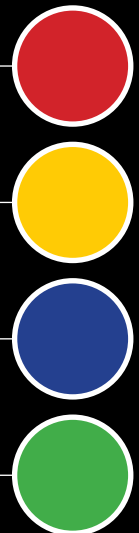


# Central Midlands Council of Governments



FY 2005-2006



**Annual Report** | *Fiscal Year 2005 - 2006*



## CMCOG Mission Statement

To provide the highest quality of planning, technical assistance and services to local governments, businesses and citizens in the Central Midlands region.

### Guiding Principles

- Provide a regional forum where any local government can have issues heard and needs addressed.
- Advocate on behalf of regional governments, businesses and citizens.
- Provide planning and technical assistance with current and future needs of the region in mind.

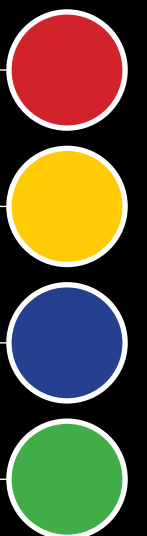


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[www.centralmidlands.org](http://www.centralmidlands.org)



## From the Chairman



**CMCOG Chairman  
R. David Brown**

The end of this past program year in June marked the conclusion of the first year of my two-year term as chairman of the Central Midlands Council of Governments. I believe in all honesty, that this year has been an extremely fruitful one for this agency and where our labors have received significant local, regional, statewide and even national recognition.

Highlights from the past year include our two national awards received by the Central Midlands Family Caregiver Support Program and the Midlands Workforce Development Board. Our Family Caregiver Support Program was the recipient of a 2006 Aging Achievement Award from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging in Chicago this past summer. The award recognizes the hard work of CMCOG's family caregivers in establishing a program to provide assistance to individuals caring for older family members who have health problems.

The Midlands Workforce Development Board (MWDB) was the recipient of the Crystal Globe Award from the Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN) at the National WorkKeys Conference in Nashville for their Job Ready Card; a career readiness certificate program. This award capped a remarkable year for the MWDB, which, earlier in the year also received the Joe A. Young Award from the South Carolina Workforce Investment Board for being the Outstanding Workforce Development Board in South Carolina.

This past year has also seen the completion of a number of major planning studies directed by CMCOG. The Central Midlands Rail Feasibility Study was conducted over the course of the past year to reassess the practicality and cost-effectiveness of commuter rail and other high capacity transit modes in the region. As the population of our region continues to grow, alternative methods of transportation will become necessary, not to just to ease congestion on our roads, but also to combat the associated environmental issues. In that respect, the significance of the recently completed Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Plan really comes to the forefront. The CMCOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan took a close look at existing facilities within the region, and together with

*Thurmond Dean Brown*

major stakeholders in the field of bicycle and pedestrian transportation, developed a plan that we hope will serve to promote cycling and walking as viable means of transportation in the Central Midlands region.

Other major issues addressed within the last year include the S-48 (Columbia Avenue) corridor study in the Town of Chapin, phase one of a regional Green Infrastructure Plan and the formation of the Central Midlands Regional Planning and Development Committee. This committee was established to provide guidance to a number of important COG programs that are not addressed by the current committee structure, such as community and economic development, regional planning projects, and the nascent Wetlands Mitigation Bank and other regional environmental initiatives.

The aforementioned accomplishments, coupled with the high level of recognition a number of our programs have received serves to highlight the wide-ranging, complex and multi-faceted issues that are addressed every day through the various departments and programs housed at the COG. The achievements of the past program year also illustrate the dedication and diligence of the Central Midlands Board, our Executive Director and the staff of CMCOG as we all strive towards our common goal of improving the quality of life within our region, whether that relates to transportation issues, the environment, workforce and economic development or caring for our senior citizens. The COG is ideally placed to act as a steward of regional resources and develop strategies to address issues that transcend our various local municipal and county boundaries.

I am extremely honored to have the privilege of chairing an organization such as CMCOG and look forward to reporting on another highly successful year in 2006-07.



*Norman Whitaker*

## From the Executive Director



**CMCOG  
Executive Director  
Norman Whitaker**

This past year has, by any standards, been an exceptional one at Central Midlands Council of Governments. Our capable staff has completed a variety of projects, which stand to have a significant impact throughout the region at both the local and regional level.

The Central Midlands region is growing at a faster pace than at any time in recent history, with 2005 being a record year for new residential development. Planning for new growth and its impact on the region's infrastructure is therefore critical and highlights the importance of much of our work over the past year. This year we completed the Central Midlands Commuter Rail Study, which lays the groundwork for the establishment of high capacity public transit in our region in the years to come. A regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Pathways Plan was also completed this year. This study, another key component of our multi-modal regional transportation plan, identifies best practices, policies and strategies to encourage cycling and walking as viable means of transportation in the region.

The regional scope of our successes this year, however, has not been confined to the realm of transportation planning. Over the past twelve months, great strides have been made toward the development of a regional Green Infrastructure Plan; an interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystems and functions and provides associated benefits to human populations.

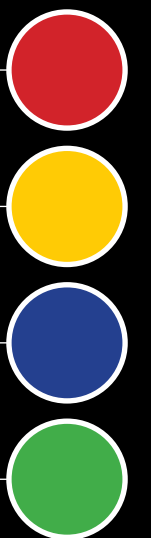
From a human services perspective, our Aging and Ombudsman programs have each had an outstanding year as they seek to improve the quality of life for our region's growing senior population. In addition, the Regional Ombudsman Program, in addition to its regular activities of advocating, mediating and investigating reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation, developed a series of informational guidebooks designed to empower residents of long term care facilities and

their families. These publications have since been held up as standard for ombudsman programs across the State of South Carolina and are now used routinely by the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging. Furthermore, the Midlands Workforce Development Board, in its second year of affiliation with the COG, continues to expand its services, winning both state and national recognition for the variety and quality of services provided to employers and employment seekers across the region.

As important as considering the "Big Picture" is, the COG staff has also made every effort to provide a high level of support and assistance at the local level. This summer, work was completed on the first of our sub-area plans; the Columbia Avenue (S-48) Corridor Study. This plan, which was undertaken with both land use and transportation planning in mind, has resulted in design alternatives and development guidelines for a two mile stretch of highway from I-26 into the Town of Chapin. Also at the local level, 2005-06 was a strong year for our CDBG program with more than \$1.15 million in grant funds awarded to undertake a wide range of community development activities throughout the region. Considerable efforts were also made this past year to provide a high level of local planning assistance to planning commissions and municipalities across the region. Staff completed comprehensive plan updates for Springdale and West Columbia. Our planners have also been certified to provide State mandated training for planning commissions, zoning board of appeals, and local staff planners.

Now, as we move into the next program year our goal is to continue to do what CMCOG has been striving towards for more than 30 years; regional planning from a local perspective.

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## 2005-06 Major Achievements

2005-06 was an especially active year for Central Midlands Council of Governments. Each of the agency's three main program areas (Planning Services, Aging Services & Workforce and Economic development) enjoyed considerable success and achievement as the COG strives to meet the changing regional demands and needs of federal, state and local government, the business community and private citizens of the region. The following are some of the noteworthy achievements over the past program year and serve to illustrate CMCOG's commitment to focusing on important regional growth and development issues that are critical to improving the quality of life in our region.

### Workforce & Economic Development

The 2005-06 program year marked the second full year of the Midlands Workforce Development Board (MWDB) as a program operating within the Central Midlands Council of Governments. A highly successful year at the COG culminated in the MWDB receiving a Crystal Globe award for being the Outstanding Local Workforce Development Program at the National ACT-WorkKeys Conference held in Nashville, Tennessee in May. The award also included \$10,000 to be used for the continued development and marketing of the highly successful WorkKeys Program in the Midlands region, which in its first year of operation performed 4,972 WorkKeys assessments serving more than 1,600 clients. A further 200 individuals have been enrolled in WIN training, earning 966 credentials. Staff has also completed 45 different job profiles for a variety of clients.

The WorkKeys Program, is a nationally standardized job skills assessment system, developed by the American College Testing (ACT) program which has been immensely popular with a wide variety of employers and educational establishments throughout the MWDB area (Richland, Lexington and Fairfield counties). The tests can be tailored to suit individual needs, while testing and assessing a variety of hard skills such as math and reading and soft skills like teamwork and observation, and identify an individual's current skill level as well as targeting ways to improve skill sets in the workplace.

Recently, the MWDB obtained a license for Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN) training, a hands-on computer model which permits an individual to move through a variety of skills tests at their own pace and a series of bronze, silver and gold "Job Ready" certification cards offer incentives to an individual to improve their skills in the Midlands workplace. The MWDB has undertaken a wide-reaching advertising campaign for the WorkKeys program including a variety of television and radio spots and a number of highly visible billboard displays across the region. Furthermore, building on recent efforts to reach out to the Midlands' growing Hispanic community, the majority of WorkKeys tests and literature are also available in Spanish.

WorkKeys has also been used within the past year as an empowerment tool by the staff of the Midlands Workforce Development Board, providing opportunities for more than 60 at-risk youth from the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School in Springdale, South Carolina. The MWDB provided incentives for them to pass their GED, take WorkKeys and WIN training and was able to provide a variety of other employment-related skills such as health and fitness, time management, CPR training and the development of resumes, portfolios and interview techniques. The final phase of the project was to develop and install a "Bus Wrap" advertising the WorkKeys program. The completed bus was unveiled to the youth as a surprise at their graduation ceremony at Fort Jackson on June 10th, 2006.



**WorkKeys Program "Bus Wrap"**

WorkKeys has been so successful within the Midlands region over the past year that staff has fielded a number of requests to provide information on the operation of its program to other states around the country with the Midlands WorkKeys program being hailed as a model program for Career Readiness Certificate Programs across the country.



**2006 WIN Award**



**Bonnie Austin  
2006 WIN Award**

## 2005-2006

### Aging Services

The Central Midlands Area Agency on Aging (AAA) was also rewarded for its hard work in striving to provide the highest quality of care and services to the estimated 101,500 senior citizens (15.8% of the population) in the region. The Central Midlands Family Caregiver Support Program, in only its fourth full year of operation, was nominated for and was awarded a 2006 Aging Achievement Award from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. The Aging Achievement Awards are presented annually and recognize ground-breaking and successful programs targeted at improving the quality of life for seniors. Since 2002, the Central Midlands Family Caregiver Support Program has assisted several hundred individuals from around the region who are caring for family members aged 60 with health problems, as well as a number of grandparents who are raising children under the age of 18.



**Sharon Seago & Jean Bridges with  
Jane Kennedy Aging Award**

In addition, Ms. Jean Bridges, a member of the "Silver Haired Legislature" from the Central Midlands region who has for many years actively lobbied on senior issues, received the prestigious Jane Kennedy Excellence in Aging Award after being nominated for the honor by staff of the Area Agency on Aging. The Jane Kennedy award, which is presented annually by the Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging (SE4A), is named after a former AAA Director and godmother of the singer Jimmy Buffett and recognizes an individual who has made a positive impact on the quality of life of older adults. Ms.

Bridges was presented with the award at the SE4A annual training conference held in Orange Beach, Alabama in November 2005.



**Dr. McClellan visits "Generations" in Chapin**

A considerable amount of staff time, particularly in the latter portion of 2005 was dedicated to responding to a wealth of questions, inquiries and concerns regarding the new Medicare Part D prescription drug plans that came into effect in January 2006. In all, between September and December 2005, more than 600 phone calls were responded to and outreach in the form of workshops and other presentations were held, to address one of the most significant changes to the Medicare Program in recent years. In December 2005, in anticipation of the imminent deadline for enrollment, staff had the honor of receiving then-administrator of the federal government's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Dr. Mark McClellan, as he visited the "Generations" assisted living facility to speak with residents about enrollment in the new Medicare Part D plans.

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**2006 CMCOG  
Aging Staff**



Planning for the needs and protecting the interests of our region's senior population has comprised one of Central Midlands COG's key services since the inception of the Central Midlands Area Agency on Aging (AAA) in 1976. The CMCOG AAA is a quasi-governmental agency that seeks to assist seniors in the region to lead independent, meaningful and dignified lives in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. As the designated regional focal point on aging, the Central Midlands COG AAA pro-actively carries out a wide range of functions related to advocacy, planning and coordinating service delivery in the region. It also assists the local contractors with funding, program development, and technical assistance so that the best possible services are delivered to the elderly population.

The number of seniors in the region has grown significantly over the last two decades. In 1990, 13.5% of the population of the Central Midlands region was aged 60+. Figures for 2006 estimate a senior population of over 101,000 (15.8% of the region's population), which is projected to increase substantially accounting for 18.1% of the population of Richland, Lexington, Newberry and Fairfield counties by 2011.

### The Aging Program

The Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, and the recent reauthorized Older Americans Act of 2006, sets forth the federal regulations for aging programs at the state, regional, and local levels. In the Central Midlands region, the Aging Network, which consists of state, regional and local entities that operate under the framework of the Older Americans Act, is made up of the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging, Central Midlands Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging, the contractors and the seniors receiving aging services in Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, and Richland counties. Funds are allocated to the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging by the federal Administration of Aging, the state General Assembly, and through federal and state grants. These funds are used to provide programs and services to older South Carolinians through the area agencies on aging and are distributed through a competitive procurement process.

Today, as it prepares to celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the services and program operated by the Central Midlands AAA remain just as critically important; ensuring that the highest level of services are available throughout the region. The core Older Americans Act services provided in the Central Midlands region include: transportation, group dining, home delivered meals, home care and health promotion.

In October 2005, in an effort to allow seniors to participate fully and actively in the meals program, the CMCOG Area Agency on Aging initiated a Menu Contest. The contest offers meal site participants the opportunity to participate in the actual planning of a daily meal. A meal idea is submitted at the menu review meeting with the caterer selecting a meal that fits with the meal pattern. The meal site receives recognition by having its name on the menu for the quarter, receives a permanent plaque for the site, holds the trophy for the quarter, and is given a party by Bateman Senior Meals on the day their meal is served. The winners this year were the Dave Waldrop site in Newberry in January, 2006, and the Winnsboro site in April, 2006.

### Information, Referral & Assistance Program

Over the course of the past program year (2005-06), a total of 2,421 calls were received by the AAA's Information, Referral and Assistance Specialist. The Information, Referral and Assistance program is designed to be a central focal point for seniors and their families to call and enquire about the many different services and programs available to seniors throughout the region. If the caller is unable to be assisted directly, they are referred to the appropriate agency. The majority of calls received relate to meals programs and nutrition, recreation and physical activities and housekeeping issues, however, requests for information run the gamut from concerns regarding legal issues, and insurance to information on transportation and adult day cares and nursing homes.

In September, 2005, the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging was awarded a grant from the South Carolina Housing Authority to administer an emergency rental assistance program in

South Carolina for persons age sixty (60) and older and who are at or below 100% of the federal poverty level. This program was facilitated by the Information and Referral Specialist by screening applicants, assisting with application completion, verifying income documentation and identification, and making home visits as needed. The Information, Referral and Assistance Specialist also helped applicants identify the sources of chronic financial stress and, when appropriate, referred them to other programs and/or services in the community.

The Information and Referral program was charged with the task of fairly distributing rental assistance funds that came from the State Housing Authority to the state unit on aging. The Information and Referral Specialist at Central Midlands has received two hundred and seventy-two (272) contacts about the rental assistance program from November 2005 through June 2006. Seventy-nine (79) clients were assisted and \$29,307 was made available to seniors in the region who required rental assistance.

### Family Caregiver Support Program

The primary goal of the Central Midlands Family Caregiver Support Program is to provide assistance to individuals caring for family members aged 60 and older, who have health problems and works in partnership with regional aging services providers to provide a range of services to caregivers such as education and outreach on support services as well as assistance accessing the services available. The Central Midlands Family Caregiver Advocate (a licensed independent social worker) and the Family Caregiver Specialist (a master of



**CMCOG Family Caregiver Staff meet with colleagues from around South Carolina**

social work graduate) provide a range of one-on-one counseling, education and training for caregivers facilitate monthly support groups for both caregivers and seniors raising children.

The Family Caregiver Support Program can also provide limited financial reimbursements for eligible recipients to defray the cost of providing care-giving services (home safety and incontinence supplies, nutritional supplements). This past program year, the Central Midlands Family Caregiver Support Program provided financial assistance to 246 caregivers to assist with respite care and other supplemental services.

The program year 2005-06 also marked a year of recognition and achievement for the Family Caregiver Support Program as the program received a 2006 Aging Achievement Award from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (for more information on the award see page 4).

### I-Care Program

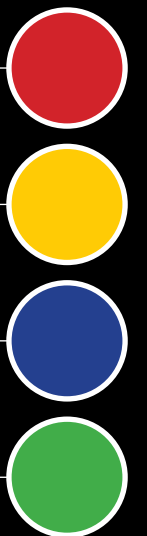
The CMCOG Insurance Counseling, Assistance and Referral for Elders (I-CARE) Program provides support and advice to seniors on a wide variety of issues such as prescription drug and Medicare changes and the dangers of insurance and Medicare fraud.

This past program year, 27 events, attended by 1,895 persons were held by I-Care staff. Staff also exhibited at sixteen health fairs and estimates reaching four thousand and twenty two people (4,022) via booths at such events. Two enrollment events were also offered concerning Medicare Part D and coupled with a variety of related public service announcements and mailings an estimated 56,018 people were reached. A further Eight 877 client contacts were made.

A Medicare Fraud Workshop and I-CARE Recognition Luncheon were held at the Capital Senior Center in June. The workshop topic was "Using Theater as an Outreach Tool". The presenters were Susan Sabre, Ph.D., Project Director and Statewide Coordinator for Senior Theater in North Carolina and Harold Berndinanski, a writer/actor for the North Carolina Seminar Theater Network. Clarissa Cain of the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging also spoke on Medicare Fraud Issues in South Carolina. State I-CARE workers and other program partners were also recognized at this event with a series of awards and certificates.



**Joe Ritchey & Norman Whitaker with 2006 Aging Achievement Award**





**continued - Caring for the Community / Community Services**

**Long Term Care Ombudsman Program**

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Staff investigates reports of abuse, neglect, exploitation, quality of care issues and residents' rights issues on behalf of vulnerable adults in long-term care facilities. Staff also investigates quality of care issues and Resident Rights violations. This program provides advocacy and consultations regarding long-term care issues. Ombudsman staff also conducts "Friendly Visits" to long-term care facilities to ensure that residents are receiving quality care and to address issues observed during the visit. In the program year 2005-06, 69 "Friendly Visits" to Long-Term Care Facilities were conducted. 20 training sessions were also held this past year.

Over the course of the last program year, the Central Midlands Long Term Care Ombudsman Program once again had one of the largest caseloads in South Carolina, with 1,723 intakes with an approximate total of 2,008 complaints entered. Of these intakes, the following approximations were noted: 16% of the intakes entered were related to abuse; 18% of the intakes entered were related to neglect; 3% of the intakes entered were related to exploitation; 32% of the intakes entered were related to advocacy issues/ information/ consultation cases, and 31% of the intakes entered were related to quality of care issues.

In July 2005, Implementation of the Volunteer Ombudsman Program began. Volunteer Ombudsman will make regular visits to the facilities to speak with residents and their family/ friends. The primary focus of this program is to provide information to residents and their families about the Resident Bill of Rights, the Ombudsman Program and to make observations and advocate as necessary. Volunteer Ombudsmen are not Certified Long-Term Care Ombudsman Investigators. A Volunteer is an essential link between the Long Term Care Ombudsman staff and the residents in facilities. To date, 11 potential volunteers have been trained and 18 facilities have agreed to participate in the program. A series of pamphlets and posters have also been developed in an effort to widely promote the program across the region.

In early 2006, in response to an overwhelming number of requests from the public for information

and due to the fact that ombudsmen are not permitted to recommend facilities or release data on the number of investigations at a particular facility, Midlands ombudsman staff developed a guidebook to assist the public in often emotional process of selecting a long-term care facility.

The publication, entitled, "Choosing Long-Term Care Placement," is a comprehensive guide designed to provide information on how to select a care home, from visiting the facility through the admissions process. The guide also contains advice on how to help new residents adjust to a nursing home and includes a glossary of terms used in long-term care facilities, a variety of checklists and helpful contact information.

Staff is also developing a second document called "Empowering Residents & Families in Long-Term Care Facilities." This guide provides information on the Omnibus Adult Protection Act, the SC Bill of Rights for Residents of Long-Term Care Facilities and outlines various grievance and complaint filing procedures.

This year, Ombudsman staff also initiated an Advance Directive Project, the purpose of which was to provide facilities with updated Advance Directive forms and introduce Five Wishes, the newest Advance Directive that was signed into South Carolina law in June 2005. Approximately 900 advance directive forms were distributed in this effort over the past year.

**Central Midlands Cares**

Central Midlands Council of Governments continued its long-standing tradition of giving back to the community through a number of initiatives held over the past year. In addition to our traditional holiday donations to the Cooperative Ministry and the Salvation Army's "Stuff-A-Bus" toy and food drive, CMCOG staff exceeded its annual giving to the United Way of the Midlands annual fund-raising campaign for the fourth consecutive year, maintaining the long standing record of the agency as a "Midlands Pace Setter." This year, CMCOG staff raised a total of \$4,021.50, an increase of 48% over the previous year. CMCOG staff actively continues to serve on each of the four program committees of the United Way of the Midlands.

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**Ombudsman Staff with Lt. Gov Bauer**



**United Way of the Midlands**

**Planning Services**

Planning for our growing region has been one of the mainstays of the work program at Central Midlands Council of Governments since the agency was founded nearly forty years ago. CMCOG plays a variety of different roles throughout the region, being, for example, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Greater Columbia area, the regional 208 Water Quality Management Area and Economic Development District, as well as being a region-wide planning agency and service provider to local government. It is therefore critically important that the correct balance be struck at both the local, and ultimately the regional level, to ensure that the Central Midlands region maintains the capacity to plan for and adapt to new growth, while managing our existing infrastructure and natural resources to sustain and protect the quality of life enjoyed throughout our four-county region.

One of the major highlights in the planning sector this year was the formation of the Central Midlands Regional Planning and Development Committee, which replaced the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Rating and Ranking Committee, which no longer had a clear purpose due to changes in the SC Department of Commerce's CDBG funding process.

The new committee is designed to be much broader in scope to provide guidance to a number of CMCOG programs not currently addressed by the current committee structure, such as Community and Economic Development grants; regional planning projects such as the Hazard Mitigation Plan and Green Infrastructure Plan; the Wetlands Mitigation Bank and comprehensive planning and zoning issues. The Committee makes recommendations to the CMCOG Board on action items such as adoption or amendments of plans and initiation of new initiatives involving the aforementioned programs.

The Regional Planning and Development Committee, which meets quarterly, is chaired by Dr. Roger Gaddy, mayor of Winnsboro with Val Hutchinson from Richland County Council serving as Vice-chair.

**Environmental Planning**

Environmental issues continued to remain at the forefront of planning initiatives undertaken

by Central Midlands' planning staff during the past program year. Central Midlands COG serves as the 208 Water Quality Management Area for the region and processed 360 applications for 208 water quality permits over the past program year.

**Green Infrastructure**

Work continued on the development of a Green Infrastructure and Open Spaces Plan, on which work began last year with the completion of comprehensive regional inventory of natural, recreational and cultural facilities.

The Central Midlands Green Infrastructure Concept is based on the principle of identifying and linking together open spaces to create a series of interlinked sites and hubs that would serve to improve air and water quality as well as promote plant and wildlife diversity. The Central Midlands region boasts over 152,000 acres of public and protected land as well as large tracts of farmland and managed forest that serve as open space resources, all of which have the potential to be linked together via the region's various rivers, creeks, streams and floodplains to create a series "green lungs." The recently completed Green Infrastructure Concept Map will be a vital tool as the plan progresses over the coming year from the conceptual to the implementation phase.

The next phase of the plan involves the creation of steering and technical committees to transform the concept of green infrastructure into a tangible plan that can be implemented in the Central Midlands region. Public participation will also be a key component as the plan is refined with the identification of action steps to see the final version through to its implementation. The Central Midlands Green Infrastructure Plan is not designed to curtail development, but dovetail with new development, to identify open spaces that are already protected or those worthy of being protected due to their functionality as working lands, their natural beauty or due to the existence of rare flora and fauna. By mapping a wide variety of open space types, potential linkages for tying them together can be identified. The identified links and hubs can serve as buffers to development through which the character of the region as well as valuable environmental features can be retained.



**Protecting our Wetlands**



**Protecting areas of natural beauty**





### continued - Planning Services

#### Mitigation Bank

Work also progressed this year on the creation of a Mitigation Bank for the Central Midlands region. As a result of the successful presentation last year of a prospectus to the South Carolina Mitigation Bank Review Team (MBRT) that outlined the potential for a mitigation banking project within the Central Midlands region, a pilot study was undertaken to evaluate for further study 15 tracts showing the characteristics of sites with apparent restoration credit opportunities. Over the course of the past program year 6 of the initial 15 sites studied were short-listed and discussions with property owners were entered into. Upon further review and negotiation, the list was further narrowed to one site that, upon presentation to the MBRT and a subsequent site visit in the spring of 2006, was deemed suitable as a mitigation bank property.

In April 2006, CMCOG entered into a contract with Southeast Environmental Solutions to undertake a baseline monitoring program and other research at the site. Baseline monitoring and research are anticipated to be completed by April 2007 and will subsequently be presented to the MBRT, at which time the bank may be granted full or partial credit status. Preliminary approval for the Central Midlands Mitigation Bank could be granted by the middle of 2008 with the bank being granted full operational status by early 2009.

#### Community & Economic Development

2005-06 was another active year for community and economic development within the Central Midlands region. In addition to administering 14 previously-approved grant projects, a total of nine new Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications were submitted to the SC Department of Commerce for consideration for funding over the course of the year. Of the nine applications submitted, six were approved for funding, totaling more than \$1.5 million in grant funds. The successful grantees from across the region received funds to undertake a variety of activities to benefit low and moderate income citizens, from downtown revitalization and housing stock assessments to comprehensive needs assessments and drainage projects.

Within the past program year, the City of Newberry has received \$500,000 in CDBG funds to revitalize its downtown business district, to include activities such as streetscaping, lighting and parking improvements, in order to enhance economic competitiveness, stimulate private investment and improve the appearance and function of downtown Newberry. The Town of Winnsboro received \$489,420 to undertake the final phase of its downtown beautification and streetscaping project. The City of Newberry also received a second grant for \$20,000 to perform an assessment of the city's housing stock and develop a plan to reverse neighborhood decline in the city. The Town of Eastover received \$20,000 to perform a comprehensive needs assessment of the town. The finished needs assessment will be used as a blueprint for developing a strategy to improve the vitality of the town and increase its economic competitiveness. The Town of Batesburg-Leesville was awarded \$500,000 in the summer of 2006 to conduct drainage improvements to address storm water runoff issues in the Williams Street area of town. In the summer of 2006, a further three applications totaling almost \$1.4 million were developed and submitted for consideration for funding. Grant awards for the summer 2006 funding cycle are scheduled to be announced by the end of 2006.

CMCOG also received two local planning grants for \$50,000 during the past year, which are to be used for the development of new community development projects and initiatives and to undertake the Central Midlands portion of a state-wide economic development project to locate and map water and sewer lines using GIS. CMCOG also successfully completed its 2006 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs).

The City of Newberry, in partnership with CMCOG, received the SC Community Development Association's Award of Excellence for its adaptive re-use and conversion of the old Newberry Hospital building into 35 apartments for low income seniors. The \$4.1 million project involved a number of partners including, the City of Newberry, Newberry County, First Community Bank, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta

Newberry Housing Authority, Newberry County Council on Aging, the Landmark Group, the SC Department of Commerce, the SC Department of Archives and History, the SC Housing Finance and Development Authority and CMCOG. The city was nominated for the award by Robin Cooley, CMCOG's community development planner.



The completed \$4.1 million old Newberry Hospital project

#### Transportation Planning

In its role as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Greater Columbia area, the program year 2005-06 was an especially fruitful one as staff strived to create a true multi-modal transportation plan and adapted to the requirements of the new federal highway bill; the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The three primary responsibilities of the MPO are to develop a Long Range Transportation Plan, which is a 25 year vision for the metropolitan area; develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – a list of specific projects for which funding is anticipated and develop a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which identifies the annual transportation planning activities to be undertaken each program year.

In the program year 2005-06, in addition to the completion of three major transportation planning studies (see Major Accomplishments section for details on the Commuter Rail Study, Bicycle and Pedestrian plan and Columbia Avenue Corridor Study), a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and a new Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) were also completed. The 2006-2012 TIP for the COATS area is a seven-year program of transportation capital

projects together with a seven-year estimate of transit capital and maintenance requirements. The TIP document is usually approved biennially, and may be amended on an as-needed basis throughout the year. This past year also included an update to the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which was developed via a cooperative process involving all units of local government within the COATS study area and also incorporated the recommendations of CMCOG staff.

CMCOG also serves as the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) for the Central Midlands region and the past program year also saw the development of a TIP for the rural portions of the region. The rural TIP follows a similar model to that developed for the metropolitan area, but is a six-year program, and will cover the period from 2007-2012. The urban and rural TIPs were adopted by the CMCOG Board in June 2006.

Substantial time was also spent this year in preparation for a number of upcoming projects over the course of the next program year. These projects include a region-wide motor freight study, a congestion management study, which together with the three recently completed transportation studies, are to be included in the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan for the Greater Columbia area, which is to be updated over the course of the next two years.

A study area for the second Sub-Area Plan to be undertaken in the Central Midlands region was also selected. The next sub-area study, which again will look at transportation issues in relation to existing and future land use, will study an area of Lower Richland County bounded to the north by Fort Jackson, to the south by Bluff Road, by I-77 to the west and McEntire Air National Guard Base to the east.



Town of Batesburg-Leesville receives \$500,000 in CDBG funds



Town of Eastover receives \$20,000 in CDBG planning funds





### continued - Planning Services

#### Research, Demographics & GIS

The analysis of historic, current and future growth trends is a key strategy used in the development of both short and long range transportation planning. With the upcoming revision to the Columbia area's Long Range Transportation Plan, considerable efforts were made this past year to begin gathering critical demographic and socio-economic data sets to be used for the base and horizon years (2005 and 2035) in the plan update as well as making the changes necessary to make the transition from a linear transportation model to a more complex GIS-based TransCAD model.

In addition to the annual studies on building permit activity, multi-family housing and commercial real estate and office space, several new research and demographic studies were also completed this past year. A mid-decade development trends report was compiled to highlight population growth and development trends that have occurred within the Central Midlands region since the 2000 Census. Studies showed that 2005 was a record year for building permits in the Central Midlands region with a record high 9,680 permits issued. The combined value of these permits totaled more than \$1.5 billion; also a new high. Research staff also created a new development trends report highlighting building permit activity for the first six months of 2006. This new report shows that building permits issued in the first half of 2006 appear to be on a pace to surpass 2005's record high, with continued strong residential growth, particularly in the multi-family housing market. Other documents produced this year by research and GIS staff include the 2006 Selected Statistics reports for the Central Midlands region and the Greater Columbia Area, a region-wide economic indicators report as well as Traffic Count Data reports by county and a variety of market studies (Region Reports) and newsletters.

CMCOG also possesses a state of the art GIS mapping system and has produced a number of specialized GIS mapping projects over the past year such as maintaining and updating a routing and mapping transit database for the Central Midland Regional Transit Authority; address matching a database of WIA client locations to

create color-coded maps for use in improving client services across the region and various projects for a variety of clients such as Lexington Medical Center and Colliers Keenan commercial realtors.

This year the GIS department also gave two career oriented workshops to students enrolled in the WIA youth program at the Will Lou Gray Opportunity School. The workshops included an introduction to GIS technology and a comprehensive survey of career and educational opportunities within the GIS industry. Included in the presentation was a detailed overview of the various COG program areas and the role GIS plays in their day to day operations.

#### Workforce Development

The Midlands Workforce Development Board is the Workforce Investment Act Administrative (WIA) unit for Richland, Lexington and Fairfield Counties, and is committed to building an integrated workforce development system that effectively pools the resources of 14 diverse partner agencies and delivers optimal quality customer focused service. Partner agencies include local area school districts, county social service providers, the state vocational rehabilitative agency, the state Employment Security Commission, local community action council, and private non-profits. The services provided are targeted at both youth's aged 14 to 21 and adults aged 21 and over and include programs such as job readiness and motivation, job search assistance, job placement and job retention services.

The goal of Midlands Workforce Center is to simplify the process for businesses of finding well-trained, highly qualified employees. The Midlands Workforce Development Board lists jobs, prescreens applicants based on the specifications of individual employers, interviews applicants and can provide invaluable labor market information as well as assisting with specific training needs. A few of the business services available in the Workforce Center are: *WorkKeys profiles and assessments; Incumbent Worker Training; Employed Worker Training; On-the-Job-Training; Customized Training.*



MWDB Employer Recognition Luncheon, June 2006



Columbia Fire Chief, Bradley Anderson addresses the MWDB luncheon

Two luncheons were held by the Midlands Workforce Development Board in November 2005 and June 2006 to recognize the contributions of employers region-wide. The events, which were each attended by around 200 guests, recognized a range of employers and business partners such as the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School, Hueck Foils, Ascension Hospice, the City of Columbia Fire Department, CoMar Products and SAGE Technical Services.

#### Local Planning

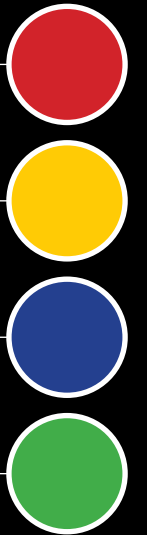
Since the creation of the Central Midlands Council of Governments, local planning assistance has been one of the core services provided to member governments, whether in the form of land use planning, zoning administration or other technical assistance.

Over the past year, CMCOG has strived to provide the highest quality professional planning assistance to a number of local governments across the region. In the past year, local planning assistance has been provided to the City of West Columbia and the Town of Springdale in updating their comprehensive plans. Staff has

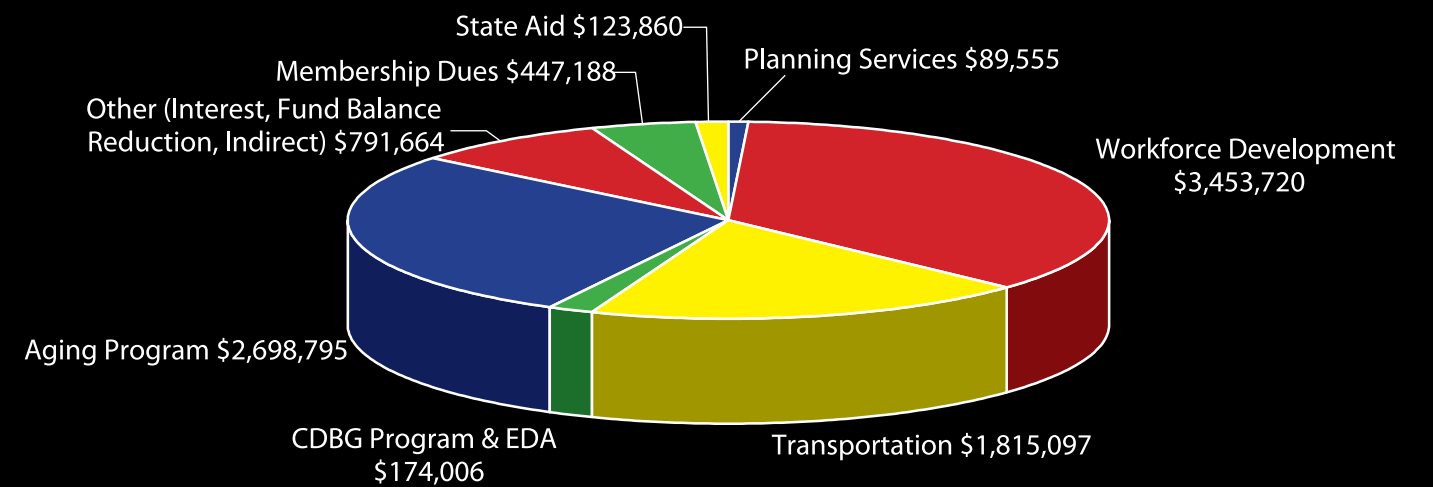
also served this past year as advisory members to provide technical assistance to the planning commissions of the Towns of Lexington, Chapin and Batesburg-Leesville.

Furthermore, in response to the recently amended requirements of the SC Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act, CMCOG Planning staff has been active this year holding training sessions for planners and appointed planning officials. The Enabling Act requires county and municipal planning staff and appointed officials to undertake 6 hours of orientation training in the first year and three hours per year of continuing education in following years. Since March 2006, CMCOG planning staff has conducted 13 sessions at various locations around the Central Midlands region as well as 6 sessions outside the region (Aiken, Denmark and Bamberg). All sessions held are multi-jurisdictional and have been attended by 168 people.

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### Budgeted FY2006 Revenue



July 1, 2005 - June 30, 2006

**Chairman – Russell David Brown**

**Vice-Chairman – Jimmy C. Bales**

**Fairfield County**

- M. Stephen Brakefield
- Russell David Brown, Councilman  
**(CMCOG Chairman)**
- Carnell Murphy, Councilman

**Lexington County**

- William B. Banning, Councilman
- William A. Brooks, County Administrator  
(to May 2006)
- John Carrigg, Councilman
- M. Todd Cullum, Councilman
- George H. “Smokey” Davis, Councilman
- William C. “Billy” Derrick, Councilman
- Katherine Doucett, County Administrator  
(from June 2006)
- Melanie P. Ellerbe
- Johnny W. Jeffcoat, Councilman
- Wilber Lee Jeffcoat
- Joe Owens, Councilman

**Newberry County**

- Vina Abrams
- Hodge Harmon
- Henry B. Summer, Councilman

**Richland County**

- Earl F. Brown, Jr.
- Bruce Carter  
(to August 2005)
- Larry C. Cooke
- J. Marshall Hofer  
(to August 2005)
- Valerie Hutchinson, Councilwoman
- Damon Jeter, Councilman
- Michael A. Letts
- Paul Livingston, Councilman
- Joseph McEachern, Councilman
- Anthony G. Mizzell, Councilman
- Bernice G. Scott, Councilwoman
- Craig Wall  
(from September 2005)
- Sarah B. Watson  
(from September 2005)

**Legislative Delegations**

- Rep. Creighton B. Coleman  
Fairfield County
- Rep. Edward H. “Ted” Pitts  
Lexington County
- Rep. Walton J. McLeod  
Newberry County
- Rep. Jimmy C. Bales  
Richland County  
**(CMCOG Vice-Chairman)**

**Batesburg-Leesville**

- Gary Holmes, Councilman  
(to August 2005)
- Joseph Coleman, Councilman  
(September 2005)
- Todd O’Dell, Councilman  
(from October 2005)

**Cayce**

- Avery B. Wilkerson, Mayor

**Columbia**

- E. W. Cromartie, II, Councilman
- Sam Davis, Councilman
- Tameika I. Devine, Councilwoman
- John N. Hardee
- Dr. Milton Kimpson
- Cathy Novinger

**Forest Acres**

- Mark Williams, Administrator

**Irmo**

- Barry A. Walker, Sr., Councilman  
(from October 2005)
- Paul Younginer, Councilman  
(to September 2005)

**Lexington**

- T. Randall Halfacre, Mayor

**Newberry**

- T. Edward Kyzer, Mayor

**Springdale**

- Pat G. Smith, Mayor

**West Columbia**

- Bobby E. Horton, Mayor

**Winnsboro**

- Dr. Roger A. Gaddy, Mayor

**Advisory Members (Non-voting)**

**Arcadia Lakes**

- Richard W. Thomas, Mayor

**Blythewood**

- Pete Amoth, Mayor

**Chapin**

- Stanley E. Shealy, Mayor

**Eastover**

- Christopher K. Campbell, Sr., Mayor

**Pelion**

- Charles Haggard, Mayor

**Pine Ridge**

- Vacant

**Prosperity**

- Bruce Connelly, Mayor

**Ridgeway**

- Charlene Herring, Mayor

**South Congaree**

- Larry Jackson, Mayor

**Kershaw County**

*(Transportation & Water Quality Issues only)*

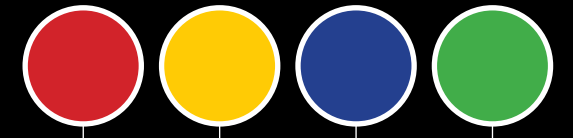
- Robert T. Boland, County Administrator

- ABRAHAMSEN, Carol.....Aging Program Specialist
- ANDERSON, Felicia.....Ombudsman Investigator
- ANDERSON, Harriet A. ....Special Assistant to the Executive Director
- AUSTIN, Bonnie.....Director, WIA Program
- BALL, Ann .....WIA Information System Analyst
- BART, Roland .....Senior Transportation Planner
- BEAGEN, Tammy .....WIA Senior Planner
- BELL, Aaron .....Principal Transportation Planner
- BELL-FORD, Shelia .....Administrative Assistant II
- BLOCKER, Nevetta W. ....Assistant Director (& Finance Director)
- BUGGS-WILLIAMS, LaToya .....Ombudsman Investigator/  
Volunteers Coordinator
- BURRELL, Eartha .....Accountant
- BUTLER, Barry .....WIA Grants Coordinator
- CATOE, Jeremy .....WorkKeys Planner
- CAULDER, Mike .....WIA Principal Planner
- COOLEY, Robin R. ....Manager, Community & Economic Development
- COON, Candace .....GIS Technician
- \* FEASTER, Spencer .....WorkKeys Assessment Proctor/Developer
- GAWRONSKI, Cyndi .....Community Development Planner
- GEALY, Evelyn M. ....Research Associate - Demographics
- HARMON, Anna H. ....Manager, Regional LTC Ombudsman Program
- HART, Diane .....Administrative Assistant - Workforce
- HUFFMAN, John A. ....Planner & Grants Administrator
- KELLER, Charlie .....Manager, WIA Research & Analysis
- KELLY, Clifton .....Mail Clerk/ Courier/ Vehicle Maintenance
- MAULDIN, Ben .....Director, Planning & Research
- MERRILL, Julie .....Aging Program Specialist
- MILHOUSE, Tasha .....Receptionist/Administrative Assistant
- MONTGOMERY, Ethel .....Manager, Contracts & Grants
- RITCHEY, Joe .....Family Caregiver Advocate
- ROPEL, Malia .....Accountant
- RYAN, Joseph .....Senior Planner (*Environmental*)
- SEAGO, Sharon .....Director, Area Agency on Aging
- SHEALY, Ken .....Manager, Special Projects
- SHULER, Wayne .....Chief Planner
- SIMMONS, Andrew J. ....Manager, Information Services
- SIMMONS, Reginald .....Director, Transportation
- SPARKS, Angela .....Accounting Clerk
- SPROUSE, Gregory .....Principal GIS Planner
- THOMAS, Shirley .....Senior Ombudsman Investigator
- THOMPSON, Jackie .....Information, Referral & Assistance Coordinator
- WADDELL, Dee .....Ombudsman Program Coordinator
- WHITAKER, Norman .....Executive Director
- WHITE, (Robert) Chris .....WorkKeys Program Manager
- WILLIAMS, Fretoria .....Administrative Assistant
- WILSON, Sara .....Business & Industry Consultant

□ Denotes Contract Employee  
\* No longer with CMCOG

**We would like to welcome our new staff members who joined CMCOG during the past year:**

- **Aaron Bell:** Principal Transportation Planner
- **Jeremy Catoe:** WorkKeys Planner
- **Cyndi Gawronski:** Community Development Planner
- **Diane Hart:** Administrative Assistant - Workforce
- **Julie Merrill:** Aging Program Specialist
- **Tasha Milhouse:** Receptionist
- **Malia Ropel:** Accountant
- **Chris White:** WorkKeys Manager
- **Fretoria Williams:** Administrative Specialist-Transportation/Planning
- **Sara Wilson:** Business & Industry Consultant



**Promotions & Other Staff Recognitions:**

**Shirley Thomas:** Promoted to Senior Ombudsman Investigator

**Felicia Anderson:** Earned her Baccalaureate Social Work degree from Limehouse College and was promoted to Ombudsman Investigator

**Eartha Burrell:** Received her degree in Accounting from Limestone College and was promoted to the position of Accountant.

**Julie Merrill:** Family Caregiver Specialist, received a scholarship from the Southeastern Association of Area Agencies on Aging in November and also received her graduate level certificate in Gerontology from the University of South Carolina.

**Robin Cooley:** Received recognition from the City of Newberry in the form of a resolution commending her for her contributions and efforts to assist the city in its community and economic development activities in recent years.



Since 1969, the Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) has been assisting local governments develop local and regional plans within the four midlands counties (Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland) of South Carolina, as well as providing local governments with planning and technical support to improve the quality of life within the region.

CMCOG currently consists of 14 member governments and serves in excess of 600,000 people by providing a regional forum, which allows local officials to seek out common goals and address regional concerns. Today, CMCOG provides a variety of local and regional planning services and technical assistance to local governments within the four-county region.



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