Here's to the next 800 tons.



Thanks for all your help!

## A NEW ERA OF COORDINATION BEGINS



On May 3rd, a new era in travel management begins in Aiken, SC, as Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG) along with its five partnering agencies kicks off the latest in intelligent transportation systems (ITS) to manage and coordinate the services of the Aiken County area. The first 5 of 22 vehicles run by LSCOG and Aiken County Transit will be tied together with automatic vehicle location (AVL) and mobile data terminals (MDT) and centralized computer-assisted dispatching (CAD) to coordinate the efforts of LSCOG's five separate transit authorities.

Once fully implemented, Aiken County passengers will have a single center to contact for their transportation needs as well as be able to reserve and manage their transportation either over the Internet, or by calling one telephone number, through which they can speak with a live customer service representative. This technology is new to our local area and it represents a cutting edge to tie it all together for multiple rural transportation systems.

Lower Savannah Council of Government's future Travel Management Coordination Center (TMCC) was born from a grant from the US DOT's Mobility Services for All Americans (MSAA) Initiative. LSCOG along with eight other sites was chosen for Phase 1 of the project which included designing such a travel management center. In Phase 2 of the Initiative, LSCOG was chosen to make their designs a reality along with sites located in Paducah, KY and Camden, NJ.

The TMCC's primary scope and function is to increase and enhance transportation services throughout the region. This includes the adoption of policies and procedures that allow the transportation agencies in the region to coordinate services successfully. In addition to regional policies, procedures and the implementation of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies, the project scope and goal is to address the unmet needs identified ~ *Continued next page*

*Continued* ~ by stakeholders in the region and to increase customer service and transit capacity through coordination.

LSCOG is very pleased with the continued enthusiasm and participation of our partners in this implementation phase. This includes the Aiken Area Council on Aging; the Allendale County Office on Aging; Palmetto Breeze, the Regional Transit Authority which serves Allendale County and operates the Allendale Scooter; Generations Unlimited in Barnwell County; the Bamberg County Handy Ride; and Santee Wateree Regional Transit Authority which operates the new public transit service in Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties.

## ARE YOU LOOKING TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AND BOOST MORALE IN YOUR WORKPLACE?



**Be part of the solution that's working for a growing number of Georgia employers.** With the current economic landscape and the financial imperative to strengthen productivity and efficiency while balancing employee morale, there is simply no better time for employers to consider telework and compressed work weeks as a valuable workplace strategy.

Employers across Georgia are also eligible for a tax credit of up to \$20,000 for implementation of a telework program. In addition, The Clean Air Campaign is offering up to \$2,000 labor cost reimbursement for implementation or expansion of a compressed work week program.

*The Clean Air Campaign can assist you in determining if these programs are a fit for your organization at no cost. To find out more, contact Erin Clark at 404.368.3096, [eclark@cleanaircampaign.org](mailto:eclark@cleanaircampaign.org) or visit [CleanAirCampaign.org](http://CleanAirCampaign.org).*

## Aiken County News

### ROADS:

- Aiken County is in the process of hiring a consultant for the US 1/78 Corridor study. The primary objective of the study is to evaluate and address current transportation conditions along the corridor and propose future improvements with particular emphasis on flow, capacity, adjacent & nearby land uses, and multimodal planning. The study must also address the wide range of challenges and opportunities affecting the corridor and involve public participation as a critical component towards future planning. A notice to proceed is anticipated for May. ~ *Continued Above*

- The SC ARTS Subcommittee met in February to discuss final design elements for the Silver Bluff Road widening project, and a motion for SCDOT to move forward with the final design was approved.
- The consultant for the North Side Road Network Study met with the City of Aiken and other project advisory members in March to discuss recent data collection.
- The consultant hired by Aiken County to develop the Aiken County Project Prioritization Tool is nearing completion of the tool (application). It is data input driven and can rank intersection, widening, and new location projects. Guidelines for ranking are done in accordance with State Legislative Act 114, and the tool must be approved by the SC Highway Commission, which is anticipated in May. Members of the SC TCC have been testing the tool and are very pleased with its performance so far.

### BIKE/PED:

- Several members of the SC ARTS Subcommittee also met in February with the president of the Aiken Bicycle Club to discuss how to make Aiken County and the urbanized areas more bicycle friendly. Follow up discussions will take place throughout the year.

### AIR:

- City of North Augusta is moving forward with a proposed Park & Ride Facility near Exit 5 off I-20. They have completed a preliminary low impact design and updated the cost estimate.

### WORKSHOP:

- Members from the SC portion of the ARTS MPO attended a free Livability Workshop on April 13, 2010, in Columbia. It was hosted by The Federal Highway Administration's South Carolina Division and SCDOT. The goal was to raise awareness and provide information about emerging trends in livability and how transportation fits into a holistic approach. A variety of speakers were represented by EPA, FHWA, and MPOs (including Skip Grkovic of the City of North Augusta) who discussed what is happening with livability and sustainability from a local and national perspective.

### TRANSIT:

- Lower Savannah Council of Governments, City of Aiken, and Aiken County are continuing to explore potential sites for the installation of 3 - 4 bus shelters for the Best Friends Express transit service. Program funds from the Federal Transit Administration are available for this type of transit enhancement and must be spent by June 30, 2010.



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

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### **UPCOMING ARTS MEETINGS**

#### **May 2010**

TCC and CAC Meeting - May 12,  
2010 10:00 A.M.

#### **June 2010**

Policy Committee Meeting - June 3,  
2010 11:00 A.M.

ARTS committee meetings are 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.

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