



Centralina Council of Governments

**GROWING**  
our economy.

**CONTROLLING**  
the COST of government.

**IMPROVING**  
quality of life.

**2010 Annual Report**

## Working Together to Grow Our Economy, Control Cost of Government and Improve Quality of Life

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. We are one of 17 state-designated councils of government charged with this responsibility in North Carolina.

Now, more than ever, there is a sense of urgency for our work. We are challenged to design and build the physical and service infrastructure to support a region that is expected to double in population over the next 30 years. The funding available from federal, state and local governments to accomplish our task is severely limited.

This 2010 Annual Report summarizes how CCOG worked with you to meet regional challenges of:

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

In 2011, CCOG is resolved to quicken our pace to find collaborative, practical solutions that build the foundations for growing our economy and jobs, controlling cost of government and improving quality of life.



**Martha Sue Hall**  
CCOG Chairperson



**Jim Prosser**  
CCOG Executive Director

# Promoting Community and E

Growing the economy is vitally important to the health of the region. To achieve a strong, diverse economy, we need to ensure that economic growth occurs in areas where people live throughout the region. CCOG Community and Economic Development services support economic growth and related community development activities of area jurisdictions. Planned, sustainable growth can assure the future health of existing communities and prevent over-reliance on transportation systems to connect people to a handful of areas of job concentration.

Central to region-wide economic growth is the **Centralina Economic Development Commission (CEDC)**, a diverse partnership of the public and private sectors. The CEDC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit established in 2005 by the Centralina Council of Governments to promote a diversified and innovative economic base, sustainable growth within the region, and the development, expansion and retention of business and industry jobs. CCOG Community and Economic Development staff provide the CEDC with principal staffing and operations.

The Centralina Economic Development Commission is:

- Designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) as the regional Economic Development District.
- Charged with implementing the adopted Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Five-Year Plan to prioritize and fund economic development by conducting research, providing technical assistance and facilitating member governments' access to program funding.

In recent years, the CEDC obtained and managed approximately \$4 million in EDA grants to support projects such as:

- Gaston College David Belk Cannon Health Education Institute construction;
- North Mecklenburg Industrial Park's new Overpass Bridge, serving Huntersville/Cornelius/Davidson;
- The Center for Optoelectronics and Optical Communication at UNC Charlotte implementation; and,
- Establishment of a regional Logistics Alliance organization and new website to foster advancement of the distribution networks of the Charlotte region.

# Economic Development

## COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

The Centralina Economic Development Commission (CEDC) is working in preparation for the next five-year update of its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy plan in 2012. The CEDS plan integrates the region's human and physical capital planning in the service of economic development. The original plan was developed through the analysis of the region's economy. The plan includes a guide for regional goals and objectives, a regional plan of action, identified investment priorities, and proposed funding sources.

In 2010, with U.S. EDA and private support, the CEDC:

- Recognized and promoted excellence in manufacturing, hosting the first annual **Advanced Manufacturing Awards event** and creating an Advanced Manufacturing industry website, "MINDS THAT MANUFACTURE." The event, attended by more than 100 company members and local officials, recognized excellence in advanced process innovation and green improvements in local manufacturing businesses.
- Received an initial award notice of just over \$1 million in direct funding for the U.S. EDA CCOG/CEDC **Regional Revolving Loan Fund for Small Business**. The funding was received in partnership with the EDA and the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission. It will provide leverage for additional private loan capacity to support regional small and entrepreneurial business loans, including value added agricultural enterprise. Final award notice will occur in Spring 2011.

CCOG and the CEDC managed a grant process for the U.S. EDA award of \$1,717,500 that will provide the sewer services necessary to develop a new 220-acre **Lincolnton-Lincoln County Regional Airport business park**. This grant, funded under EDA's Community Trade Adjustment Assistance program, supports the construction of sewer infrastructure improvements to develop Phase 1 of the Airport Business Park. The co-grantees, Lincoln County, the City of Lincolnton, and the Lincolnton/Lincoln County Regional Airport Authority, estimate the project will create 200 jobs, create 20 new industrial sites, allow for industrial uses in eight existing private hangers, and attract aeronautics-focused companies as well as their owners with corporate aircraft. CCOG and the CEDC provided grant award assistance.



## Community and Economic Development community services

include helping to shape municipal plans, allocate resources, resolve conflicts and improve neighborhoods, write and manage grants for projects, and provide contract technical assistance for code enforcement and grant administration. Activities in 2010 include:

- The **City of Cherryville in Gaston County** replaced an aged sewer pump station, benefitting homeowners and creating several jobs, with the \$223,125 cost paid for by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA).
- **Dodge City, in Union County**, utilized CDBG funds to pay for the \$225,434 installation of a new waterline to improve services in an area of low to moderate income homeowners.
- Replacement of defective waterlines in the **Town of Morven in Anson County** with a \$748,923 CDBG grant will reduce demand on the county's water system and save money for Morven.
- The Burke Dale multi-year development project to construct in-fill housing within a fragile **City of Mooresville** neighborhood in Iredell County is underway. In-fill housing for home ownership at this site was a key goal of the community's Master Development Plan.
- More than 20 existing homes were rehabilitated or received emergency repairs in the **Cities of Salisbury, Kannapolis and Mooresville** and in **Cabarrus and Lincoln County** through CDBG funds and the HOME Partnership Investment program.

*CCOG Community and Economic Development services support planned, sustainable growth, which assures the future health of existing communities.*

# Competitive Workforce in the Global Economy

Growing the region's economy means not only creating jobs, but diversifying our economy and ensuring workers have the training and skills to participate in the job market, in particular in new growing sectors. Having a ready and trained workforce with the skills and talents employers are seeking will help us retain and attract the types of industry that are viable to the region.

The Centralina Workforce Development Board (WDB) works to ensure career counseling and training are available to the unemployed, those needing to upgrade workforce skills, and those making a transition in the workforce. In 2010, the Centralina WDB supported outreach for jobs in the allied health industry and energy and energy-related fields. Finally, the Workforce Development Board continues to provide an integrated one-stop system for workforce services to career seekers and employers in the region.

## CENTRALINA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD RESULTS

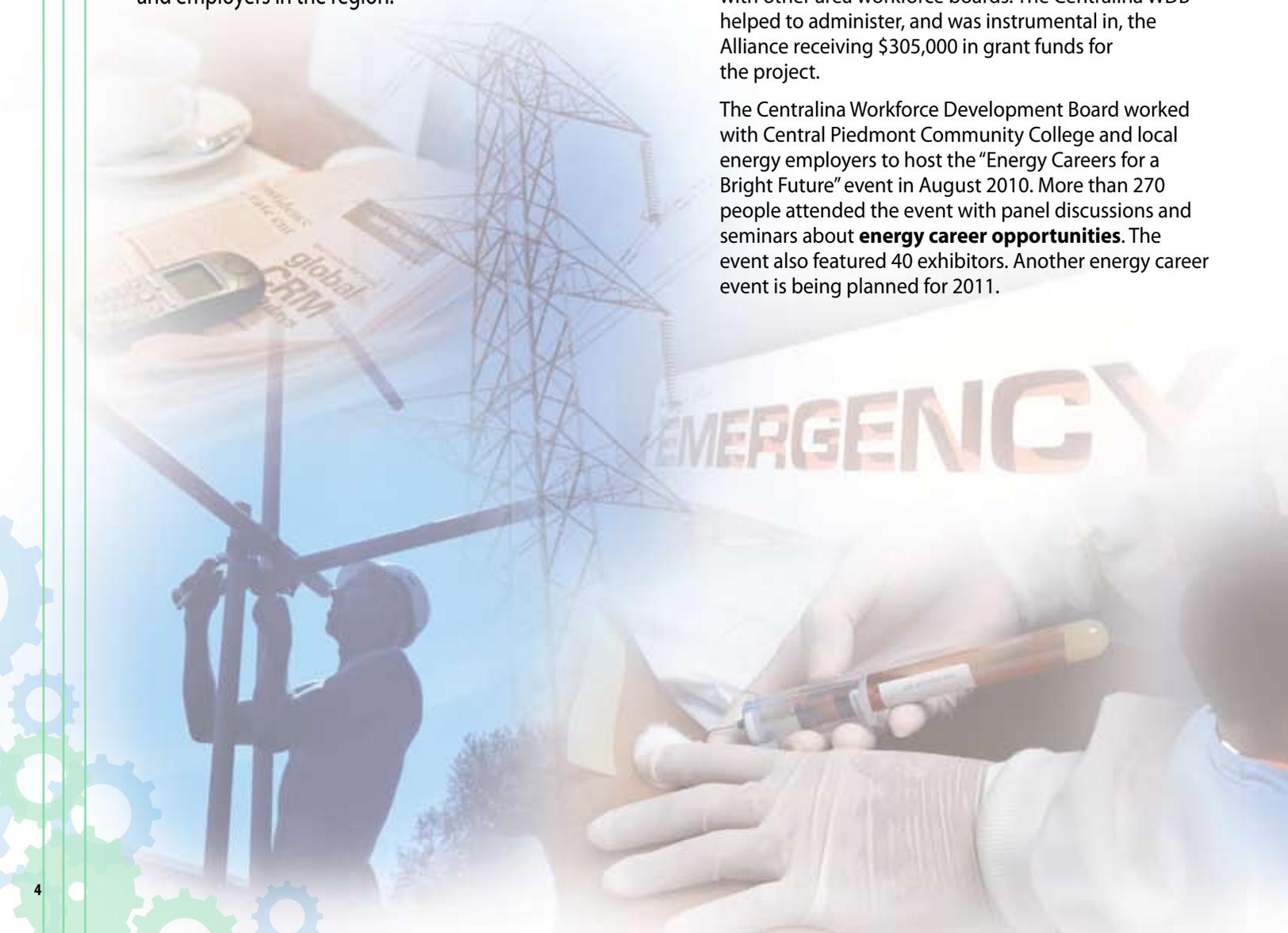
### Workforce Training

The Centralina Workforce Development Board helped to implement **JobsNOW "12 in 6"**, a program to provide long-term unemployed and dislocated workers with short-term skills training in areas of need for employers in the region. Through the program, 196 individuals were served in 2010 with 87 completing training and 37 entering employment at an average starting wage of \$12.08 per hour. The program is a collaboration of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Development, Centralina WDB and the North Carolina Community College System.

### Growing Industry Sectors

Nine Career Pathways showcase events were held throughout the region for jobs in the **allied health industry**, reaching 500 people. The Centralina Workforce Development Board serves a leadership role with the Competitive Workforce Alliance, a partnership with other area workforce boards. The Centralina WDB helped to administer, and was instrumental in, the Alliance receiving \$305,000 in grant funds for the project.

The Centralina Workforce Development Board worked with Central Piedmont Community College and local energy employers to host the "Energy Careers for a Bright Future" event in August 2010. More than 270 people attended the event with panel discussions and seminars about **energy career opportunities**. The event also featured 40 exhibitors. Another energy career event is being planned for 2011.



## Career Development

To meet the demand for intensive career counseling and assessment for those in transition in the workforce, a cooperative program called the **Re-Employment Bridge Institute** was developed. The program featured 15 workshops throughout the region, with 350 registered participants. The program serves as a national model for how communities and local agencies can work together to help dislocated workers find employment. The project is a partnership between Centralina Workforce Development Board and Rowan-Cabarrus Community College.

## Business Retention

In order to **retain local businesses** in the area, 11 local employers received assistance with 527 employees scheduled for training to upgrade their skills. The Centralina Workforce Development Board has collaborated extensively with area employers, community colleges, private training providers and the North Carolina State Industrial Extension Service in the development, approval, and implementation of grants to assist in upgrading skills for incumbent workers in order to retain local businesses. The Centralina WDB, through Incumbent Worker Training grants, made a total of \$190,063 in economic investment in our counties.

## JobLink Career Centers

The region's eight **JobLink Career Centers** worked with more customers in 2010 than in any previous year. The Centralina Workforce Development Board has provided oversight, direction, guidance and support for the development of the JobLink Career Centers. Eight of every ten individuals finishing workforce development programs entered employment or received a high school diploma or GED certificate. More than 95 percent of dislocated workers served through Centralina WDB training programs entered employment.

## Customer Service Provided at Centralina JobLink Career Centers

Job and Training Seekers	
Customers Seeking Services	221,634
Placed in Jobs through Centers	5,407
Placed in Training through Centers	1,355
People Utilizing Career Resource Room/Area	129,078
People Receiving other Services	190,239
Employers	
Job Orders Placed through Centers	5,954
Job Orders Filled through Centers	3,452
Other Employer Services Provided through Centers	4,082

*It is vital that we have a ready and trained workforce with the skills and talents employers are seeking in order to retain and attract the types of industry that are viable to the region.*

# Creating a Culture of Environmental Stewardship

A safe and healthy environment with good water and air quality is a cornerstone to the region's vision for the future. Most of the Centralina region was included in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designation of non-attainment for eight-hour ozone levels in April 2004. CCOG regional partners have been working collaboratively to improve air quality, as well as promote sustainability. CCOG partnerships and collaborative initiatives are also underway to improve water resources in the region.

## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP RESULTS

### Air Quality and Sustainability

The **Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition (CCFC)** is a local effort of the Centralina Council of Governments and is one of nearly 100 coalitions nationwide that are part of the U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Cities Program. The Clean Cities mission is to reduce petroleum dependence, expand and accelerate the use of alternative fuel vehicles and advanced technology, and improve air quality.

In May 2010, the Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition officially kicked off its participation in the **Carolina Blue Skies and Green Jobs Initiative**, an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funded grant program. The bi-state initiative provides funding for regional fleets to purchase advanced technology vehicles and alternative fueling equipment. Of the \$12.9 million North Carolina/South Carolina grant, more than \$2 million flows directly to the Centralina region.

The first **truck stop electrification** installation in the Centralina region and the second in North Carolina opened at the Derrick Travel Center in Salisbury in June 2010. Long distance truck drivers are required by law to take breaks from driving while transporting freight. Instead of idling their diesel engines for hours to access heat, air conditioning, internet, or television, a truck driver can now pull into one of 44 technology-equipped spaces and just plug in. The result is a reduction in air and noise pollution and fuel savings. The project was funded through \$100,000 in EPA Smartway funds and \$400,000 in Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. In addition to grant writing and management, CCOG and the Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition provided project oversight.

Under contract to the City, CCOG prepared the **Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan for Bessemer City** which provides this Gaston County community with the tools it needs to achieve its pedestrian-friendly vision. The plan serves as both a comprehensive guide for building or improving pedestrian routes and amenities, and a detailed blueprint for City policy revision that will guide future development. The plan includes a community network with connections between the neighborhoods, the central business district and other industrial/business sites, as well as links to open space and other area pedestrian networks. The plan has been used in the City's 2010-2011 budget session to prioritize funding of projects for Safe Routes to School and Carolina Thread Trail grant applications.



Centralina staff facilitated the **CMAQ project ranking processes** for Fiscal Years 2013-2015 for both Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) and the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. These funds support projects that improve air quality in those transportation planning organizations' jurisdictions.

## Water Quality

Centralina provided administrative support to the **Lake Wylie Marine Commission** and the **Mountain Island Lake Marine Commission**, which both pursued regional water quality initiatives in 2010. The Lake Wylie Marine Commission created the Clean Marina Program to improve water quality by reducing pollution from marinas on the lake. The Mountain Island Lake Marine Commission introduced proposed Motor Vessel Managed Access Regulations on Mountain Island Lake. The Commission asked CCOG staff to provide further stakeholder outreach in order to receive additional input and comment on the regulations.

Centralina partnered with three other Councils of Government in the **Yadkin Pee-Dee River Basin** to analyze the entire 7,213-square-mile river basin and objectively rate its restoration and conservation needs based upon publicly-available data. Thirty-nine percent of all rivers and streams and 36 percent of all lakes and reservoirs in the basin are listed as impaired by the North Carolina Division of Water Quality, and fail to meet EPA water quality standards. The final document from the project will be used to address current water quality needs and give river basin stakeholders guidance, while leveraging resources and funding to support work at the local level.

The **Centralina Regional Stormwater Partnership**, representing 23 local governments, has been working to educate the public on good stormwater practices through ads on the radio and television, in both English and Spanish. The partnership is funded primarily by dues from local member governments averaging about \$70,000 annually and an EPA grant fund of about \$11,000 to develop posters with stormwater messaging for the region's Spanish speaking populations. The partnership also assisted the City of Concord with the approval of a \$56,000 grant from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund to upgrade a retention pond for the community.

CCOG staff is currently managing two water quality projects underway in the **Goose Creek and Crooked Creek watersheds** that span both Mecklenburg and Union counties. These watersheds are home to several endangered species and contain several impaired or polluted bodies of water. CCOG staff applied for and was awarded funding to convene, coordinate and manage stakeholder involvement in a local watershed plan (now in Phase II). CCOG staff also applied for and was granted a multi-year grant for water quality modeling in the watersheds.

*Ensuring clean air and water resources is critical to the overall health, quality of life, and competitiveness of the region.*



# Land Use Planning for the Future

As the region grows, we need to look at how to maximize the existing physical and service system infrastructure as a way to control the cost of government, as well as address the emerging needs of a growing and diverse population. In addition to more traditional land use planning, CCOG planning staff's role has expanded to facilitating regional collaborative efforts involving land use, such as environmental stewardship and transportation initiatives described elsewhere in this report. CCOG also provides local planners with training on important emerging issues.

## LAND USE PLANNING RESULTS

CCOG completed the first **regional map of industrially zoned areas** in April 2010 with the help of a working group of economic developers, planners, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) professionals. The map is a first step to helping local decision-makers identify areas for future industrial growth and revitalization, enabling them to maximize existing investments in infrastructure. Because it creates sustainable reinvestment opportunities, the map is being used to apply for sustainability grants for the region.

The CONNECT Vision was the basis for the **region's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant application** for \$3.9 million in regional planning funds for sustainable growth, with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). To submit the application, CCOG worked with the Catawba Regional COG in South Carolina, the University of North Carolina Charlotte's Urban Institute, the City of Charlotte, MPOs and RPOs throughout the region, and a number of other partners ranging from the Charlotte Regional Partnership and Urban Land Institute to the Arts and Science Council, creating the CONNECT Consortium. Although not funded by HUD, the region received Preferred Sustainability Status, resulting in local governments being eligible for "bonus points" on a wide variety of federal grants.

North Carolina communities are increasingly feeling the need to have their **Planning Board and Board of Adjustment members trained** on North Carolina planning law. Litigation or the threat of litigation has been on the rise in recent years. To address this issue, CCOG and the North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association (NCAPA) teamed up to provide training sessions on general planning law and quasi-judicial planning law. A total of seven training sessions were held in three different locations –Wilson, Greensboro and Asheville – with about 275 attending. CCOG staff also provided similar training sessions in Monroe and Mooresville with about 125 people attending.

Centralina staff continue to assist in the implementation of the **Gaston County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)**. The Unified Development Ordinance, authored by Centralina staff and adopted by the County in 2008, has since been adopted by three other cities in Gaston County (Gastonia, Bessemer City and Lowell). As a result, more than 75 percent of the County's population is living within the UDO's jurisdiction. CCOG staff began working with another Gaston County community, Ranlo, to help with its Unified Development Ordinance adoption.

Gaston County received an **American Planning Association Award** in 2010 recognizing its efforts in adopting the Unified Development Ordinance and proactively working with local governments to secure its adoption elsewhere in the County. The Unified Development Ordinance was selected to be showcased at a session of the New Partners for Smart Growth Conference in Charlotte in February 2011, a national gathering with more than 1,500 attendees.

# Transportation Options for a Growing Region

Central to sustainable, well-managed growth in the region is a transportation system that has the physical and service delivery infrastructure to meet the needs of our region and local governments. The **Centralina Regional Transportation Planning Study** was completed and the findings rolled out in November 2010 at a gathering of more than 150 regional leaders. The findings generally addressed the lack of regional planning and advocacy framework for transportation needs and funding, when compared to other fast growing peer regions throughout the country.

The Transportation Study begins a new phase in 2011, focusing on how to close the gaps identified in the initial study. Elected policy leaders will determine the appropriate scope for regional transportation efforts and options for how to best realize improvements to regional transportation systems.

## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING RESULTS

The City of Charlotte, as the lead planning agency for Mecklenburg Urban Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO), contracted with Centralina staff to facilitate the development of the **2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for Mecklenburg County** and the urban portion of Union County. The plan was completed in early 2010 and allowed MUMPO to continue eligibility for receiving and spending federal funds for transportation projects.

CCOG is addressing bicycle needs throughout the region, with the first **multi-county bicycle plan completed in North Carolina**. The Lake Norman Bicycle Route is a 150-mile circuit of the Lake connecting neighborhoods, businesses, and providing recreational and economic development opportunities.

Continued mobility is one of the top issues for older adults within the region. **Centralina Area Agency on Aging** has been involved in several initiatives throughout 2010 to address transportation and mobility management. A nationally-known transportation specialist facilitated a regional discussion among local transit providers, the first step in greater collaboration among human service providers in the region.

CCOG assisted the **Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS)** in three separate prioritizing and allocating processes for two grant programs: Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedoms grants.

CCOG staffs the **Lake Norman Rural Planning Organization (LNRPO)**, assisting with grants, transportation planning and mapping to serve Iredell, Lincoln, and Cleveland Counties, and the rural portion of Gaston County.

*Experience in other regions demonstrates that collaborative infrastructure planning at a regional level saves money and produces better results.*



Biking photo courtesy [www.pedbikeimages.org/](http://www.pedbikeimages.org/) Carl Sundstrom

# Lifelong Communities

CCOG is working with communities in the Centralina region to ensure that they can be lifelong communities where people have a high quality of life, regardless of age or a disability. The challenges to maintaining quality of life and social equity for our aging population loom large. By 2030, North Carolina's total older adult population is expected to nearly double, from 12 percent to 23 percent of the total population. The economic downturn has resulted in an increasing number of aging adults who have lost their jobs, lost significant retirement savings, and have a higher percentage of debt than previous generations.

CCOG helps communities provide the infrastructure to meet these increasing needs. That infrastructure delivers the services and programs that ensure older and disabled adults remain in their homes, have food and transportation, are retrained for jobs if needed, and can maintain their health.

The purpose of Centralina Area Agency on Aging (CAAA) is to:

- Plan and develop long-range plans for Livable Senior-Friendly Communities.
- Develop and administer an area plan that is a comprehensive and coordinated system of service delivery in our area.
- Provide training leading to employment for seniors through the Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program.
- Provide a regional ombudsman program to promote and protect the rights of consumers before, during, and after they consider a long term care placement.
- Coordinate, train for, fund and monitor programs for state and federal funds.
- Provide advocacy, resources, and services to consumers through the Family Caregiver Support Program.

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING RESULTS

Centralina Area Agency on Aging received **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)** funds in 2009-2010 in three vital categories to enable providers to expand services to older adults and those with disabilities within our region. They were: nutrition, evidence-based health promotion programs, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

The **Nutrition Program** provides congregate meals in settings such as churches or senior centers, and home-delivered meals to those over the age of 60 who do not have another way to receive nutrition on their own. When many of Centralina counties were at risk of significantly reducing the number of meals that could be served, our region was able to provide additional meals, through stimulus funds, to more than 2,914 persons who received more than 100,000 meals.

**Evidence-Based Health Promotion programs** provide results oriented training to individuals to help them take charge of their own health through self-awareness and self-empowerment. Centralina Area Agency on Aging is the licensee for three evidence-based health programs: Living Health, Living Health with Diabetes, and a Matter of Balance. The Area Agency on Aging provided fidelity oversight, training of leaders and participants, and funding to expand these programs.



The **Senior Community Service Employment Program** provided funding for an additional 28 positions. The program retrained persons age 55 and older needing employment. The regional program was so successful that Centralina received unspent funds from other regions in the state. The ARRA program served 47 individuals and the regular funded program served 248 individuals. Thirty-one participants found employment in light of the economic climate and high unemployment.

**Other 2010 services included:**

- **Empowering Informed Decision** – Centralina Area Agency on Aging (CAAA) provided information and referral to consumers and caregivers regarding benefits and resources to easily access existing health and long term care options. Assistance was provided through development and training of NCcareLINK which is a database of services information; training on Medicare Part D Low-Income Subsidy, and funding of local Information and Assistance services.
- **Policy Development** – CAAA developed an extensive training module and toolkit for advocates regarding reauthorization of federal legislation for funding for all community based aging services within the region.
- **Home and Community Based Services** CAAA completed extensive work in the development of Community Resource Connections with Cabarrus and Mecklenburg Counties. Lincoln and Rowan Counties were assisted with the initiation of a readiness assessment for Community Resource Connections.
- **Older American Act Funds Management** CAAA offers not only regular monitoring of the Older American Act funds to ensure that Older American Act dollars are used to their maximum potential, but offers extensive tools, training, and implementation of the Annual Centralina Conference on Aging. That conference provided required training to more than 400 frontline workers around the region.

*CCOG helps provide the infrastructure for services and programs that ensure older and disabled adults remain in their homes, have food and transportation, are retrained for jobs if needed, and can maintain their health.*





Centralina Council of Governments

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## Mapping Our Future through the CONNECT Vision

Our region's roadmap to the future is the CONNECT Vision, a shared vision established and championed by the elected leaders within our region. Centralina is one of the few regions in North Carolina to establish a shared and unified vision. As our region faces unprecedented growth, the CONNECT Vision provides a roadmap for how we grow – how we increase jobs, control the cost of government and improve quality of life for our citizens. The CONNECT Vision forms the framework for the work of the Centralina Council of Governments. CONNECT's six "core" values are:

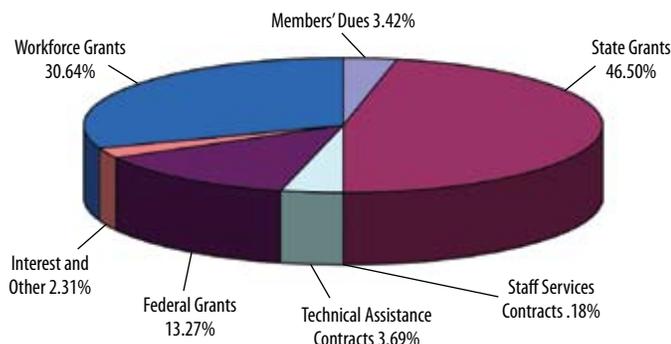
- **Sustainable, well-managed growth** that maintains quality of life, protects open space and environmental quality, retains the natural character of the region, and maximizes the efficiency of infrastructure investments.
- **Increased collaboration among jurisdictions** on issues that transcend boundaries, including growth management, transportation, and environmental concerns, in a manner that recognizes both regional and local needs.
- **A strong, diverse economy** that supports a wide variety of businesses.
- **A safe and healthy environment** with good air quality and water resources.
- **High quality educational opportunities** that are available to all residents.
- **Enhanced social equity** through community leadership and cooperative volunteerism.



## Financial Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2010

### Sources of Revenue

Members' Dues	805,160
Interest and Other	542,657
Technical Assistance	868,617
Staff Services Contracts	42,215
Workforce Grants	7,211,907
Federal Grants	3,123,149
State Grants	10,944,327
	23,538,032



### Expenditures by Program

General Government	419,283
Transportation	118,003
Environmental Protection	759,274
Economic and Physical Development	1,515,485
Human Services	12,533,061
Workforce Development	8,205,259
	23,550,365

