



# ARTS Newsletter

April 2011

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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.*

## CSRA AIR QUALITY ALLIANCE STAKEHOLDERS SPRING MEETING HELD

Air quality was the topic of discussion at the CSRA Air Quality Alliance Stakeholders meeting held on March 18, 2011 at the SCE&G Misty Lake Recreation Area. The audience members were multi-disciplinary and consisted of representatives from federal, state and local government, industry, schools and many others concerned about the state of air quality in our region.

Due to the impending summer release of new and stricter National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, and continued concerns over a potential non-attainment air quality status for the region, the meeting topics were especially relevant to those stakeholders present. In light of the new standards and potential non-attainment status, speakers made presentations that covered multiple topics. Myra Reece, Director, Bureau of Air Quality, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) gave opening remarks along with Jac Capp, Air Protection Branch Chief, Environmental Protection Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Additionally, Joel Huey of the US Environmental Protection Agency was also present to give federal air quality updates.



Since a potential ozone non-attainment status is directly related to a three year average of the most recent air quality monitor readings, presentations given by Tommy Flynn of SCDHEC and Jimmy Johnson of Georgia EPD on the latest South Carolina and Georgia monitor readings within the CSRA were also of great interest to the audience. Transportation Conformity was also a presentation topic and how it relates to non-attainment status and funding for transportation projects.

Lastly, the meeting was rounded out by a series of presentations on various air quality initiatives happening now in our region. Skip Grkovic, Director of Planning and Economic Development for the City of North Augusta gave an update on the US 25 Park and Ride facility, while Allen J. Feather of VPSI, Inc. educated the audience about van pool options that help to reduce single occupant vehicle trips and thus reduce air pollutants. Additionally, presentations were made by Kenyon Thweatt about the Georgia Clean Air Campaign and Channell Webster of SCDHEC about the Lawn Mower Exchange Program. Kenyon outlined the various programs and resources available to the commuting public and business owners, such as compressed work weeks, telecommuting, and the commuter awards program. Channel described the process for organizations or municipalities to set up a lawn mower exchange program in their area. The lawn mower exchange program provides incentives or discount vouchers for the purchase of electric lawn mowers in exchange for their gas powered mowers.

### 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

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

## Update on Georgia TIA of 2010

March 30<sup>th</sup> was the deadline for Georgia local governments to submit projects to the Georgia Department of Transportation for inclusion on the draft list of transportation projects mandated by the Georgia Transportation Investment Act of 2010 (TIA). Over the next few months, Georgia DOT's Planning Director, Todd Long, will work with the Executive Committee of each Regional Transportation Roundtable to develop a final list of transportation projects to finance with the expected proceeds from a 1% regional sales tax. Roundtables must submit an approved project list to Mr. Long on or before October 15, 2011.

The CSRA Regional Commission is coordinating TIA activities in the 13-county CSRA and has received approximately 285 project proposals from local governments and the Augusta MPO to pass along to Georgia DOT. The proposals include projects to improve roads, bridges, traffic signal systems, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, airports, mass transit systems and multiuse trails. Several projects in the ARTS Transportation Improvement Program were submitted for consideration.

A vote on the 1% transportation sales tax would be held during the general primary in August, 2012. A majority of the region's voters must approve the ballot question in order for the tax to become effective. Proceeds from the tax would begin flowing to cities and counties in the first quarter of 2013. If voters reject the tax, then the levy cannot be on a ballot again for at least 24 months.

For additional information about the CSRA Regional Roundtable, go to the following website or contact Mr. Christian Lentz at the CSRA Regional Commission at (706)210-2000 or [clentz@csrarc.ga.gov](mailto:clentz@csrarc.ga.gov)  
[www.csrarc.org/planning/planning\\_transp.html](http://www.csrarc.org/planning/planning_transp.html)



*An ARTS CAC member for two years, Walter Lamb, died March 20th after a short fight with cancer. A Naval pilot and investment advisor, he was a pioneer in the computer time sharing industry and loved politics and golf. Walter organized the Wounded Warrior charity golf tournament and ran for SC State House of Representatives. Donations can be made to the Wounded Warrior charity golf tournament (contact Steve Banworth – 803-643-3000).*

## Safe Routes to School



Schools and communities can find out more about the Georgia Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Resource Center and partnership benefits by going to our web site:

[www.SafeRoutesGA.org](http://www.SafeRoutesGA.org). By providing resources, incentives, and support, this FREE program for K-8 schools enables and encourages children to walk and bicycle to school where and when it is safe. Where it's not safe, we want to make it safe. Additionally, we want children to learn bicycle and pedestrian safety and to know the health and environmental benefits of active transportation. The GA SRTS Resource Center is a federally-funded project of the GA Department of Transportation. Contact: Patti Sistrunk, School Outreach Coordinator: [Patti@SafeRoutesGA.org](mailto:Patti@SafeRoutesGA.org) or (404) 849-3141

## North Augusta Park and Ride Facility



Plans for the planned four acre, 200 car park and ride facility to be located in the northwest quadrant of I-20 Exit 5 in North Augusta are moving forward. The project was approved for \$1 million in funding by the ARTS SC Policy Subcommittee and SCDOT last year. The SCDOT solicitation of engineering proposals for the project design resulted in twelve submittals by the February 15 deadline. Consultant selection will occur prior to March 14.

The site for the facility is currently owned by SCDOT and was included in the recent Palmetto Parkway related improvements to the Exit 5 interchange. Therefore, right-of-way acquisition and environmental reviews will be minimal. Preliminary design and final engineering are expected to be complete by the fall with construction commencing in early 2012.

Preliminary demand investigations indicate that commuters to Augusta, Columbia, Sage Mill Industrial Park and the Savannah River Site will utilize the new facility. In addition to providing air quality and fuel conservation benefits to the region, the park and ride facility will be designed utilizing low impact stormwater techniques, native landscaping, energy efficient lighting fixtures and crime prevention details. Upon completion it is anticipated that the facility will be managed by the City of North Augusta.

## Drivers, Stop Your Engines



Did you know that unnecessary diesel idling wastes fuel, wears down engine components and puts harmful emissions into the air? Chances are if you manage a fleet of vehicles or receive deliveries at your facility, this is happening right under your nose. The simple act of turning off idling diesel engines can make a big difference.

The Clean Air Campaign can help your organization develop an effective program to reduce unnecessary diesel idling at your workplace and with fleet operations – **all at no cost**. It's important for your company to participate because unnecessary idling wastes money and puts your employees at risk. By working with The Clean Air Campaign to start an idling reduction program, you can:

### Save on Fuel and Maintenance Expenses

Idling wastes more fuel and causes twice the wear on internal parts compared to driving at highway speeds. In addition, prolonged idling can reduce the operating life of engine oil by 75%.

### Protect Employee Health

Diesel exhaust contains more than 40 hazardous air pollutants and poses a health risk to anyone nearby, including drivers and employees. Even employees inside your building are affected because exhaust can enter through air intakes, doors and windows.

### Help reduce unnecessary diesel idling so we can all breathe easier.

Through its diesel idle reduction program, The Clean Air Campaign helps public and private employers with voluntary activities to reduce air pollution in the region. Participation in this program by employers in the CSRA is part of a larger effort to combat the region's ongoing air pollution issues. In fact, during 2010, some areas around the region experienced days in which the amount of ground-level ozone in the air was considered unhealthy for certain groups.

Reducing unnecessary idling through a formal policy can help mitigate some of the area's pollution problems, while also controlling overhead expenses and protecting employee health. Visit [CleanAirCampaign.org/No-Idle](http://CleanAirCampaign.org/No-Idle) for more information or contact us directly at 1-877 CleanAir (253-2624).

## Aiken County News

### ROADS:

- The kickoff meeting for the US 1/78 Corridor Study was held in December 2010. The study is expected to take 12 months to complete. An Advisory Committee meeting and a Public Meeting was held on March 31, 2011. For further details, please contact Gerald K. Jefferson.
- The North Side Road Transportation Study for the City of Aiken is nearly complete. The consultant recently submitted the final draft report, and the steering committee is reviewing it for final comments.
- The preliminary engineering work for the widening of Hitchcock Parkway is in the consultant selection phase.

### BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN:

Aiken County in conjunction with the Augusta Richmond County Planning Commission recently selected a consultant to update the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the ARTS area. Aiken County is seeking an expanded analysis and supplemental study of their own bicycle and pedestrian system. The one-year Plan is expected to get underway by May 2011.

### AIR:

SCDOT's in-house design staff has reviewed the RFP for the City of North Augusta's proposed Park & Ride Facility to be built near Interstate 20 and Highway 25. Proposals were due to SCDOT by mid-February.

### TRANSIT:

The Best Friend Express transit service has gotten bus shelters installed at several locations around the City of Aiken.

### ***Tips to Save Gas and Reduce Air Pollution***

- ~Walk, bike, take a bus or carpool when possible*
- ~ Combine errands into one trip*
- ~ Avoid revving or idling engine over 30 seconds*
- ~ Use air conditioning only when necessary*



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

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US POSTAGE

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AUGUSTA, GA

PERMIT #363

## **UPCOMING ARTS MEETINGS**

### **May 2011**

TCC and CAC Meeting - May 11,  
2011 at 10:00 AM

### **June 2011**

Policy Committee Meeting - June 2,  
2011 at 11:00 AM

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.

## **The ARTS Staff**

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**Visit Us at the Web!**

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