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WPCOG - Newsletter

December 2020

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Christmas at the WPCOG



WPCOG staff helped provide 2 families at Longview Elementary with Christmas gifts this year. We were able to buy presents for the kids and gift cards for the families for groceries and restaurants. WPCOG also took up donations for canned food, Styrofoam products and soap for several local agencies in the area.





Transportation

WPCOG and Lenoir-Rhyne University Co-Host the Western North Carolina Air Quality Conference

On December 11, the WPCOG and Lenoir-Rhyne University co-hosted the 15th annual Western NC Air Quality Conference. For the first time since establishing this Conference 15 years ago, attendees and presenters had to meet virtually due to the current pandemic. Still, over 100 registrants tuned in via Zoom to the five conference sessions. The Reese Institute and the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization continue to be key partners in producing this annual event.

Three of the five sessions focused on transportation trends that help improve air quality. John Marshall provided a visual update on the Hickory Trail System's progress, including segments like City Walk and River Walk. Marshall also shared the draft City of Hickory Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which recommends a network of additional sidewalks, crossings, and bicycle facilities to access the core Hickory Trail system. John Vine-Hodge shared his colleague Kathryn Seringue's presentation on the NC Great Trails Plan. This new NCDOT-sponsored plan seeks to connect every one of North Carolina's 100 counties with a system of multi-use paths, including the four counties in the WPCOG region. The Catawba River Trail linking Morganton and Hickory via East Burke communities is one of the key trail connections reflected in the new NCDOT plan. Nastasha Earle-Young shared the results of the new NC Moves 2050 plan. Building upon statewide input, this recently adopted NCDOT plan evaluated alternative future scenarios, like automated vehicles.

Two of the five sessions focused more directly on air quality and its research. Sarah Zelasky presented her ten-year analysis of the social costs of on-road emissions. Her analysis looked at where emissions occurred nationally and the health impact costs for each county. James Sherman shared his long-term trends of aerosol measurements in southern Appalachia and their effects on absorbing or scattering radiation. Measurements for Dr. Sherman's analysis were collected in Boone at the joint NASA and NOAA facility staffed by Appalachian State University.

To learn more about this and past conference topics, you may visit the WPCOG web page at: www.wpcog.org/air-water-quality-conference

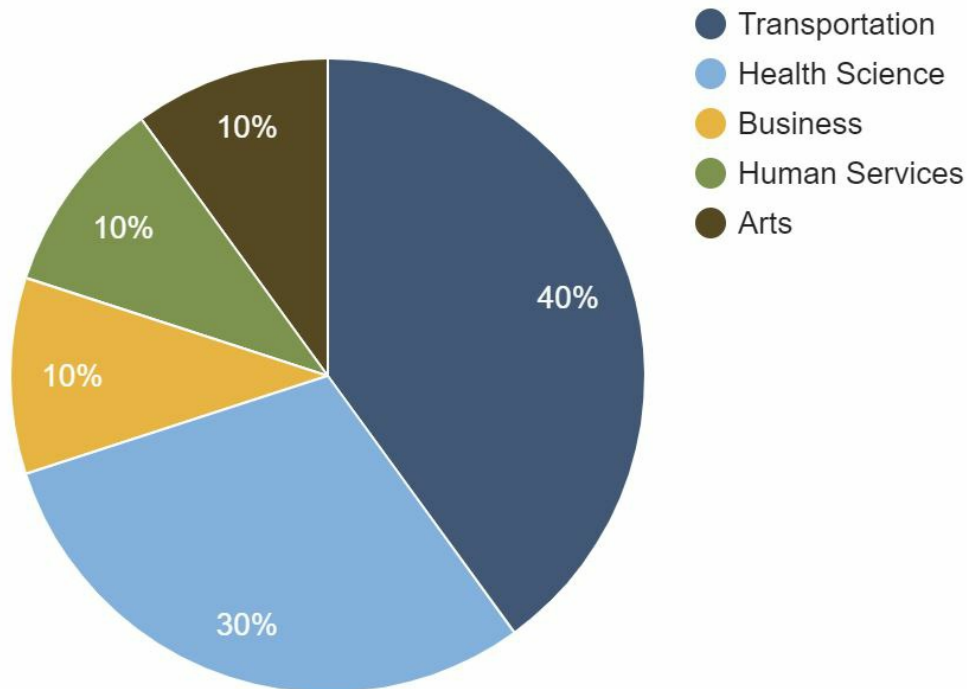
Article by Brian Horton

Workforce Development Board NCWorks is Working!

NCWorks is working and doing a great job through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. From March 2020 (NCWorks closed to the public on 3/18/2020) until the beginning of December (we re-opened on 10/05/2020), we have provided 75 training scholarships and over 12,000 career-assisted services. Our website www.westernpiedmontworks.org hosts our monthly "Workforce by the Numbers" dashboard, success stories, recruitment and workshop events, and other pertinent labor market information related to our region.



Scholarship & Training by Industry



Article by Wendy Johnson



What is Project C.A.R.E.?

Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty) is a North Carolina funded dementia-specific support program for family caregivers. The program uses a family consultant to provide comprehensive support to caregivers of those caring for someone at home with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia. Project C.A.R.E. family consultants assist caregivers with education, resources, and access to vouchers to alleviate some of the stress caregiving can create.

The program's purpose is to assist the caregiver with keeping the person with dementia safe and comfortable in their home for as long as possible. The Family Consultant receives referrals to the program and schedules in-home visits to meet with the caregiver and the person with dementia. The level of assistance provided varies and is dependent upon what the caregiver needs and prefers. In the last year, Project CARE has provided support to more than 200 caregivers in the 16 county region. Many of the caregivers served have elected to utilize respite to provide a needed break from the 24 hours a day responsibility of caregiving. Caregivers of any age caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia who are not eligible to receive similar services through programs such as V.A., Medicaid, etc. Services are available

for our services. Often we assist those who are on the waiting lists for other programs. While there are no specific income limitations, Project C.A.R.E. prioritizes low-income, rural, and minority families.

Project C.A.R.E. Also provides education and information to the public. There are more than 120 forms of dementia. Current statistics reveal that every 65 seconds, someone is diagnosed with a form of dementia. One in three Seniors die from a Dementia Diagnosis. As time progresses, we will know, care for or be a person with dementia. Estimates are that one in six people will have some form of dementia. Everyone needs to know the signs of dementia and how to help.

Below is a listing of signs as compared to normal aging:

- **Memory Loss that Affects Daily Life** - Forgetfulness is common with dementia but also common as we age. The difference is the ability to think through the steps and recall accurate information. People with dementia cannot sequence and remember if something has been forgotten.
- **Challenges in planning or solving problems** - The inability to follow instructions like recipes or mathematical tasks is common with dementia. People without dementia may occasionally make an error in their checkbook but can find and correct their mistakes.
- **Difficulty completing familiar tasks** - People with dementia may forget the steps involved in a task, such as cleaning, dressing, and brushing their teeth. People without dementia may forget how to program electronics but can complete the task with help.
- **Confusion with time or place** - A person with dementia can lose track of days, seasons, and passage of time. They may think it is time to get up and eat breakfast after an afternoon nap. People without Dementia May forget an appointment or the day of the week upon waking but can remember once they are up and functioning.
- **Trouble understanding special relationships and images** - People with dementia may have trouble reading, judging distance, or may pass a mirror and think someone else is in the room. Typically, people without dementia can discern special and visual changes upon consultation with an optometrist or physician.
- **Problems with words in speaking or writing** - A person with dementia may forget the word for a common item, such as a straw, and cannot recall the word. Sometimes they have trouble writing a word that is familiar and used daily. A stool may become a footrest. Typically, people without dementia may have to think long to find the right word to use in a sentence or substitute a different word of similar meaning.
- **Misplacing things and inability to retrace steps** - Often, people with dementia will place objects in unusual places: remote control in the microwave or keys in the freezer. Once they have placed it in

an unfamiliar location, they cannot find it and often accuse others of taking their things. Typically, a person without dementia will put something in an unfamiliar location (keys in the freezer) but can retrace their steps to find where they put them.

- **Decreased or poor judgments** - People with dementia may have difficulty making decisions. Anything from deciding a meal to prepare, items to use, or how to manage money can be a concern. They also begin to pay less attention to grooming and dressing. Typically, people without dementia occasionally make bad decisions, but usually, those are small in scale and easily correctable.
- **Withdrawal from work or Social Activities** - A person with dementia may remove themselves from activities they once enjoyed because they notice a difference in their ability. They can no longer interact normally or have trouble keeping up with others. A typical person without dementia may sometimes be tired of attending events or tire of social obligations.
- **Changes in mood and personality** - The mood and personality of a person with dementia can change slightly or dramatically. They can become anxious, confused, depressed, or fearful. A change in situation or routine may be out of their comfort zone and cause extreme aggravation. While typically, people without dementia may develop habits and become upset with something out of the routine that happens, a person without dementia can recover quickly.

--Information excerpt from the Alzheimer's Association 10 Warning Signs

Project C.A.R.E. is here to help anyone with dementia. Please call if we can be of assistance as you work to assist those with dementia. Remember. We will all encounter someone with dementia in our lifetime.

Service Area:

Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Davie, Forsyth, Mitchell, Stokes, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, Yadkin, and Yancey Counties.

Project C.A.R.E. services are provided at no cost. Learn more at www.wpcogaaa.org or Call 828-485-4267

You are not alone. Call for help!

[Article by Karen Phoenix](#)

Community & Economic Development

Bedding company receives \$100K building reuse grant



A manufacturer of bedding materials has been awarded a \$100,000 NC Commerce Building Reuse Grant to renovate a facility in Hildebran in Burke County.

East Coast Bedding, LLC - a subsidiary of California-based manufacturer Allied Feather + Down - will be renovating a 377,000-square-foot building and creating 19 new, full-time jobs as part of the grant.

Awarded through Burke County, East Coast Bedding worked with WPCOG Staff, Burke Development, Inc., and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina to apply for the grant.

A high-quality goose-down supplier for luxury brands, East Coast Bedding, will be investing more than \$2.2 million for the renovation project.

[Article by Paul Teague](#)

Community & Regional Planning

Census 2020 Update

The WPCOG Data Center has received numerous questions concerning the release of Census 2020 data over the past several weeks.

Bob Coats, the Governor's Census Liaison, recently sent NC Data Center affiliates an update on Census 2020 operations:

- The Census Bureau released the 2015-2019 American Community Survey socioeconomic characteristics of the population (i.e., income, poverty, educational attainment, disability status, etc.) on December 10, 2020. The ACS estimates will be available to subcounty areas such as census tracts and block groups. The ACS estimates are NOT 2020 Census counts.
- There is still uncertainty in the 2020 Census data release schedule. The 2020 Census Apportionment counts scheduled for December 31, 2020, will likely NOT be released until late January 2021.
- The first local data from the 2020 Census will be released with the Redistricting data scheduled for release on a flow basis beginning on April 1, 2021. The delay in releasing the Apportionment data will likely delay the release of the Redistricting data until May 2021.
- 2020 Census geospatial resources will be released January-February 2021. After required delivery to state redistricting leaders, the geographic support products will be posted to the Census website, and links to those products will be consolidated on the Census Redistricting & Voting Rights Data Office (CRVRDO) Internet site at www.census.gov/rdo.



MAKE NC
COUNT
CENSUS 2020

The WPCOG Data Center will continue to share updates concerning the 2020 Census.

Please contact Taylor Dellinger at 828-485-4233 or taylor.dellinger@wpcog.org if you have questions concerning the 2014-2019 American Community Survey or the 2020 Census.

Article by Taylor Dellinger

Regional Housing Authority Annual Landlord Workshop

The WPCOG Regional Housing Authority hosted the 7th Annual Landlord Workshop on November 18, 2020, to discuss new changes in Federal and State guidelines relating to COVID-19, answer frequently asked questions, and announce an exciting opportunity to engage new landlords. The RHA hosted the meeting remotely via ZOOM to maintain social distancing and experienced record-breaking attendance.

Eviction Moratorium: Hannah Wyatt, an attorney from Legal Aid, was the featured speaker. She provided valuable information regarding the CDC and Governor's Eviction Moratorium. The CDC order took effect on September 4, 2020, to temporarily halt residential evictions due to unpaid rent for "covered persons." A tenant must sign a declaration and give a copy to their landlord to invoke the order's protections. For more information regarding the eviction moratorium protections and your legal rights, please contact Legal Aid at 866.219.5262.

New Landlord Incentive: RHA staff was excited to announce the new Landlord Incentive Program, which begins January 1, 2021. The RHA recognizes the need for new landlords and the additional burden (process time, paperwork, and inspection requirements) to leasing through the HCV program. The RHA will begin offering \$500 to new landlords and \$50 for referring a new landlord.

Landlord Information: RHA staff discussed the move to bi-annual inspections and the Landlord Portal. The Landlord Portal is accessed from the WPCOG website and provides landlords access to their monthly

payments breakdown, 1099s, and tenant rent changes. You can also access the website directly with this link. <https://housing.wpcog.net>.

Community Resources: Community resources are available to assist with tenants' needs, including food, utility assistance, and emergency financial assistance. If you need assistance or would like to know more about available area resources, please contact either:

- Kala Guido (Catawba and Alexander Counties) at 828.485.4282 kala.guido@wpcog.org
- Ashley Dale (Burke and Caldwell Counties) at 828.485.4227 ashley.dale@wpcog.org

Article by Elizabeth Moncrief

WPCOG CALENDAR

All scheduled meetings are currently being conducted electronically. For a listing of upcoming meetings and information on how to participate or attend, please visit www.wpcog.org/electronic-public-meetings.

Stay Connected



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