

Augusta Regional Transportation Study Newsletter

Issue 23

March 2005

New ARTS CAC Members

Public involvement is an integral part of the ARTS transportation planning process. It is with great pleasure that we welcome the following new members to the Citizens Advisory Committee:

- Mr. Don Skinner – Columbia County
- Mr. Greg Capers – Columbia County
- Mr. Jim Bartley – Columbia County
- Mr. Raymond Griffin – North Augusta

They join the following current CAC members:

- Mr. Eric Schumacher – Richmond County
- Mr. Terry Smith – Richmond County
- Mr. Les Morton – Richmond County
- Mr. Butch Gallop, Jr. – Richmond County
- Mr. Phil Croll – City of Aiken
- Mr. Willie Bell – City of Aiken
- Ms. Marianne Pecoraro – Aiken County

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Fall Line Air Quality Study Completed

On February 8, 2005 Dr. Michael Chang of Georgia Tech gave a briefing of the final report of the Fall Line Air Quality (FAQS) at the Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce. FAQS is a study to assess urban and regional air pollution, identify the sources of pollution and pollution precursors, and recommend strategies for improving air quality in the Augusta, Macon, and Columbus metropolitan areas.

The release of the final report represents the culmination of over five years of work by many people to document air quality across central Georgia, evaluate the merits of various strategies to reduce air pollution, and model existing and future air quality. The FAQS work is an integral part of the Early Action Plan and the modeling done shows that the Augusta area will continue to meet national air quality standards for ozone through the year 2012. ARTS would like to thank those in the Augusta area who had the foresight to advocate for and secure funding of the FAQS. ARTS is especially grateful to the members of the Augusta Air Quality Task Force. Under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce, the Task Force monitored the progress on the FAQS, provided a forum for discussing air pollution control strategies, and advised state and federal officials on air quality issues of concern in the Augusta area.

Both the full text of the Final Report, and a 30-page Executive Summary, can be viewed and downloaded at the FAQS website:

<http://cure.eas.gatech.edu/faqs/index.html>

ARTS MEETINGS

ARTS committee meetings are usually 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.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

The Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission website includes all ARTS committee agendas and related transportation planning information. The address is:
http://www.augustaga.gov/departments/planning_zoning/

Radio Communications Project Grant Awarded to Lower Savannah Region

The Lower Savannah Council of Governments, which serves as the Regional Transit Management Association (RTMA) for a six-county area in South Carolina, and as the manager of the Best Friend Express Transit System in Aiken County, has been awarded a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for a radio communications project. The demonstration project will replace cell phones with state of the art radio equipment on rural and urban transit vehicles. The project is expected to improve the quality and efficiency of transit systems, provide greater safety and security for transit operators and their passengers, reduce costs and make it easier for transit providers to coordinate their trips with one another.

The project will provide up to 90 radios, 5 base stations and 10 portable units to the transit systems and, if funds permit, GPS units will be installed on as many as 100 transit vehicles. The project will utilize the Palmetto 800 radio system, which is used by all public safety responders in South Carolina and allows tower coverage with little if any drop in service.

For more information, contact Connie Shade at Lower Savannah Council of Governments, Aiken, S. C. Phone (803) 649-7981.

Tips to Save Gas, Improve Mileage and Reduce Air Pollution

With gas prices continuing to rise and the summer driving season rapidly approaching, here are some common sense tips for saving gas, improving mileage and reducing air pollution.

- Walk, bike, take a bus or carpool when possible
- Combine errands into one trip
- Drive your car wisely and maintain it properly
- Go easy on the brakes and gas pedal
- Avoid long idles (Turn off the engine when waiting on a train!)
- Avoid carrying unneeded items in the trunk
- Avoid high speeds
- Use air conditioning only when necessary
- Keep tires properly inflated and aligned
- Get regular engine tune-ups and car maintenance checks

Source: U.S. EPA, Office of Mobile Sources

Frequently Called Numbers

- GDOT Area Office – Augusta (706) 855-3466
- GDOT District Two Office – Tennille (478) 552-4601
- SC DOT - Aiken County Maintenance Shop (803) 642-7600
- Augusta Public Works and Engineering Dept. (706) 796-5040
- Augusta Traffic Engineering Division (706) 821-1841
- Columbia County Road Construction Dept. (706) 541-4011
- Columbia County Roads and Bridges Dept. (706) 541-1143
- Augusta Public Transit (706) 821-1721
- Aiken County Transit (Best Friend Express) (803) 648-6493



Transitions

- The Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission welcomes Mr. Calvin Abram as the new ARTS Transportation Planner. Calvin comes to Augusta from Birmingham, Alabama where he worked most recently as a planning consultant. Calvin replaces Ms. Sangeetha Rao who now works as an attorney for the city of Atlanta.
- The Georgia Department of Transportation Office of Planning recently announced the hiring of Mr. Winn Keathley and assigned him to work with ARTS. Winn comes to GDOT from the Tennessee DOT and replaces Ms. Beth Edmiston. We welcome Winn and thank Radney Simpson for providing technical assistance on an interim basis.

Evans-to-Locks Multi-Use Trail Update

Columbia County has contracted with Cranston, Robertson and Whitehurst to design the final phase of the multi-use trail along Evans-to-Locks Road. The 1.8 mile leg of the trail will extend along Evans-to-Locks Road from the intersection of Blue Ridge Drive to the Government Center complex in Evans. When this phase of the project is completed in April 2006 there will be over 8 miles of multi-use trail connecting the Evans Town Center with the Savannah Rapids Pavilion and the Augusta Canal. The trail also serves a number of residential subdivisions located along Evans-to-Locks Road. Funding for the project is from Transportation Enhancement grants and the Columbia County's Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax.

Georgia Regional ITS Architecture Completed

The statewide Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) architecture for Georgia is now complete. The statewide architecture – called the Georgia Regional ITS or GRITS - is a roadmap for ITS deployment in the state over the next 20 years.

Stakeholders from throughout the state developed GRITS. A team of consulting firms headed by ITERIS, Inc., under a contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), facilitated the development of the architecture. As part of the project, ITS Georgia sponsored three rounds of stakeholder meetings held throughout the state between November 2004 and January 2005.

ARTS staff and personnel from other local agencies participated in all three rounds of stakeholder meetings. ARTS staff assisted ITERIS in arranging stakeholder meeting locations in Augusta during the 2nd and 3rd rounds.

For more information please visit the Georgia Regional ITS Architecture Website at www.gritsarchitecture.com.

Augusta-Richmond County Planning
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APRIL 2005
NO MEETINGS
MAY 2005
<p>CAC/TCC - MAY 11TH 10:00 A.M. S.C. POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE MAY 19TH 4:00 P.M. (AIKEN)</p>
JUNE 2005
<p>POLICY - JUNE 2ND 11:00 A.M. ENDORSE FINAL TIP CAC/TCC – NO MEETING</p>

The ARTS Staff	
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<p><u>Transit Planner:</u> Juriah Lewis, ARCPC (706) 821-1796 jlewis@augustaga.gov</p>	<p><u>Aiken County Transportation Planner:</u> Stephen Strohminger, ACPDD (803) 642 – 1520 sstrohminger@aikencounty.net</p>