



ARTS Newsletter

Fall 2014

IN THIS ISSUE

New Park-and-Ride Facility for N. Augusta

New Transit Service to Fort Gordon

Active Living Workshop hosted by AARP Georgia

New ARTS Staff

ARTS Facts

Aiken County News

Save on Gas

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

GRAND OPENING OF RIVER LEVEE MULTI-USE RECREATION TRAIL

U.S. Rep. John Barrow joined Augusta Canal National Heritage Area officials to cut the ribbon on the area's newest multi-use recreation trail Monday October 6. The \$1.74 million River Levee Trail is a 1.5-mile paved pedestrian and bicycle path winding between the Augusta Canal and Savannah River. The trail features two riverside bridges and a 400-foot timber boardwalk. The project was funded in part by a \$925,000 GA DOT Transportation Enhancement Grant.

"This facility is a crown jewel for our region," said U.S. Rep. Barrow. "It's interesting to reflect that a river used to bring people together when a river was the highway. Then we invented rivers of concrete and steel, and all of the sudden God's original highways became a barrier. Now, as people from all over visit this trail, the canal will again be a place where folks come together."

River Levee Trail is only the most recent recreational improvement in the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area. The heritage area also added two permanent trailside restrooms, a quarter-mile walking trail leading to a canoe launch dock, and a comprehensive trail signage system, all installed within the past year. © Rebecca Rogers (Augusta Canal National Heritage Area)



FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS:

GDOT Area Office—
Augusta (706) 855-3466

Augusta Engineering Department (706) 796-5040

Augusta Traffic Engineering Division (706) 821-1841

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

NEW PARK-AND-RIDE FACILITY OPENS IN NORTH AUGUSTA

On August 21, 2014 the City of North Augusta, SCDOT, SCDHEC and ARTS cut the ribbon on the 230 space Park-AND-Ride facility. A project conceived in 2009 by North Augusta in discussions with officials from the SCDHEC, Aiken County and SCDOT. The facility is located



adjacent to Exit 5, the interchange of I-20 and US 25. The goals of the project are to reduce traffic on major arterials in the CSRA and reduce air pollution. The \$1.6 million facility, funded and constructed by SCDOT at the request of the city of North Augusta, will serve commuters on I-20, southbound Palmetto Parkway (I-520) and US 25 in both directions. North Augusta under a permit from SCDOT will manage and maintain the facility. During the ribbon cutting ceremony Jack Porter of the DHEC Bureau of Air Quality presented North Augusta Mayor Lark Jones a plaque from DHEC recognizing North Augusta's leadership in the development of the Park & Ride

INAUGURAL TRANSIT SERVICE TO FORT GORDON

Years of planning, discussion and hard work eventually paid off on Monday November 3, 2014 with the launch of an Augusta Public Transit (APT) service to the Fort Gordon military installation. The #10 route connects Walmart (Forest Hills), Augusta Mall, Eisenhower Medical Center and Fort Gordon and is set to operate for 6 months as a pilot service. Fort Gordon joins a growing community of military bases served by transit systems around the nation.

It's anticipated that ridership levels will enable the service to become a permanent route in the APT system. The new transit service operates 6 days per week (Monday to Saturday) with the first bus leaving the Fort Gordon bus depot at 6:10am (Mon-Fri) (7:10am Sat) and the last return bus departing from the Augusta Mall each evening at 6:30pm (Mon-Sat). The service will significantly improve travel options between the base, the Augusta Mall and downtown Augusta.

A ribbon cutting ceremony held during the morning of November 3 at the Augusta Mall, was attended by officials and active service personnel from Fort Gordon, Commissioners, representatives from the City of Augusta and Augusta Mall, transit advocates and the media.



ACTIVE LIVING WORKSHOP COMES TO AUGUSTA

Georgia AARP and the Walkable and Livable Communities (WALC) Institute hosted a public workshop on Wednesday October 29, 2014 at the Boathouse Community Center, Augusta GA. Active Living and the importance of age-friendly neighborhood planning were the workshop themes. WALC speaker Ian Lockwood presented key elements that enabled Augusta to become recognized nationally as an AARP Age-Friendly Community. He encouraged Augusta to continue planning in ways that ensure streets are comfortable, engaging and accessible for everyone while being vibrant, safe and easy to navigate.

Everyone who attended the workshop had lots to say about the age-friendliness of their communities. The need for improvements in safety, integrity and respect were some of the major issues raised by neighborhood representatives. Age-friendly planning strategies such as road diets, complete streets, dense street grids and curb elimination (on residential streets) are some of the means by which Augusta-Richmond county can continue to maintain its age-friendly community status.

The enthusiasm generated by the workshop influenced several participants to lead volunteer clean-up campaigns in their neighborhoods. Overall, the AARP and WALC hosted workshop proved to be a resounding success. Concluding the workshop all participants agreed to share what they had learned with family and friends in their communities, churches or neighborhood associations. The photo shows Augusta Commissioner Bill Lockett receiving an award from AARP Georgia for his work on advocating for Augusta's status as an Age-Friendly Community.



AIKEN COUNTY NEWS

SPECIAL STUDIES

The SC 19 (Edgefield Highway) Corridor Study was completed in September and has been accepted by the SC ARTS Policy Subcommittee.

SURFACE ROADS

In Aiken:

SC 302 (Silver Bluff Road) Corridor Improvements:

The right-of-way phase is approximately 30% complete. Environmental documents have been approved and no permit is required. Utility coordination is also underway. Construction letting is tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2015.

SC 118 (Hitchcock Parkway) Widening:

During the SC ARTS Policy Subcommittee meeting in November, the members approved amending the Purpose-and-Need statement/proposed scope from increasing capacity and improving safety to corridor improvements and improving safety. Further development of the project will continue including an updated construction letting schedule. The revised P-and N/proposed scope and estimated cost/funding are also pending approval by the ARTS Policy Committee and will need to be re-programmed into the LRTP, TIP, and STIP.

In Clearwater/Beech Island:

SC 126 (Belvedere-Clearwater Road) Widening:

The environmental documents/permitting coordination are currently underway. Preliminary design is currently under development. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled around spring/summer of 2015. The right-of-way phase is tentatively scheduled to begin summer of 2015.

In North Augusta:

SC 125 (East Buena Vista Avenue/Atomic Road) Corridor Improvements:

The environmental documents have been approved, and no permit is required. The right-of-way phase is approximately 10% complete. Utility coordination is currently underway. Construction letting is tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2015.

AIR QUALITY

The North Augusta Park-and-Ride Facility was completed in September and is open to traffic.

NEW ARTS STAFF

ARTS is expanding to serve our constituents better and smarter. In recent months Director Melanie Wilson has brought several new staff onboard.

Carletta Singleton, Strategic Long Range Planning Manager is tasked with managing the ARTS 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The ARTS 2040 LRTP process commences in January 2015. More details to come.

Oliver Page, Ph.D., as principal transportation planner, together with Nish Trivedi, Andrew Ulhir and Anh Vu will provide planning input into the 2040 LRTP. Andrew Dolch, GIS technician will create attention-grabbing GIS images.

ARTS FACT

Did you know that the 2010 population of four county ARTS region was 511,686 persons making it the second largest Metropolitan Planning Organization in the State of Georgia? That's up 12 percent from year 2000.

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

PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
AUGUSTA, GA
PERMIT #363

UPCOMING ARTS MEETINGS

Joint Special TCC and CAC Policy Committee Meeting December 17, 2014, 11:00 AM

ARTS committee meetings are held on the 2nd Floor of the Municipal Building at 530 Telfair 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. Tel: (706) 821-1796

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

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

Carletta Singleton, **Strategic Long Range Planning Manager**
CSingleton@augustaga.gov

Oliver Page, **Transportation Planner**
opage@augustaga.gov

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

Aiken County Planning and Development Department, 1680 Richland Ave., West, Suite 130, Aiken, SC 29801. Tel: (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>