



# ARTS Newsletter

Spring 2014

## IN THIS ISSUE

Air Quality Awareness Week

River Watch Parkway Extension Started

Traffic Signal Backplates Recommended

Seasonal Burning Ban Starts May 1

Status of Road and Trail Projects

Aiken County News  
Air Quality News

*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.*

## AIR QUALITY AWARENESS WEEK, APRIL 28 - MAY 2



Learn how air quality affects your health and what you can do to reduce air pollution during Air Quality Awareness Week, April 28—May 2, 2014. People with asthma, lung disease and cardiovascular disease are affected by air pollution, but did you know that children, teenagers and even healthy adults are at risk from ozone and

particle pollution? Children and teenagers are more susceptible to air pollution because their lungs are still developing and they are usually more active outdoors. Healthy, adults who are active outdoors are also at risk from ozone, which can make it more difficult to breathe deeply, cause coughing and damage the lining of the lungs. Knowing your Air Quality Index can help reduce your exposure to air pollution and take proactive steps to reduce your contribution to air pollution. For more information about the Air quality Index go to: [www.airnow.gov/](http://www.airnow.gov/) For more information about Air Quality Awareness Week go to:

[www.nws.noaa.gov/airquality](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/airquality)

## 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

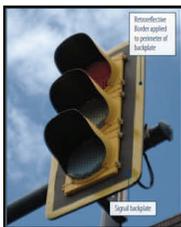
## RIVER WATCH PARKWAY EXTENSION STARTED



Work on upgrades to an important commuter route is underway. On February 17th, a ground-breaking was held for the River Watch Extension project, also known as the Old Petersburg Road / Old Evans Road project. The project will widen the road to four lanes, includes a bridge over the CSX Railroad and adds sidewalks and bicycle lanes. The project extends the road for 2.5 miles

from near Baston Road on the east to Washington Road on the west. The project is designed to relieve traffic congestion, improve connectivity, enhance facilities for drivers, pedestrians and bike riders, and accommodate an increase in traffic in coming years. The Georgia Department of Transportation awarded a construction contract to E. R. Snell Contractor. The \$34.1 million project includes \$20.0 million of penny sales tax funds authorized by the Transportation Investment Act. The project completion date is April 30, 2017.

## TRAFFIC SIGNAL BACKPLATES RECOMMENDED



Backplates are being installed on newer traffic signal heads in order to improve the visibility of the illuminated face of the signal. The improved visibility of a signal head is then made more conspicuous by framing the backplate with a retroreflective border. Taken together, a signal head equipped with a backplate with retroreflective border is made more visible and conspicuous in both daytime and nighttime conditions, which is intended to reduce unintentional red-light running crashes. Backplates and a retroreflective border make the signal head more visible to motorists and may reduce crashes at urban, signalized intersections.

FHWA recommends backplates with retroreflective borders as part of efforts to systematically improve safety performance at signalized intersections. The most effective means of implementing this proven safety countermeasure is to adopt it as a standard treatment for signalized intersections across a jurisdiction so that it is consistently included with all new construction and modernization projects, as well as being a worthy retrofit project for existing signals at intersections with red-light running crash histories. Other low-cost options include adding a reflective border to an existing backplate and installing backplates with retroreflective borders on existing mast arm and span wire assemblies. **Source: Federal Highway Administration, Proven Safety Countermeasures**

### SEASONAL BURNING BAN STARTS MAY 1

**Open Burning Ban in Effect** - A seasonal open burning ban is in effect for Columbia and Richmond counties from May 1 – September 30. The open burning ban prohibits citizens and businesses from burning yard and land-clearing debris. The exceptions to the ban are:

- Agricultural Burning
- Forestry “prescribed burning”
- Campfires or barbeques
- Fire-fighting training exemption, provided appropriate permit is issued
- Operation of open flame equipment exemption
- Explosive disposal in accordance with U.S. Department of Labor Regulations

Failure to adhere to the burn ban may result in fines. For additional information contact the EPD Augusta District Office (706) 792-7744

### STATUS OF ROAD / TRAIL PROJECTS

- **Wrightsboro Road** - widen to 4 lanes from Jimmie Dyess Parkway to I-520 Southbound ramp - 38% scheduled time to date. Current completion date is July 4, 2015. Contractor is Reeves Construction.
- **SR 232 / Columbia Rd.** - widen to 4 lanes from CR 221 / Old Belair Rd. to SR 383 / Belair Rd. (PI # 231440) - Construction underway. Contractor is Beams Construction.
- **SR 56 / Mike Padgett Hwy.** - widen from Bennock Mill Rd. to Old Waynesboro Rd. (PI # 0006431) - Clearing, grubbing and installation of erosion control structures underway. Current completion date is June 30, 2016. Contractor is Reeves Construction.
- **Old Petersburg / Old Evans Road** (River Watch Parkway Ext.) - widen to 4 lanes from Baston Rd. to Old Evans Rd. and extend from Old Evans Rd. to Washington Rd. - **Contract for \$34.1 million awarded on November 14, 2013 to E. R. Snell Contractor. Completion date is April 30, 2017.**
- **Augusta Canal Multi-Use Trail, Phase IV** – extend the multi-use trail from 12th St. to 7th St. along the Third Level Canal (PI # 0008195) - **Bids scheduled to be opened on March 13, 2014.**

## AIKEN COUNTY NEWS

### SPECIAL STUDIES

The **SC 19 (Edgefield Highway) Corridor Study** is approximately 60% complete. The city of Aiken and Aiken County and consultants with DRMP, Inc. continue to examine existing conditions and evaluate future improvements to the road corridor from Hampton Avenue to the Edgefield County line. The second of three steering committee meetings was held on January 16th at the Aiken Housing Authority. The meeting agenda included a review of issues raised at three public meetings held last November and December, a review of the character of the four regions within the study area and a discussion of possible safety and aesthetic improvements in the highway corridor.

Going forward,, DRMP is refining guiding principles, developing design alternatives and cost estimates, recommending land use solutions and drafting the study report. The next public information meeting will be held on Thursday, April 24th from 4:00-7:00 PM at Bethel Baptist Church located at 1127 Bethel Church Road in Aiken.

### ROAD PROJECTS

**SC 118 (Hitchcock Parkway)** - The South Carolina Department of Transportation held a public information meeting on Thursday, December 5, 2013 to receive public comments on the revised concept plan for the road widening project. The concept was revised based on comments received during the first public meeting in November 2012. A public hearing is anticipated in the fall 2014.

**SC 302 (Silver Bluff Road)** - Right-of-way acquisition is underway and construction is tentatively scheduled for the spring of 2015.

**SC 125 (E. Buena Vista Avenue / Atomic Road)** - Right-of-way obligation for the corridor improvement project underway and scheduled to take 15-18 months to complete. Construction is scheduled to begin in May 2015.

**US 25/Walnut Lane**—Construction continues on this corridor improvement project, and is scheduled to be complete in spring 2014.

**SC 126 (Belvedere - Clearwater Road)** - The South Carolina Department of Transportation held a public information meeting on February 24, 2014 on this road widening project. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit input from residents and gather information on historic and cultural resources in the area. A public hearing is anticipated in about a year.

For additional information about these projects contact Gerald Jefferson, Aiken County Planning and Development Department, at [gjefferson@aikencountysc.gov](mailto:gjefferson@aikencountysc.gov) or (803) 642-1520 Ext. 2603.

## AIR QUALITY NEWS

**North Augusta Park-and-Ride Lot** — Construction is progressing and the project is scheduled to be completed by the late summer or fall of this year. The project site is located off Exit 5 at the intersection of I-20 and U.S. Highway 25.

**South Carolina ARTS Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee** — The committee was formed in June 2013, and its charter was approved by the South Carolina ARTS Policy Subcommittee in November. The committee's mission is to advise SC ARTS, Aiken County, and other local jurisdictions on implementation of the Aiken County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan and other opportunities to promote safe bicycling and walking in Aiken County.

## ARTS WEBSITE

The [ARTS Website](#) is hosted by the city of Augusta and includes committee meeting agendas and minutes, documents, back copies of the newsletter, links to other websites and archived reports. You can also sign up to receive e-mails about ARTS meetings, events and public notices. Visit the website today. We welcome your feedback at any time.

### ***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 Planning and Development Department**  
525 Telfair Street  
Augusta, GA 30901

PRSR T STD  
US POSTAGE

**PAID**

AUGUSTA, GA  
PERMIT #363

### UPCOMING ARTS MEETINGS

**TCC and CAC Meeting**  
May 14, 2014, 10:30 AM

**Policy Committee Meeting**  
June 5, 2014, 11:00 AM

ARTS committee meetings are held on the 8th Floor of the Municipal Building at 530 Greene Street, Augusta, GA. Please call (706) 821-1796 to verify the time and location.

### Augusta Regional Transportation Study Contacts

**Augusta Planning and Development Department, 525 Telfair Street, Augusta, GA 30901, (706) 821-1796**

Melanie Wilson, **Executive Director**  
mwilson@augustaga.gov

Paul DeCamp, **Deputy Director**  
pdecamp@augustaga.gov

**ARTS Transportation Planner (vacant)**

Lynn Russell, **ARTS Coordinator**  
LRussell@augustaga.gov

Juriah Lewis, **Transit Planner**  
jlewis@augustaga.gov

.....

**Aiken County Planning and Development Department, 1680 Richland Ave., West, Suite 130, Aiken, SC 29801, (803) 642-1520**

Stephen Strohminger, **Executive Director**  
sstrohminger@aikencountysc.gov

Gerald Jefferson, **Transportation Planner**  
gjefferson@aikencountysc.gov

.....  
**Lower Savannah Council of Governments**  
2748 Wagener Rd., Aiken, SC 29801,  
(803) 649-7981

Connie Shade, **Director**  
cshade@lscog.org

Dana Luttrull, **Grant Compliance Manager**  
dluttrull@lscog.org

Visit Us at the Web!

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