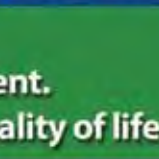
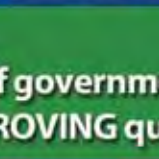
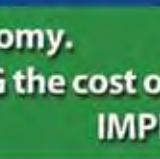
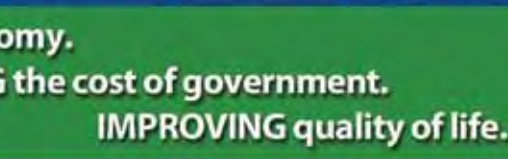




Centralina Council of Governments

2011-2012 Annual Report



Meeting Our Regional Challenges

The Centralina Council of Government's (CCOG) role is to coordinate the efforts of federal, state and local governments and organizations to grow our region's economy and jobs, control the cost of government and improve quality of life. More specifically, the services that the organization provides enable local governments to get up-to-date information, save money, access grant funds and better position themselves for long-term economic health. We are one of 16 state-designated councils of government charged with this responsibility in North Carolina.

This Fiscal Year 2011-2012 annual report summarizes the numerous ways that CCOG is responding to the needs of our member governments, to the citizens and to this region. CCOG has worked this fiscal year to meet the regional challenges of:

- CONNECT Our Future;
- Promoting Community and Economic Development;
- Maintaining a Competitive Workforce in a Global Economy;
- Ensuring Lifelong Communities;
- Creating a Culture of Environmental Stewardship;
- Land Use Planning for the Future; and
- Transportation Options for a Growing Region.

CONNECT Our Future

"CONNECT Our Future" is a three-year process in which communities, counties, businesses, educators, non-profits and other organizations work together to develop a regional growth framework for growing jobs and the economy, controlling cost of government and improving quality of life. This initiative is funded by a \$4.9 million HUD Sustainable Communities Grant awarded in November 2011, and \$3 million in local in-kind public and private matching resources.

Through this process, Centralina COG, along with its South Carolina partner Catawba Regional Council of Governments, is facilitating the efforts of governments and organizations in the region to achieve the fundamental obligation of government: building greater communities for future generations.

Our region is one of the fastest growing regions of more than 1 million people in the U.S. The CONNECT initiative will help to ensure strategies and systems are in place to match future growth with quality jobs, necessary transportation, housing, water and air quality and other social and physical infrastructure.

The CONNECT Our Future process will engage public, private and non-profit organizations across the 14-county bi-state region. The work is based on the 2008 CONNECT regional vision and will build on what communities and their citizens identify as existing conditions, future plans, needs, values, and potential strategies.

During the first half of 2012, CONNECT Consortium membership outreach was underway with elected officials making presentations to local government boards. The CONNECT Consortium is composed of more than 100 member organizations and the official Consortium launch kickoff took place in July 2012. Other organizational structure was put in place and public engagement planning was underway, with the first local, community-based events scheduled to begin in October 2012.



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

Promoting Community and Economic Development

Growing the economy is vitally important to the health of the region. Services provided by CCOG's Community and Economic Development (CED) Department provide various technical and support services for assisting our members to shape municipal plans, allocate resources, resolve conflicts and improve neighborhoods. Significant activities in Fiscal Year 2011-12 include:

- Urgent Repair Program—Funded by the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency in annual competitive cycles, \$125,000 serves Lincoln and Union Counties in 2011; \$84,000 serves Iredell and Lincoln counties in 2012.
- CDBG administration and grant management provided to several communities in the region.
- Drug and Alcohol Testing Program for municipal transportation departments.
- Code Enforcement services administered in nine communities to help improve and maintain housing stock.

Essential to collaborative region-wide economic growth is the Centralina Economic Development Commission (CEDC), established by CCOG in 2005 as a diverse non-profit partnership of public and private sectors to promote retention, expansion, and development of business and industry. The CEDC is designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) as the regional Economic Development District charged with implementing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Five-Year Plan by conducting research, providing technical assistance and facilitating member government's access to federal funding. This year the CEDC:

- Initiated the Five-year CEDS Update in collaboration with key regional stakeholders.
- Collaborated to align the CEDS plan with "NC Tomorrow" - the state initiative for building communities for tomorrow's jobs.
- Administered the Centralina Regional Revolving Loan Fund, funded in part by the NC Tobacco Trust Fund and the U.S. EDA to provide gap financing to small businesses to create jobs and grow our economy, especially value added agricultural and advanced production small business enterprises.

Maintaining a Competitive Workforce in a Global Economy

Growing the region's economy means creating jobs and diversifying our economy to ensure workers have the training and skills to participate in the job market. Through public and private sector partnerships the Centralina Workforce Development Board provides leadership in a variety of workforce development areas and has been effective in meeting the needs of the current and emerging workforce. This year's program highlights include:

- Sponsoring the Bridging Business and Workforce Development conference in Concord to meet the demand for connecting workforce and business partners. The conference serves as a national model.
- Serving as project lead for the development of the 2012 Skills Survey of North Carolina Employers, a research project to determine the gaps in a worker's training and skills versus the demands of employers.
- Winning, along with four other workforce boards, the 2012 Public-Sector Jerry Award from the Charlotte Regional Partnership (CRP), which recognizes significant and ongoing contributions to economic development.
- Launching the E3: North Carolina Program for Manufacturers. E3, short for Economy, Energy, and Environment, helps businesses focus equally on economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social equity. Besam in Monroe was the first local company involved in the project.
- Continuing to be a workforce leader in North Carolina with Incumbent Workforce Development Program grants approved for seven area businesses to upgrade the skills of employees with local businesses, providing over \$154,000 in economic investment to the region.
- Exceeding state and federal mandated standards for program performance – over 95 percent of dislocated workers served through Centralina WDB training programs entered employment; in all, Workforce Investment Act services enrolled 1,278 in training and education and employment development activities.

Ensuring Lifelong Communities

In the midst of unprecedented growth in the older adult population, Centralina Area Agency on Aging (AAA) has maximized shrinking resources to impact the quality of life in our region through extensive collaboration and partnership with the Aging Network, service providers, non-traditional partners in transportation, healthcare, and community design.

With a primary focus of helping individuals stay healthier and active, the Centralina AAA offers self-management workshops to help ensure people in the region with chronic diseases have the support they need to access healthy options and live well. This year Centralina AAA has increased the number of trained leaders for evidenced based programs by 52 percent. This has resulted in a 45 percent increase in Living Healthy workshops, an 88 percent increase in Living Healthy with Diabetes workshops, and a 57 percent increase in "A Matter of Balance" workshops. More than 96 percent of those who have completed the classes report that as a result of the workshops, they have increased their activity level, implemented self management tools and would recommend the workshop to a friend.

A regional survey identified the need for information about aging issues as critical for older adults in our region. As older adults and families plan for long term needs, they must be aware of options and resources available to them. A new initiative was implemented this year to provide more focused assistance to help residents of long term care facilities transition back into the community environment.

The Area Agency on Aging is recognized statewide for the annual training conference with over 425 attendees, ongoing newsletters, website and one-on-one assistance. A key role of the Area Agency on Aging continues to be advocacy, whether it is individual rights of residents of long term care through our Ombudsman program, or legislative advocacy through the Senior Tar Heel Legislature and development and implementation of the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Tool Kit.

Through community planning, Centralina Area Agency on Aging funds and supports a person-centered service delivery system that promotes independence and preserves dignity for older adults and their families.

Land Use Planning for the Future

CCOG assists local governments with a wide range of technical services including land use planning, grant writing, policy analysis, ordinance writing, meeting facilitation, graphic design, and geographic information systems (GIS) work.

- In addition to serving as the staff planner for the Town of Marshville, CCOG provides planning and mapping services to the Towns of Unionville and Wingate in Union County on an as-needed basis. In other communities, assistance ranges from writing future land use plans (City of Cherryville) to crafting ordinance text amendments (Town of Pineville) and assisting with annexations (City of Belmont).
- Communities within, and outside our region look to Centralina to provide planning related training to both elected and appointed officials. This service is provided at the local level for individual communities and at the regional and sub-regional levels. This year, Centralina conducted quasi-judicial and conditional zoning training in Gaston County, Albemarle, Statesville, Pembroke, Wilson, Asheville, Elizabethtown.
- The Planning Department reviewed local watershed policies and regulations for inclusion in a Local Watershed Plan and provided analysis of the relationship between land use codes and water quality.
- Staff also provided legislative updates to planning directors, keeping them abreast of growth and development issues that may impact their community.

Creating a Culture of Environmental Stewardship

A safe and healthy environment is an essential component of the region's vision for the future. CCOG's Sustainability Program works with partners to improve, conserve, and protect our region's natural resources and to promote a clean and healthy environment.

Sustainability Program staff are involved in a number of different energy and environmental sectors including: water resources (quality and quantity); air quality; renewable energy and energy efficiency; solid waste and recycling; and cleaner, alternative fuels and advanced vehicle technologies through the Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition (CCFC), a designated US Department of Energy Clean Cities program. Some of the highlights of the year include:

- Continuing to administer the Regional Storm Water Partnership (RSP) and expand the program by creating water posters in Spanish.
- Administering the Union County Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block grant to support lighting retrofits in schools and solar hot water for jail facilities.
- A \$500,000 grant award – NC PEV Readiness Initiative: Plugging in from Mountains to Sea to support community and statewide planning for plug-in electric vehicles (PEV) and charging infrastructure.
- Carolina Blue Skies & Green Jobs Initiative – a four-year, bi-state effort to increase availability and use of alternative fuels, simultaneously deploying alternative fuel vehicles and advanced technology vehicles in North
- Working with CCFC stakeholders to displace over 1 million gallons of gasoline and diesel in the greater Charlotte region by using cleaner, alternative fuels and advanced technology vehicles.

Transportation Options for a Growing Region

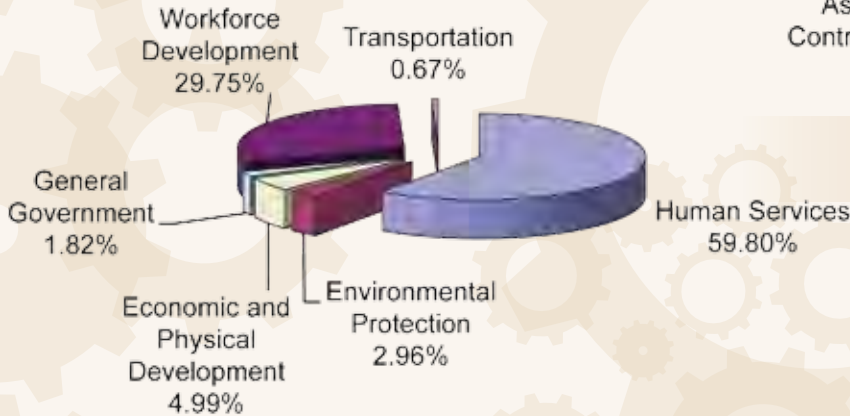
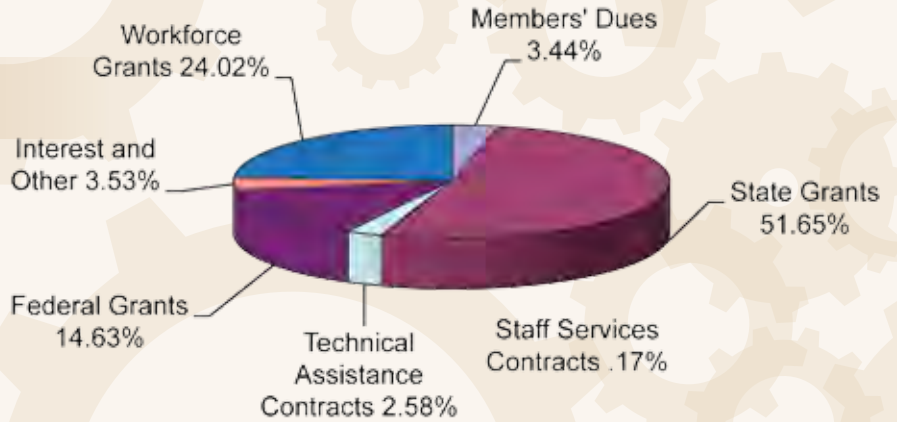
Communities of all sizes are challenged with planning, funding, and implementing transportation improvements to meet citizen needs. With multiple state and local government agencies involved in these issues, precise and thorough coordination is essential. CCOG staff plays a key role in this coordination as well as introducing and implementing new initiatives and plans to promote transportation access, choice, and efficiency throughout the region. Significant projects and efforts are listed below.

- As a result of the 2010 regional transportation governance study recommendations, CCOG staff worked with business leaders to develop a scope of work for a Regional Freight Mobility Plan. The scope identifies collective opportunities and challenges for truck, rail and air freight modes in the bi-state region.
- CCOG facilitated the project development and prioritization process for nearly \$20 million in federal transportation funds available in Mecklenburg and Union Counties to help reduce congestion and air pollution (Congestion Mitigation for Air Quality program).
- Through a grant award from the NCDOT, the Regional Mobility Management Project identified more efficient, effective and affordable ways to provide human service transit for veterans, the elderly, and disabled.
- CCOG served as staff to the Lake Norman Rural Planning Organization, the state-designated transportation planning organization for Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, and Lincoln counties.
- Bike and Pedestrian planning and design was conducted for Waxhaw, Bessemer City, and the Lake Norman Bicycle Route, the first multi-county route in the state.

Financial Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2011

Centralina Council of Governments' revenues from all sources exceeded \$21.7 million during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2011, with increases in federal, state and other grants revenue. The accompanying charts show the primary revenues by source and expenditures by program.

Sources of Revenues



Expenditures by Program



Centralina Council of Governments

525 North Tryon Street • 12th Floor • Charlotte, NC 28202 • 704-372-2416 • 704-347-4710 fax

www.centralina.org