

Centralina
Council of Governments

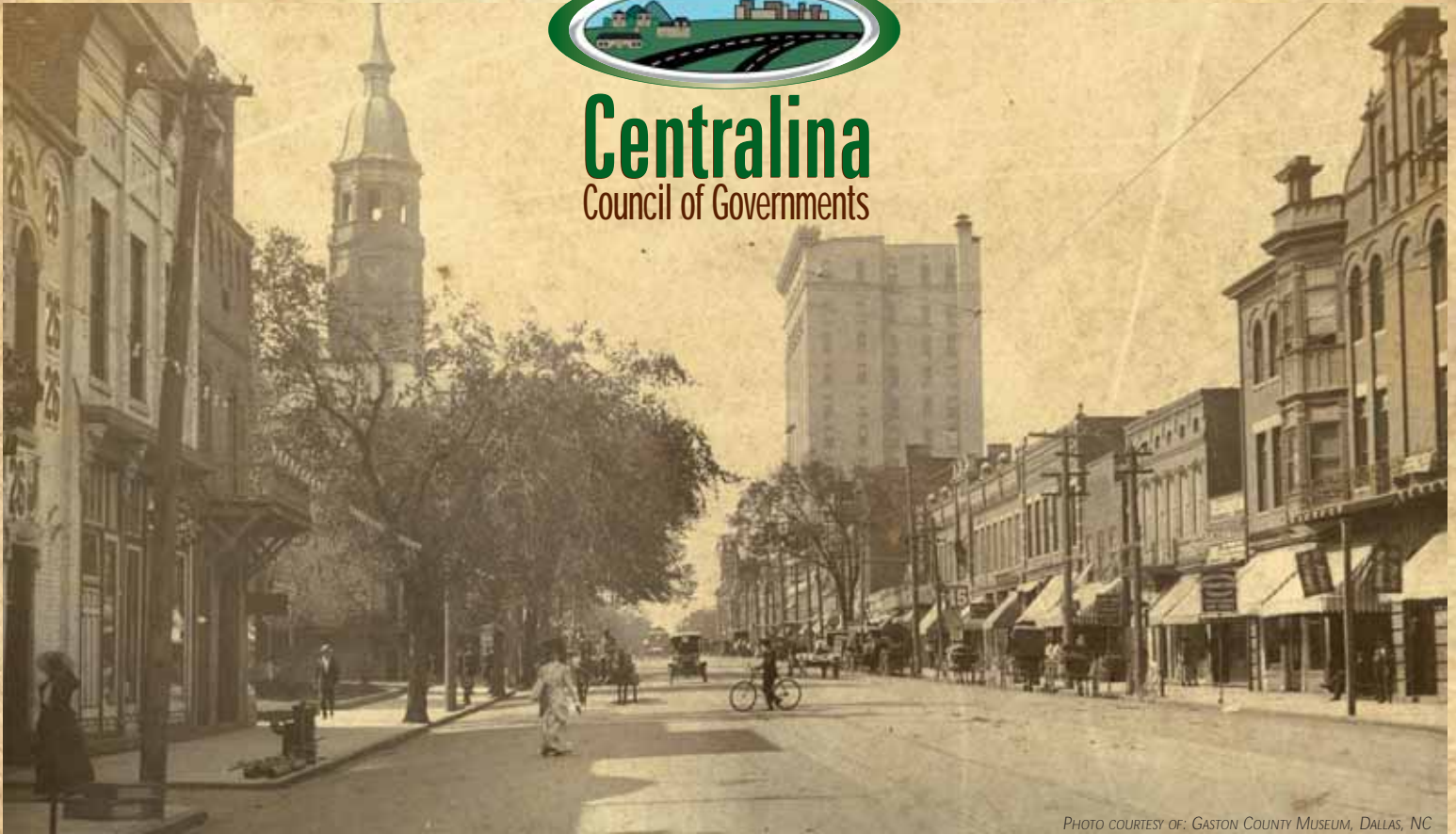


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THE REGION GROWING TOGETHER...



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MISSION STATEMENT

*Centralina Council of Governments
is the lead organization to coordinate
regional solutions for growth and
quality of life issues.*



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THE REGION
GROWING
TOGETHER...



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ADMINISTRATION



SERVICES

Staff in this core function of Centralina COG provides regional leadership to support out member jurisdictions and coordinate regional initiatives, and provides the support structure for other COG program areas. Major functions/services provided include:

- ❑ **Member Services** – A central purpose of Centralina COG is to provide members with forums for elected officials, managers, and planners to discuss regional public policy, and a platform for collaborative regional actions and dialog. Working closely with our 76 member jurisdictions allows us to determine needs and possible partnerships, and develop policy directions. We also assist members by introducing new programs or initiatives.
- ❑ **Regional Planning and Environmental Initiatives** – Our staff has led the way over the past two years with its innovative approaches to regional planning and program implementation.
 - **CONNECT Regional Initiative** – This regional visioning initiative will establish goals and broad direction through the Centralina Board and develop a menu of policies and actions that can be undertaken by local governments. This menu-driven technique of policies and actions allows local jurisdictions to tailor directionally-appropriate actions to meet their local needs. The "integrated planning approach" employed by CONNECT encourages leaders to look at actions that will provide a wide range of benefits for a wide range of constituents/needs—actions such as stream buffering, creating walkable communities and more.



framework for our future

- **Environmental initiatives for air and water quality** – Key initiatives include SEQL (a initiative in which our region worked together to find ways to promote economic growth while protecting the environment), Clear the Air for Kids and the Stormwater Partnership
- ❑ **Management and Administration** – Centralina core management and administration staff supports the COG Board and their initiatives and provides internal support for the grant funded and technical assistance functions of COG. Management and administrative functions include oversight of the budget, representing the region with numerous organizations and at State, federal and local government functions, executive management, clerk /board support,

human resources, finance, information technology, and public relations. Some Administration staff also provides technical assistance to local jurisdictions. Examples of support and technical assistance include:

- Facilitating Meetings /strategic planning sessions
- Providing (GIS) Geographic Information Services to member governments. Services include mapping for future land use plans and zoning; GIS analysis for and annexation and demographic analysis.
- Supporting the software associated with the statewide Caregiver program implemented in all counties.
- Supporting the website for the North Carolina’s Lead Regional Organization Association.
- Providing Human Resource support – pay and classification studies, compensation studies, recruitment assistance and interim staffing, developing and implementing assessment centers for personnel recruitment and promotion
- Providing information and referral services

LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION

- ❑ **Member Services** – In 2007, we helped introduce our members to E-Civis Grants Locator to improve the process for searching for State, federal and foundation funds.

Staff provided technical support for the Gaston 2012, Gaston Tomorrow Transportation Committee and Gaston’s Quality of Natural Resources Commission and served as a member of the City of Charlotte’s Environmental Cabinet.

- ❑ **Regional Planning and Environmental Initiatives** – Centralina staff is leading the CONNECT Project, which is the development of the region’s first comprehensive vision for the future based on core citizen values and public policy. CONNECT will result in an actionable vision which will include regional and local level issues that must be addressed.

During 2007, transportation funding continued to develop as a major issue in NC. Centralina led efforts to bring information to local elected officials about how transportation is funded, and the specifics of the issues involved. This work culminated in December, with the appointment of the Regional Transportation Issues Working Group. During early 2008, the working group will develop the transportation component of the CONNECT regional vision and develop recommendations on funding strategies and approaches.

Stormwater is an issue everywhere in the region—whether or not a community falls under federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations. More urban areas deal with runoff from impervious surfaces, while more rural areas deal with agricultural and livestock runoff. To serve many of the communities faced with stormwater management on how to manage stormwater in a way that protects our water resources—both quantity and quality





and as an outgrowth of SEQL a regional coalition has been organized. The Regional Stormwater Partnership has three major goals:

- To engage in region-wide "education for action" and program implementation among the public
- To build capacity among local government staffs in stormwater management and education techniques
- To develop multi-jurisdictional strategies for protecting our rivers and streams from runoff—such as buffers that run through several jurisdictions—and to begin to jointly target impaired waters for restoration

Several years ago, Regional Initiatives' staff began work with the Town of Mooresville staff to update their Comprehensive Transportation Plan—a job that has traditionally been done by NCDOT. Working with Town staff, Centralina staff developed a proposed approach to NCDOT that integrated land use and transportation planning and addressed how larger-scale transportation projects related to mobility in smaller neighborhoods. The proposal was adopted, the Town proceeded with planning in collaboration with NCDOT and LNRPO staff and in 2007 the Town adopted its completed plans—both of which are based on a common vision. This is an innovative example of collaboration at the local, regional and state levels that links land use and transportation planning at a scale that makes sense for a smaller community.

- **Management and Administration** – In 2007, a reorganization was done to better align functions. Our internal operations and functions are now better coordinated and many efficiencies can be seen.

COG began the search for new office space this year. A new location is needed because our current building will be torn down and the site redeveloped in the near future. In 2005, the legislature authorized COGs Statewide to purchase office space. The decision about a new office location will be brought to the COG Board in 2008.

In 2007, the Information Technology Department implemented a web based event management product called Cvent™ to help better manage meetings, conferences and events. Cvent™ creates automated email invitations, registration, registration confirmations and event reminders. This automated process improves efficiency for both our staff and those attending functions.

This year website hosting was consolidated for the nearly one dozen websites managed by Centralina. Further consolidation is planned once the websites are converted into a common software platform. So far consolidation has resulted in approximately 40% savings on hosting along with ease of management and maintenance.

Centralina's Information Technology Department is designing a centralized contact database which combines databases currently maintained by each departments, in order to respond to the communications need of the organization.

COLLABORATION

The Regional Stormwater Partnership now includes over 25 jurisdictions and any interested communities are invited to become part of this work.

"The Clear the Air for Kids!" project is a collaborative effort with Centralina, the school systems throughout the region, and our transportation partners to deliver the message that improving air quality can help to improve children's respiratory health. This initiative is based on the understanding that air and water are resources that do not acknowledge jurisdictional boundaries. COG supports and has actively participated in the "Clean Air Works" initiative developed by Mecklenburg County and the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce.

Transportation conformity and air quality attainment are technical demonstrations that address the need to improve air quality to national standards through transportation improvements and other means. Centralina, along with the region's MPOs and RPOs, have worked together to educate local officials about the issues and to address planning for conformity and attainment collaboratively.

RESULTS

❑ Member Services

- Monitored legislative proposals and coordinated regional responses
- Distributed regional newsletters and e-blasts to update members of important events
- Assisted member jurisdictions with C-vent invitations to events
- Provides a Regional Calendar of Events

❑ CONNECT Regional Planning Initiative—

- During 2007, the vision, policies and practices that will make CONNECT happen were drafted. The CONNECT vision will begin implementation in 2008.



❑ Environmental initiatives for air and water quality

- SEQL was recognized in August with a national NADO Innovation Award for the menu driven approach that was taken to build a workable model for environmental and growth management.

❑ "Clear the Air for Kids!" has

- Installed 1,470 signs at over 490 schools in 15 school districts in the region to encourage buses and carpoolers to reduce idling. Signs directed school buses and carpoolers to "turn off your engines—kids breathe here!"
- Distributed information packets to all school principals about air quality and the need to reduce motor vehicle emissions through idle reduction strategies.



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- "Clean Air Works" has partnered with businesses across the region to reduce vehicle miles traveled, thus improving air quality.
- Distributed handouts for parents of all elementary school children on the importance of reducing idling of personal vehicles on school grounds.
- Produced Bookmarks – "10 things kids can do for the environment" – which have been distributed to all third graders in the region's 15 school districts.
- Gave a presentation on the successes of the "Clear the Air" program at the US EPA National Air Quality Conference in Florida
- ❑ Produced updated inputs to regional transportation modeling for areas affected by non-attainment designations. Such work makes it possible for areas to demonstrate transportation conformity, ensuring that federal transportation funds are not delayed or denied.
- ❑ Facilitated the start-up of the Marshville CATS express bus service.

- ❑ Obtained \$121,000 in funding from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund for the Regional Stormwater Partnership

❑ Management and Administration

- Supported the Joint Regional Forum – the statewide forum for the 17 North Carolina Regional Councils.
- Represented the region in the FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) relicensing process and on the Final Agreement Committee
- Improved internal operations by formalizing a COG Operations and Procedures Manual, creating an administrative work order systems, creating a new monthly performance tracking process, and establishing a grant tracking system.
- Designed and produced a new Technical Assistance Brochure to better inform our members about the services we offer, and implemented a Technical Assistance Follow Up Survey to gain feedback from members on our performance.
- Implemented an Intranet which enhanced internal communication and data coordination. This has increased efficiency by allowing us to share working documents, providing an announcement posting, resource scheduling and administrative work request scheduling mechanism. It also allows staff to access our network from out of the office.
- Conducted Assessment Centers for the following communities – Shelby, Kannapolis and Huntersville.
- Provided meeting facilitation for eight communities for strategic planning and annual goal setting
- Provided executive search services to two member governments for manager search





AGING SERVICES

The Centralina Area Agency on Aging (AAA) supports and helps enhance the capacity of service and advocacy systems to promote independence, preserve dignity, and advocate for the rights of older and disabled adults and their families. The major functions/services provided by Centralina Area Agency on Aging (AAA) are:

- **Program Planning** – Our AAA works with local planning committees across the region to determine the needs of older adults, improve availability and access to services, identify resources to fill gaps in services, and to allocate funds for services based on needs. Local planning efforts include evaluation of community efforts toward developing a "Senior Friendly Community". In addition, the AAA has continued to work with all nine counties to plan for implementation of Choices for Independence including Aging and Disability Resource Connections, evidence based health promotion programs, consumer directed care and nursing home diversion.
- **Ombudsman** – AAA operates an extensive Ombudsman program to advocate for residents, investigate concerns, and mediate disputes for nursing and adult care home residents. The Ombudsmen program also promotes elder abuse awareness, educates the public on long term care issues and provides technical assistance to resident family and staff. The program also provides training and ongoing technical assistance and support to more than 200 Community Advisory Committee volunteers appointed by their county commissioners, and the Senior Tar Heel Delegates who work directly with the General Assembly on older and disabled adults laws, rules and regulations.
- **Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V)** – This program helps older adults find meaningful employment, and helps them lead happier, healthier, more productive lives.
- **Senior Medicare Patrol** – The purpose of this program is to educate older adults to help them recognize and report health care fraud in Medicare or Medicaid services.
- **Heat Fan Relief** – AAA annually distributes fans to older or disabled adults who need relief from the summer heat.
- **Family Caregiver Support Program** – This program supports people who are providing care to older adults by providing information and referral, support and education, and help connecting families with the services they need. Service referrals, for example, are provided for respite care, nutritional supplements, special transportation, home modifications and community activities.

LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION

Centralina Area Agency on Aging (AAA) staff plays significant leadership roles at national, regional, state and local levels and hold leadership positions on:

- National Association of Area Agencies on Aging Board of Directors
- National Association of Local Long Term Care Ombudsman Board of Directors
- Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging Board of Directors
- North Carolina Association of Area Agencies on Aging
- North Carolina Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman Association





For the first time, two different Centralina Area Agency on Aging staff serve as chairman of two different state associations.

The leadership of Centralina staff has resulted in bringing several US Administration on Aging national pilot programs to our region. These programs emphasize evidenced based health promotion and disease prevention initiatives. Some of the pilot programs include:

- National Pilot for the Walk with Ease Program
- National Pilot for Fit and Strong
- Stanford University Chronic Disease Self Management Program

Our staff also provided assistance to the NC Division on Aging in writing and obtaining the Nursing Home Modernization Grant which will be piloted in this region in 2008. Centralina staff has served on the task force review committee on the US Administration on Aging "Choices for Independence" initiative for older adults.

Area Aging on Agency staff has also been recognized for their expertise and leadership in the field of health promotion and disease prevention and has been invited to testify before the Atlanta Regional Office of the US Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control on improving health literacy for older adults.

Centralina staff has served on the task force review committee on the US Administration on Aging "Choices for Independence" initiative for older adults.

Centralina Area Agency on Aging, as a hub for the new statewide information database, [NC CareLink](#), has been instrumental in coordinating the initiative within the region. This project is a foundational component for improving delivery of information to older and disabled adults.

Evidenced Based Health Promotion and Disease Prevention programs are part of a national movement to bring credibility to local programming to enhance health and wellness of older adults. Through leadership, innovation, and coordination of Centralina Area Agency on Aging staff, eight of the nine counties now have a certified trainer for the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program.

"Culture Change" which refocuses long term care facilities from institutional living to person centered care, is an innovative new approach to Long Term Care. The AAA Ombudsman Program premiered the movie, "Almost Home" in all nine counties to introduce the concept of "Culture Change". Introduction to this pioneering new approach was carried into the theme for the Annual Aging Conference with nationally known speakers.

In response to the concerns voiced by consumers, our Aging Advisory Committee was instrumental in raising the need for increased legal services within the region. In concert with staff, an innovative approach to delivering legal services was developed to ensure that all nine counties receive equitable services.



COLLABORATION

As our nine county region faces a growing population of older adults, collaboration with various organizations and companies is essential to accommodate their anticipated needs. In 2007, Centralina AAA partnered on numerous projects that were significant to our region:

- One of the top priority needs for older adults is information. Through collaboration with Striped Rock Publishing, All for Seniors, an information guide on services and resources for a 12 County region, reaches 65,000 older adults three times per year with information on services and resources in a twelve county region.
- In collaboration with *Dress for Success*, AAA conducted a regional event to assist low-income older workers in becoming better prepared for the changing workplace. Older Adults have received professional attire to boost self esteem and confidence in applying for employment opportunities.
- AAA staff teamed with Goodwill Industries of Southern Piedmont, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Senior Centers and Mecklenburg County JobLink Centers, and 20 local employers to hold a job fair which reached more than 150 individuals older adults looking for employment.
- Focusing on the rights of residents who reside in Long Term Care, the Ombudsman Program worked with facilities, Family Councils and Community Advisory Volunteers to conduct Resident Rights celebrations in eight of the nine counties within the region.
- In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, emergency preparedness has been a huge priority for providers of services for older and disabled adults in long term care facilities. In conjunction with a statewide initiative, Centralina conducted a regional forum, Disability and Elderly Emergency Management Initiative, to begin development of the State Plan to enhance NC's ability to respond to the emergency management needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly prior to, during and following man-made or natural disasters.



RESULTS

❑ Program Planning –

- Planning for service needs in all nine counties, over 6,377 older adults received nutrition through the Congregate or Home Delivered Meal Program, over 1,553 individuals receive assistance through the In Home Program, over 1,962 older adults receive Transportation to and from medical services or other needed assistance, over 229 individuals received a day of Adult Day Care/Health Services to support their ability to remain independent and in their own home.

- Thirteen Senior Centers provided opportunities for socialization and health and wellness program to older adults within the nine county region. Senior Center programs assisted older adults with sign-ups for Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Programs.
- All nine counties provide Health Promotion Disease Prevention programs that provided educational health programs to 2,165 older adults, exercise and fitness programs for 1,790 older adults, and health screenings and assessments for 1,259 older adults. Eight of the nine counties have trained staff for at least one evidence based health promotion program.
- In a program called Walk Around the World to get more older adults active and walking, approximately 450 older adults around the region participated in the program. After six months 50% of the participants were still involved in the program. At the beginning of the program 12.4% reported Excellent Health and the percent improved to 17.4% at the end of six months.

❑ **Ombudsman Services** – As the largest region in the State, our AAA Ombudsman Program

- Responded to 5,090 requests for technical assistance.
- Provided 527 training classes on topics including Resident Rights, Confidentiality, Elder Abuse Prevention, Creative Intervention with Difficult family members, Culture Change, and resident behavior.
- Conducted 846 facility visits
- Monitored an average of 15,422 beds each month
- Successfully resolved 277 case complaints
- Enlisted the support of over 167 volunteers during the year.

❑ **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCEP)** –

The success of Centralina’s SCEP program in previous years resulted in approximately \$200,000 in additional funds coming into our region. Over 189 individuals received training through the Senior Community Service Employment Program. The Agency exceeded the placement of participants in community service positions.





❑ **Senior Medicare Patrol –**

- Eleven community events that reached over 15,500 people were conducted to educate older adult on recognizing and reporting health care fraud in Medicare or Medicaid services.

❑ **Heat Fan Relief –**

- Over 1,492 fans were distributed to older or disabled adults who needed relief from the summer heat

❑ **Family Caregiver Support Program –**

- 1,369 caregivers received such as education, respite and supplemental services such as nutritional supplements, special transportation and home modification.

❑ **Education and Training –**

- During the past year, AAA staff has become certified trainers in the following areas in order to allow them to train and up-skill facility staff in all nine counties:
 - Elder Care and Work
 - AARP Powerful Tools for Caregivers
 - Aging Communication Training
 - Stanford University Chronic Disease Self Management program
- The annual Centralina AAA conference, entitled "**The New World of Aging: Choices for Independence**" provided training to almost 600 individuals in the region. This two day conference is one of the few aging conferences in the state that is specifically geared to meeting the training needs of front line workers. The conference incorporated the national Agency on Aging theme of "choice" to help older adults remain independent.





COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SERVICES

The CEDC was formed in 2005 to implement the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy adopted in the region and to maintain regional eligibility for Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants. Centralina's Community and Economic Development (CED) department provides a wide range of services and supports the Centralina Economic Development Commission (CEDC) and provides economic investment services to our region. The COG Board appoints CEDC which has been recognized by EDA as the Economic Development District (EDD) for the region.

CED staff provides a range of services to local governments including:

- Code Enforcement
- Grant writing, management and administration
- Neighborhood redevelopment planning
- Management of drug and alcohol programs
- Space assessment planning
- Economic development planning and staffing



The regional economy is quickly evolving from one based on low skills and cheap labor to an innovation-based economy. Recognizing the importance of growing new initiatives to better serve the region, CED added programs offering technical services and technical training.

- Commercial districts redevelopment
- Housing renovation
- Developing financial packages for redevelopment projects
- Skill-building workshops for planners and staff from public and non-profit agencies

LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION

A new five year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was adopted in 2007 by the CEDC. The *No Boundaries* report includes new target industries, reflecting the new prominence that biotech and associated technologies will play in the regional economy as the North Carolina Research Center in Kannapolis matures.

- In July 2007, CEDC initiated a website serving the logistics cluster in North and South Carolina. Members of the logistics industry noted the need for a "portal" to the region (website) where the many and diverse organizations serving this large industry could exchange information and reach constituents. The website will promote the efficacy and growth of the transportation/logistics, promote collaboration among members of the cluster, and encourage discussion of innovative products to ensure security in the industry.



COLLABORATION

The Centralina Economic Development Commission (CEDC) and a number of regional partners organized a Regional Summit, held on September 20, 2007, to initiate a broad public-private dialogue on regional growth, opportunity and prosperity.



RESULTS

- As part of the implementation plan for advanced manufacturing, CEDC staff began mapping the automotive supply chain in the region. The "supply chain" includes supplier networks, the production enterprises and the distribution systems that encompass product development, sourcing, production, logistics, and delivery of products used in the automotive, motorsports and transportation industries in the region. Existing data listed 450 companies, our research to date shows 925 companies participating in this industry. The goal is to spot areas where missing industries might be recruited to the region and to let existing manufacturers buy locally produced materials.
- The Centralina Economic Development Commission (CEDC) completed Phase II of the Advanced Manufacturing Initiative. The effort included two "Visioneering" sessions attended by approximately 60 representatives from private industry, workforce development boards, UNC C, and economic developers in the region. Four reports were issued and the final recommendations are already being used by partnering organizations.
- Since 2005, \$2.4 million in grants from the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration have been awarded to development projects in the region. The continuing viability of the CEDC allows the region to maintain eligibility for these grants.

SUMMIT *on growth* ...the second wave

- In September 2007, the CEDC sponsored the regional Summit on Growth. Over 200 attendees discussed the impacts of predicted population and employment growth in the region. The event was capped by a keynote address from David Murdock, the CEO of Dole Foods and the principal developer of the North Carolina Research Campus. Projections for the year 2030 show that population in the nine county region is expected to grow by 85% and employment by 89%. This tremendous growth will generate new demands on public infrastructure and educational systems throughout the region.



- Technical workshops are offered in the region to develop specialized skills for local staff. Workshop topics focus on redevelopment and the latest trends for infill development. Last year the workshops attracted approximately 220 participants.
- Recent reinvestment projects completed in member jurisdictions include:
 - Renovation and reuse of old Dallas High School for safe housing for elderly residents. CED staff assisted with the Community and Economic Development grant application, administered the funds and managed the renovation project. Total project costs were \$3.6 million
 - Remodeling of historic Rankin Building in the Town of Mooresville. CED staff secured grant funds to support the project and provided assistance to property owners in obtaining loans to support the project.
 - Redevelopment of Five Points District in the City of Albemarle. Centralina CED staff conducted a study of the area, prepared a redevelopment plan and secured project funding to assist in the redevelopment of Lillian Mill.



Lillian Mill before renovation



FINDING FROM THE ADVANCED MANUFACTURING REPORT:

“Prosperity happens in clusters brought about by regional competitiveness and innovation capacity. Based on the CH2M HILL Target Industry Analysis the following clusters are suggested for focused business retention, expansion, and new project development. These targeted clusters provide the most potential for creating abundant, well-paying jobs and having a strong economic impact in the region, preferably beyond their direct effect. An advanced manufacturing center can have the highest impact by focusing on these target clusters”

HIGH PRIORITY CLUSTERS:

General Machinery, Equipment and Components Cluster

Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Manufacturing Cluster

Automotive/Transportation Cluster

Telecommunication and Electronic Components Manufacturing Cluster.

PLANNING

SERVICES

Centralina's staff continued to provide services in land use planning, comprehensive planning, zoning and subdivision regulation, annexation studies, and mapping to member governments. Staff has both the experience and expertise to assist local governments in subjects related to land use planning, development and growth management and environmentally related issues. Major functions/services provided by Centralina Planning staff include:

- ❑ **Regional Planning** – Centralina Planning staff provides input into regional planning projects including:
 - ❑ NC 150 Corridor Study
 - ❑ NC 3 Corridor Study
 - ❑ NC 73 Council of Planning
- ❑ **Grant Funded Projects** – Major grants coordinated by Centralina Planning staff include:



- **Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition (CCFC)** continues to work with over a 100 public and private stake holders throughout the region to reduce dependence on petroleum and improve air quality. The CCFC was designated in 2004 in the national Department of Energy's Clean Cities program and since its inception has brought into the region over \$800,000 in clean transportation grants, with total projects exceeding \$1.5 million.
 - **Goose Creek Education Project** which is funded by NCDOT and works to increase public awareness and education about the watershed and related issues.
- ❑ **Transportation Planning** – In addition to supporting and conducting regional transportation projects, Centralina staff support the Lake Norman Rural Planning Organization, the transportation planning organization that oversees related issues in Iredell, Lincoln, Cleveland and portions of Gaston County.
 - ❑ **Planning, Zoning and Land Use Technical Assistance** – Centralina planning staff work with member jurisdictions to provide local planning assistance in areas such as annexations, developing and revising land use ordinances, conducting regional and community studies, and surveys, developing tree and landscape ordinances, and writing rules of procedure for Planning Boards and Boards of Adjustment. Staff also provides ongoing planning services to local jurisdictions that do not have a planner on staff. Such services were provided to four communities in 2007: Marvin, Fairview, Unionville and Marshville.



❑ **Marine Commissions** – Centralina serves as administrator for both the Lake Wylie and Mountain Island Lake Marine Commissions. Both commissions strive to preserve protect water quality, protect and promote public safety, preserve and protect property and to preserve and protect wildlife. The Lake Wylie Marine Commission was established through a joint resolution of Gaston, Mecklenburg and York Counties. The Mountain Island Lake Marine Commission was established through a joint resolution of Gaston, Lincoln and Mecklenburg Counties.

❑ **Training** – Centralina continues to play a lead role in providing planning training to both citizen boards and elected bodies throughout the region. Three regional training sessions were held this past year dealing with form-based codes, quasi-judicial decisions and annexation. Over 250 persons, primarily staff, planning board and board of adjustment members, as well as elected officials attended.

LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION

Centralina's planning staff attended national training sessions on form-based codes in 2007, and have begun to incorporate form-based content into regulations written for local governments. Form-based codes are an alternative to traditional land use regulations and instead incorporate design and aesthetic issues into the planning process.

Centralina's Clean Fuel Coalition (CCFC) was a recipient of the Southeast Ethanol and Biodiesel Infrastructure Corridor grant from the Department of Energy to coordinate the location of three biodiesel/ethanol retail stations in the region. With assistance from CCFC, these stations will be open to the public over the next two years.

Centralina staff has proposed to the NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program spearheading a local watershed planning process for the Goose and Crooked Creek watersheds. This initiative would assemble the variety of data and information collected within the watershed, formulate actions for improved watershed health and ultimately guide and prioritize projects in these watersheds.

Centralina created a course for real estate professionals explaining the basic principles of "Low Impact Development." The course will be offered for credit in the fall and winter 2008 at the Charlotte Region Commercial Board of REALTORS and the Mingle School of Real Estate. The development of this training program was funded by the State Division of Water Quality grant.

COLLABORATION

Centralina's staff, in conjunction with many members of the public and private sectors, have put together a work plan for creating a unified "River District" along the portions of the Catawba River located south of the Cowan's Ford Dam. The purpose of the district is to create a unified vision and associated development regulations for local governments to adopt to



preserve the integrity of the River. This initiative brings together representatives from Lincoln, Mecklenburg, and Gaston Counties on a joint planning project.

Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition continues to educate the region on alternative fuels and recently partnered with NC BioNetwork BioEd Center, Piedmont Biofuels and Triangle Clean Cities to host biodiesel quality workshops across the state.

The development of the Gaston County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) document was a collaborative effort between Centralina, Gaston County and the majority of municipalities in the county. The text of this UDO will be in a form suitable for adoption by all local governments in the county.

Working collaboratively to help ensure that the corridors remain functional, from a transportation perspective, and accommodate anticipated growth in line with community expectations and preferences, two multi-jurisdiction transportation/land use studies were begun in 2007.

- NC 3 Study which involves Iredell and Cabarrus Counties, Town of Mooresville and City of Kannapolis. Local governments felt that collaboratively studying the future of this highway was in everyone's best interest given the amount of development taking place in the Mooresville area as well as projected increases in development associated with the Research Campus in Kannapolis.
- NC 150 study which includes Gaston and Lincoln Counties and the Cities of Cherryville and Lincolnton. The four local governments wanted to jointly address the future of NC 150 in light of the "Bypass" recently completed in the Crouse community in southwest Lincoln County and recent commercial development that has occurred in Cherryville along NC 150. Most of the highway in Lincoln County is two-laned (with plans for the eventual widening of the road to four lanes), and both city and county officials wanted to ensure that quality development occurs along the Corridor that does not impede the flow of traffic.



MOUNTAIN ISLAND LAKE MANUFACTURING COMPANY

PHOTO COURTESY OF GASTON COUNTY MUSEUM, DALLAS, NC



Developing a partnership through the NC 73 Council of Planning has strengthened the administration process by COG planning staff. One of the major accomplishments of the COP was the update of the composite future land use map for the NC 73 Corridor. This represents the first time that the map had been updated since initially created for these eight jurisdictions as part of the NC 73 Transportation/Land Use Study completed in 2004.



The Mountain Island Lake and Lake Wylie Marine Commissions meet monthly and address issues from environmental protection to making recommendations on new developments around the lake. In July 2007, Mountain Island Lake Marine Commission hosted the annual Joint Marine Commission meeting which included the commissions administered by Centralina COG and the Lake Norman Marine Commission.

RESULTS

❑ Regional Planning –

- NC 73 Corridor- Update of the Corridor's composite future land use map.
- Creation of the Regional Stormwater Partnership.

❑ Grant Funded Projects –

- Clean Cities Fuels Coalition (CCFC) unveiled an alternative fuel station interactive map on its website for users to find biodiesel, ethanol, natural gas and propane stations near them or on the road. This map will assist stakeholders and the public at large to understand where alternatives fuels can be purchased in our region.
- Centralina secured a grant for \$131,000 from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund to promote and implement regional stormwater activities. A regional stormwater partnership, involving twenty-six local governments in the Region was created to implement regional stormwater programs. A 319 grant application was also prepared in 2007 to supplement the Partnership.
- The CCFC conducted three biodiesel quality workshops across the state in partnership with NC BioNetwork BioEd Center, Piedmont Biofuels and Triangle Clean Cities. The first workshop was held at Gaston College in Dallas.





- CCFC held its annual fleet managers workshop in partnership with Mecklenburg County Air Quality in November 2007. The workshop included information on diesel retrofits, biofuels, funding sources and gave an opportunity for participants to test drive a plug-in hybrid.
- In addition, preparing and distributing numerous handouts to educate citizens about watersheds and conservation easements, the Goose Creek Education Project conducted two major events
 - "Agricultural and Land Management Tools Workshop for Large Tract Landowners in the Goose Creek Watershed"
 - "Union County Planners' Lunch: Resources and Tools for Ecologically Sensitive Development"
- ☐ **Planning, Zoning and Land Use Technical Assistance** – Planning, Zoning and Land Use Technical Assistance – Centralina's planning staff worked on a variety of different technical assistance projects for its member governments. Samplings of these projects include:
 - **Lincoln County Land Use Plan** – Adopted by the Board of Commissioners in August 2007, the county is redrafting its land use regulations, in part, to implement the strategies contained in the adopted Land Use Plan.
 - **Gaston Unified Development (UDO) Ordinance** – A draft Gaston Unified Development Ordinance was completed by Centralina staff in mid-2007 and was submitted to the Gaston County Planning Department staff for final review and refinement. Gaston County staff has conducted meetings with officials from the communities in the county to explain the UDO and what its adoption will mean for the County and cities. The county anticipates adopting the UDO in early 2008. The City of Bessemer City has already adopted it and the City of Gastonia is reviewing the text for ultimate adoption.
 - **Annexation Qualification** – Centralina was involved in four separate annexation studies in three communities – Salisbury, Brevard and Cramerton
 - **Ongoing Planning Assistance** – Centralina served as "staff planner" or provided in-house training to staff in Unionville, Marshville, Mineral Springs, Landis, Waxhaw, Marvin, Anson County and Fairview.
 - **Local Staff Hiring** – Centralina continued to provide hiring assistance for planning staff in member jurisdictions. In 2007, such assistance was provided for Weddington and Lincoln County.

- **PARTF grant application assistance** – The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund provides a viable source for funding the construction and renovation of parks in North Carolina. Centralina has assisted communities throughout the region with a 100% success rate of winning applications. In 2007, assistance was provided to both Wadesboro and Cornelius (with PARTF funding secured for both communities).



- **Pedestrian Plans** – Centralina has helped numerous municipalities in the region win pedestrian planning grant awards from NCDOT. Now COG is developing those pedestrian plans through a broad, public input-driven process. Exemplifying principles of pedestrian-oriented development and smart growth, these pedestrian plans provide clear direction on policy changes and buildable projects that promote walkable neighborhoods and economically vital communities. Communities staff assisted with Pedestrian Plans including assisting Cherryville with obtaining an NCDOT Pedestrian Planning Grant
- **Meeting Facilitations/Goal Setting** – Centralina staff worked with the Town of Cornelius in facilitating meetings of the Town’s Growth Management Commission and assisted in developing regulations which implemented the growth management recommendations

❑ **Training** – Planning staff conducted the following regional training sessions:

- Form Based Code Workshop held in Mount Holly with over 100 persons attending. Many local governments are considering using form-based regulations and the workshop was viewed as a good way to familiarize planning staff, planning board members and elected officials with how form based codes work, advantages and pitfalls associated with these regulations, and what implications are for local governments if they are implemented.
- Joint planning board training sessions for seven Mecklenburg and Union communities
- Workshop on annexation held in Matthews. Centralina continued to provide annexation assistance to local governments in 2007 with two annexation studies produced. The workshop was designed to explain the various annexation methods and tools available to local governments.
- Workshop on quasi-judicial procedures. Local governments routinely get involved in conducting quasi-judicial hearings and making quasi-judicial decisions. This is a complicated process, especially for those communities that do not routinely get involved in these activities. The workshop was designed to explain when quasi-judicial procedures are to be followed, the "do's and don'ts" of conducting such hearings and the legal implications of such decisions.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

SERVICES

The Centralina Workforce Development Board (WDB) is committed to providing the vision and leadership for creating workforce solutions for our region. As the Board responsible for local workforce funding, we invest in our community by partnering with economic development, education and businesses to create innovative strategies to serve career seekers and businesses. The Centralina WDB serves Anson, Cabarrus, Iredell, Lincoln, Rowan, Stanly, and Union counties.

Major functions/services provided include:

- ❑ **Job Link Career Centers** - Since 1996, the Centralina WDB has provided oversight, direction, guidance and support for the development of the eight JobLink Career Centers in their service area. Local JobLink Career Centers continue to be the single point of contact for businesses and career seekers in our counties.
- ❑ **Workforce Investment Act (WIA)** programs funded through the Centralina WDB provide assessment, education, training and placement services to meet the needs of incumbent workers, adults, dislocated workers and youth.
- ❑ **Advocate/Facilitator** for our communities on workforce related issues and solutions

LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION

- ❑ To stay informed of cutting edge programs the Centralina WDB received information on topics such as - "Resource Navigator System", "SHARE Network", "Let the Job Speak – Job Alignment", "Literacy and Lifelong Learning to Strengthen Workforce & Economic Development" from outstanding speakers.
- ❑ The Centralina WDB expanded the use of the BusinessWise software program for local JobLink Career Centers, increasing the ability of center staff to reach out to more local businesses and increase job orders, job placements, and employer services. BizWiz, a service to better coordinate employer contacts among center staff, was added.
- ❑ Monthly surveys of local businesses are conducted to determine if workforce services offered through local JobLink Career Centers are effective, has successfully implemented a software package called Strategic Advantage. This package can provide area economic development organizations with important and relevant data for economic development planning projections (ex. Anson County Economic Development, Charlotte Regional Partnership). Additionally, the Strategic Advantage program has been used to assist in showing relevant transferable skills for those individuals laid off due to plant closings so that they may make a quicker transition to new employment.
- ❑ The Board's Community Relations Committee revamped the WDB website – www.centralinaworks.com as part of an overall rebranding process. The new website includes a blog where the community can post comments, suggestions





and ideas; customer surveys and downloadable podcasts that address workforce, economic and education issues and solutions. Additionally, visitors can explore employment and training solutions for businesses, youth and job seekers provided through the Centralina JobLink Career Centers.

- ❑ The Board's Workforce Readiness Committee addressed the challenge of "Improving Functional Literacy" by initiating a Campaign for Lifelong Learning in the region. The campaign provides the framework for promoting a certified, universal skill set to businesses (current and prospective) and workers, communicating workforce resources throughout the community, ensuring an increase two-year degrees and trade program participants and sustaining prosperity by improving financial literacy.

COLLABORATION

The Centralina WDB is the vital link in making workforce development collaboration happen in the region. Their collaborative work can be seen in the continued development and improvement of local JobLink Career Centers, the coordination of services for dislocated workers and joint partnerships for youth services.

The WDB serves as the lead organization with The Competitive Workforce Alliance for implementation of the State of the Workforce Study, which collaboratively serves 12 counties in North Carolina as well as those within the Catawba Workforce Investment Board region in SC. The Board received a \$55,000 Regional Collaboration grant and a \$55,000 Regional Skills Partnership grant for the Allied Health industry for the Alliance offered through the NC Department of Commerce.

The WDB partnered with Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, the Cabarrus and Rowan JobLink Career Centers and Castle & Cooke, Inc. in the development of the R3 Center in Kannapolis. The R3 Center will help individuals refocus on skills and interests; provide retraining, and provide re-employment services through local JobLink Career Centers and other agencies. The R3 Center also serves as a link between the NC Research Campus and people looking for new career opportunities.

The Centralina WDB continues its partnership with Rowan-Cabarrus Community College and Mitchell Community College as pilots for the new statewide Career Readiness Certification project. The Career Readiness Certificate, using the nationally recognized Work Keys assessment, is an employability credential that reflects an individual's attainment of certain core employability skills required across many industries and occupations. After implementation in 2006, Rowan-Cabarrus CC is number one and Mitchell CC number three in the state for Career Readiness Certifications issued. In 2007, the Centralina WDB helped fund, along with NC Community College grants, the implementation of Career Readiness Certification at Stanly Community College, Gaston College (Lincoln campus) and South Piedmont Community College.





During the past fiscal year, the Centralina WDB received \$6,932,205 in funds and expended \$5,763,801 or 83% with the remaining funds allocated for continuing projects (WIA training, Incumbent Worker grants). Only 10% of the funds are available for direct administrative services. Fully 90% of the monies utilized by the Board support direct training, counseling, assessment and job placement services for career seekers and a variety of business services offered through the local JobLink Career Centers.

RESULTS

❑ Job Link Career Centers –

- In 2007, the NC Department of Commerce formally recognized the continuous improvement and increased commitment to customer service made by our JobLink Career Centers; seven of our Centers are now state certificated Level II and the Cabarrus County JobLink Career Center is now a state certified Level III center.
- The eight centers in the Centralina region provided the following services during the past year:

CUSTOMER SERVICE PROVIDED AT CENTRALINA JOBLINK CAREER CENTERS	
January 1 - December 31, 2007	
Customers Seeking Services	146,100
Placed in Jobs through Centers	9,578
Placed in Training through Centers	809
People Utilizing Career Resource Room/Area	98,956
People Receiving other Services	114,816
Employers	
Job Orders Placed through Centers	10,844
Job Orders Filled through Centers	7,755
Other Employer Services Provided through Centers	4,588

❑ Incumbent Worker Services

- The Centralina WDB through Incumbent Worker Training made a total of \$251,744 in economic investment in our counties with 13 local employers received assistance and 706 employees were scheduled for training.

❑ Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs enrolled 400 adults with the average hourly wage at job placement for adult and dislocated worker completers was \$12.22.
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs enrolled 395 dislocated workers
- Eight out of every ten disadvantaged individuals finishing workforce development programs entered employment or received a high school diploma or GED certificate.
- Over 95% of dislocated workers served through Centralina WDB training programs entered employment.

❑ Youth Services –

- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs enrolled 482 youth
- The Centralina Youth Council – its members, youth participants and Board staff – participated in and help coordinate the first annual 2007 NC Youth Summit: "Young Adults, One Voice."
- The Centralina WDB and Youth Council hosted the first State of the Region Youth Services Summit focusing on meeting the training needs of local youth service providers.

❑ Advocate/Facilitator for our communities on workforce related issues and solutions

- The WDB, along with other members in the Competitive Workforce Alliance and the Charlotte Regional Partnership hosted the 2nd Annual Workforce and Economic Development Summit in Charlotte. Over 150 people attended this event which focused on the importance of education to workforce efforts.
- WDB members and staff made presentations to the following regional and national audiences regarding our programs and achievement:
 - NC Commission on Workforce Development
 - Southeastern Employment and Training Association
 - National Association of Workforce Boards
 - NC Association of Workforce Professionals
 - NC Community College System
 - WDB Directors Council
 - State Youth Leads meeting
 - State Business Services Coordinators meeting
 - Leadership Cabarrus and local Rotary
 - Civic and Lions clubs
 - Local Employer Seminars and Career Fairs, including the Iredell County Workforce Development Summit and the Stanly County Economic Development Summit
- The WDB again served as the primary co-sponsor with South Piedmont Community College of The Disney Institute's Team Creativity Program. This program, featuring its renowned brand of creative development, showed business and civic leaders different ways to be creative and challenged them to think both inside and outside the box.
- The WDB, in partnership with the Employment Security Commission, produces a monthly Labor Market Information Update.
- Over 1,000 of the Centralina WDB – Growing Occupations posters have been distributed to local schools, community colleges, JobLink Career Centers and their partner agencies throughout the region to better inform job seekers on careers and the required skills and/or education needed.



FROM THE CHAIRMAN...



It is always with great pleasure that I speak about the work of the Centralina Council of Governments...

As the state designated lead intergovernmental planning agency, Centralina COG is diligent in meeting the needs of our member governments and in advancing regional programs and initiatives. New issues arise everyday that have the potential of impacting our future decisions. Centralina and its 73 member governments consistently keep the region engaged, informed, and prepared to take action.

Centralina accomplished a number of successful projects and initiatives which are highlighted in this annual report and I invite you to review the snapshot of COG's activities for 2007. However, I also want to focus your attention on things to come.

We are about to embark upon an important milestone in the history of Centralina COG. In 2008, Centralina will celebrate 40 years of the region growing together. Since 1968, Centralina COG has existed in our region to convene our local governments in planning collectively for our regional future. Our relationship to our member governments continues to evolve to meet the needs of a growing region yet the primary mission of this organization remains the same.

Convening the region to take greater collaborative action is no easy feat but COG is successful in rallying local governments behind common concerns and establishing a true culture of regional cooperation. As we look towards the future needs of this region...

- Transportation continues to challenge the region. Aging infrastructure, together with increasing travel demands created by more people and more trips means the region must work to find the additional resources needed to sustain the region for the next 40 years and beyond. This initiative will be one of COG's biggest initiatives moving forward.
- It will also be important for our area leaders to continue to help define and craft the future of our region through our CONNECT initiative.
- Important to continue working in concert not only with our member governments but also with business and education sectors.
- Our region is not only growing, but changing demographically – we need to meet the challenge.

I extend sincere appreciation to the Board of Delegates, its officers, the Centralina COG staff and others that have worked with great energy to make this year a success. Working together we will face the critical issues before us in 2008.



“We are about to embark upon an important milestone in the history of Centralina COG. In 2008, Centralina will celebrate 40 years of...”

**“THE REGION
GROWING
TOGETHER”**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe D. Carpenter'.

Joe Carpenter
Chairman

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...



I am pleased to present the 2007 annual report for the Centralina Council of Governments...

It features information about the services that COG provides, and highlights information about leadership and innovation initiatives, collaborative efforts, and results we have seen during the year. This was a year of relationship and coalition-building in support of major regional initiatives. Centralina has engaged in a host of activities that worked to enhance the region's quality of life and collaborative approach and I am highlighting a few of these efforts:

- The CONNECT visioning initiative continued to represent a collaborative effort by regional leaders and provide an exemplary model of what can be achieved on a regional level with public, private, and civic cooperation.
- The Centralina Economic Development Commission convened over 200 regional leaders at the *Summit on Growth* to address the challenges of fast growth and to answer the question of how this growth will affect our schools, our transportation systems, our jobs and in fact our lives.
- Centralina's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) hosted a successful aging conference, *The New World of Aging* that attracted over 500 professionals who serve in the fields of aging and long-term care. Such conferences enable AAA to strengthen collaborative partnerships with aging service providers, caregivers, consumers and others across the region and to educate the region on issues relating to our senior communities.
- The Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition educates the region about clean fuels through action planning and workshops to reach the goal of reducing petroleum use in the region and to consider other fuel uses.
- Our *Workforce Development* program enrolled 1,277 dislocated workers, adults and youth in training and education programs through the Workforce Investment Act funds, and this year, the NC Department of Commerce formally recognized the continuous improvement and increased commitment to customer service made by our JobLink Centers certifying seven of the centers as Level II and the Cabarrus County as a Level III center.
- Centralina COG builds on a solid tradition of regional cooperation and effectively serves at the center of collaborative efforts in the region. We are pleased to be a partner and facilitator of planning for the future of our region – corridor plans which link member governments, business leaders and transportation officials along strategic transportation routes and have them plan for transportation facilities, land use and economic and environmental impacts.
- Internally Centralina has focused on increased accountability and more proactive reporting to our member governments and our regional partners.

The Greater Charlotte region is widely recognized as one of the best places in the Southeast to live and work. This is due in large part to the work of our local governments. As we focus on the future, I look forward to more discussion and new ideas with our elected officials and managers on how to plan and build an even stronger region.



“This was a year of relationship and coalition-building in support of major regional initiatives.”

**“THE REGION
GROWING
TOGETHER”**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Al Sharp'.

Al Sharp
Executive Director

FINANCIAL SUMMARY...

CENTRALINA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2007

EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM

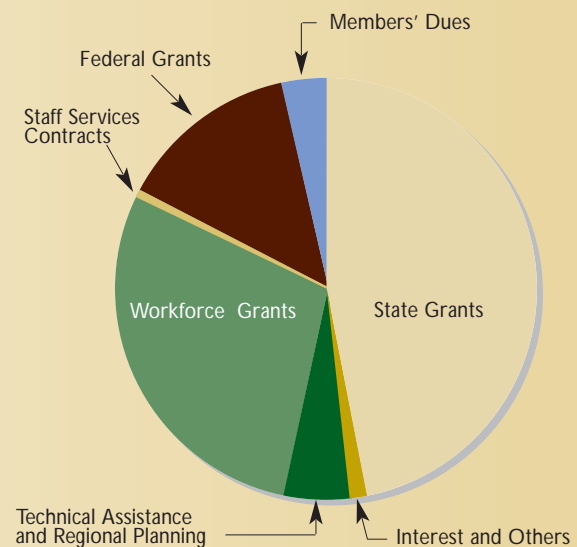
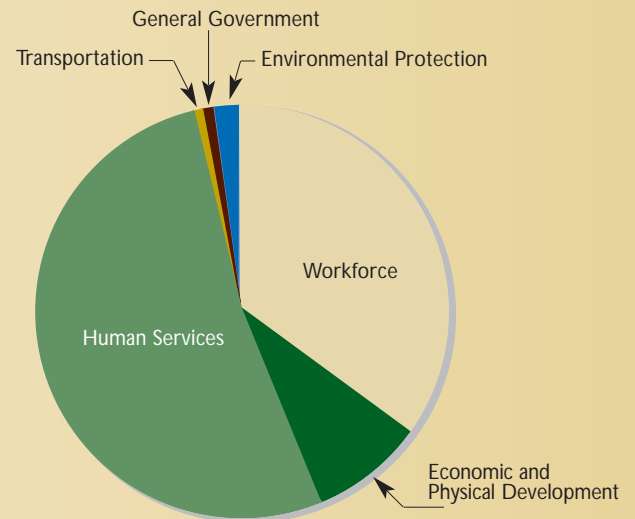
■ General Government	104,212
■ Transportation	142,842
■ Environmental Protection	438,492
■ Economic and Physical Development	1,713,074
■ Human Services	10,433,242
■ Workforce	6,910,645
Totals	<u>19,742,507</u>



Centralina
Council of Governments

SOURCES OF REVENUE

■ Members' Dues	697,896
■ Interest and Other	264,505
■ Technical Assistance and Regional Planning	935,233
■ Staff Services Contracts	55,103
■ Workforce Grants	5,763,801
■ Federal Grants	2,769,230
■ State Grants	9,288,266
Totals	<u>19,774,034</u>



CENTRALINA BOARD OF DELEGATES OFFICERS



L to R: Robert Misenheimer, Vice Chairman, Marie Moore, Treasurer, Joe Carpenter, Chairman, Bob Austell, Secretary

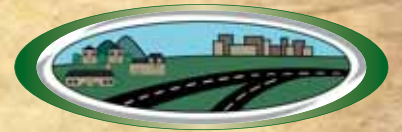




CHARLOTTE SKYLINE - 1984

THE REGION
GROWING
TOGETHER...





Centralina

Council of Governments

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Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools

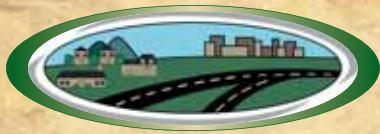
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Hezekiah Alexander Homesite,
Charlotte, NC

Charlotte Trolley, Inc.

Gaston County Museum
Dallas, NC





Centralina

Council of Governments

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