



# ARTS Newsletter

Spring 2012

## IN THIS ISSUE

Regional Air Quality Discussed at CSRA Air Quality Meeting	1
Transportation Referendum on Ballot	2
Project Manager Joins Augusta Canal Authority	2
2012 Pace Awards - Call for Entries	3
Aiken County News	3

*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.*

## Regional Air Quality Discussed

A concerned group of representatives from federal, state, and local government agencies, and industry from Georgia and South Carolina met to discuss the status of the air quality in our region on April 24, 2012. A room in the LEED Certified Gold Standard ADP Building in Augusta, Georgia served as the backdrop for a series of presentations and active discussion of the most recent air quality monitor results, and on-going clean air initiatives throughout the CSRA.

Of particular concern to the audience members were the ozone and particulate matter monitor results as they compared to the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). To date, the monitor results show our ozone and particulate matter levels to be below the current design values set by the Environmental Protection Agency. However, since some of our levels, such as ozone levels in Augusta, are close to crossing into the non-compliant (non-attainment) realm, we must remain vigilant and proactive in our efforts to reduce air pollution. This fact, in conjunction with the specter of even stricter standards, makes the monitoring of our regional air quality and on-going clean air initiatives of utmost importance.



Some of the clean air initiatives discussed in the meeting include the construction of a Park and Ride lot off Exit 5 of I-20 in North Augusta. The Park and Ride lot will feature 200 parking spaces, two bus shelters, and bio-retention stormwater infiltration areas. Additionally, the Clean Air Campaign of Georgia continues to enlist industry, and both public and private organizations, that agree to offer employees alternative work schedules. Alternative work schedules can include compressed work weeks, telework, or flextime. By offering alternatives, employee vehicle trips are reduced, which in turn reduces air pollution. Other efforts include the implementation of no-idle zones, and the identification of ways to reduce energy demands at facilities. The Clean Air Campaign also provides a commuter rewards program. Georgia commuters can take advantage of financial incentives for choosing cleaner work commute options such as walking, bicycling, transit, carpools, and vanpools. Lastly, the ARTS/Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update was highlighted. The plan's primary objective is to improve the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the region.

## 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

## Transportation Referendum on Ballot



On July 31<sup>st</sup> Georgia voters in the 13-county CSRA will have an opportunity to vote on the question of whether or not to add a penny to the sales tax to fund transportation projects. If approved, the sales tax will generate an estimated \$841 million over a 10-year period.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the revenue would fund the completion of eighty-four (84) transportation projects included on an investment list developed and approved by the CSRA Regional Transportation Roundtable. The Roundtable is a committee made up of elected officials from CSRA local governments. The remaining twenty-five percent (25%) of the revenues, called discretionary funds, would be distributed by formula to local governments for eligible transportation projects of their choosing.

The investment list include road widening, bridge replacement and restoration, traffic signal modernization, intersection improvements and road resurfacing projects, as well as operating assistance for Augusta Public Transit. Fifty (50) of the projects are in Richmond County and another eight are in Columbia County.

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, go to the following Georgia Department of Transportation webpage -

<http://www.dot.state.ga.us/localgovernment/fundingprograms/transreferendum/Pages/default.aspx> or contact Mr. Christian Lentz at the CSRA Regional Commission at (706) 210-2000 or [clentz@csrarc.ga.gov](mailto:clentz@csrarc.ga.gov)

### ***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*

## Project Manager Joins Augusta Canal Authority



### **New gateways, trails, signage on agenda**

Russell E. Foster has joined the Augusta Canal Authority staff as Project Manager. In this new role, Foster will facilitate various canal improvement projects.

Among Foster's project responsibilities are extensions of the trail system, development of new gateways and creation of a trail signage system.

Construction begins this fall on phase IIIB of the canal's New Bartram Trail . This phase features two pre-engineered bridges that will span the tailraces behind the King and Sibley Mills and create a paved trail atop the Savannah River levee, linking to an existing trail section on the canal's east side.



The Canal Authority also is taking steps to improve access and appearance at several entry points. Plans are being finalized for a new parking area at Grace and Eve Streets, paving of the trail behind Westview cemetery (the Canal Historic Trail), a new parking area and trail at Riverlook Drive and an attractive new gate for Goodrich Street. Also in preliminary design is a comprehensive trail signage program, funded by a grant from the Georgia Recreational Trails Program.

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**Project Manager:** Russell E. Foster [foster@augustacanal.com](mailto:foster@augustacanal.com) 706-823-0440 , extension 9



## SPECIAL STUDIES:

**US 1/US 78 Corridor Study** has been completed and was accepted by the SC ARTS Subcommittee in May. Implementation of design recommendations require developing an implementation coordination group, and actively pursuing grants and other funding. The Study is posted on the [www.aikencountysc.gov](http://www.aikencountysc.gov) website.

**Northside Transportation Study** has been completed, and is pending adoption by the Aiken City Council.

**Aiken County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan** is to be completed by early June. Final tasks include prioritizing projects and citing potential funding sources. The plan draft can be viewed at [www.bikewalkarts.com](http://www.bikewalkarts.com).

**Dougherty Road Corridor Study** will be under contract after being approved by SCDOT, ARTS, and the Aiken City Manager.

**SC 19 (Edgefield Highway) Corridor Study** will be advertised for bids in the near future by the Aiken County Planning & Development Department.

## SURFACE ROADS:

The City of Aiken has been approved by the SC Transportation Infrastructure Bank for \$13.5 million in state funding for three road projects:

**Hitchcock Parkway widening** - \$9.5 million, **University Parkway widening** - \$3 million to widen between Richland Avenue and S.C. Highway 118, and **Dougherty and Whiskey Roads turn lane improvements** - \$1 million. That money will be paired with one-cent sales tax money that was approved by voters in 2010 as follows:

The Hitchcock Parkway project - \$4 million

University Parkway project - \$3 million

Dougherty Road project - \$90,000.

**Hitchcock Parkway** - the project scope has been finalized, and is pending SCDOT Commission approval.

**Silver Bluff Road Corridor Improvements** - SCDOT is working to advance to a public information meeting in summer 2012. ROW acquisition is scheduled to begin late summer 2012 and construction in the summer 2013.

## AIR QUALITY:

SCDOT and the City of North Augusta are reviewing the conceptual design for the proposed **Park & Ride Facility** to be located off Exit 5 at the intersection of I-20 and Highway US 25. Surveys and traffic analysis for the site have been completed.



Georgia employers and property management companies are stepping forward with progressive ideas to improve the environment, ensure employee wellness and address commuter traffic congestion. Their initiatives to foster a culture of sustainable decision-making make these organizations stand out among the best workplaces for commuters.

### **Submit your application to be recognized as a leader.**

If your group has demonstrated a commitment to commute options programs and sustainability, now is your chance to shine. Let us know how your efforts play an integral role in our shared pursuit of less traffic and cleaner air.

### **Award Categories** ([full descriptions online](#)):

#### *Best Overall Program - Private Sector Employers*

- Small Employer: 100 or fewer employees
- Medium Employer: 101 - 500 employees
- Large Employer: 501 or more employees

#### *Best Overall Program - Property Manager*

#### *Government Champions - Public Sector Employers*

- Federal Employer
- State Employer
- Local Employer (region, county or city)

#### *Most Innovative Program - Private/Public Sector Employers and Property Managers*

#### *Telework Catalyst - Private/Public Sector Employer*

#### *Georgia Department of Transportation Commissioner's Award - Individual*

Winners will be announced at the 2012 PACE Awards, to be held in downtown Atlanta at the Georgia-Pacific Auditorium on Wednesday, November 7. Winning organizations will be featured in radio announcements on WABE 90.1 FM and in a special section of the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*.

**To Apply:** Go to the Clean Air Campaign website for the full award descriptions and select your award category. Download and complete the detailed application. Submit your application by 4:00pm EST on Friday, August 31. For more information, call 1-877-CLEANAIR (1-877-253-2624) or visit [www.cleanaircampaign.org](http://www.cleanaircampaign.org).





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

PRSR STD

US POSTAGE

**PAID**

AUGUSTA, GA

PERMIT #363

### **UPCOMING ARTS MEETINGS**

**TCC and CAC Meeting**  
August 8, 2012, 10:30 AM

**Policy Committee Meeting**  
September 6, 2012, 11:00 AM

**TCC and CAC Meeting**  
September 12, 2012, 10:30 AM

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

### **The ARTS Staff**

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