

Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Western Piedmont Council of Governments. Don't forget to add jason.toney@wpcog.org to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

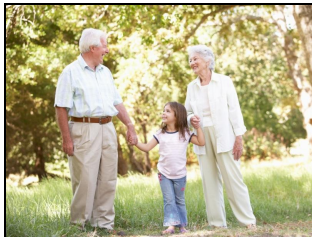


WPCOG - Newsletter

August 2018

Table of Contents

[Calendar of Events](#) | [Announcements](#)



Area Agency on Aging

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren...

[Learn more.](#)



Community & Economic Development

7 Tips for Keeping a Healthy Home...

[Learn more.](#)



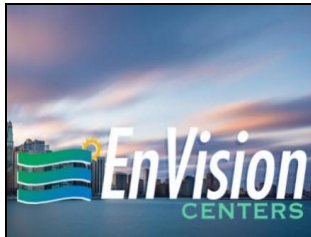
Community & Regional Planning

The Western Piedmont Storm Water Partnership Outreach...[Learn more.](#)



IT/GIS Services

Town of Drexel Unveils Mobile GIS for Utilities...[Learn more.](#)



Regional Housing Authority

EnVision Center Update...

[Learn more.](#)



Transportation Planning

Another Round of Grant Funding Available for Local Transportation Projects...[Learn more.](#)



Workforce Development Board

NCWorks Workforce

Development

Scholar...[Learn more.](#)



Community & Regional Planning

The Western Piedmont Storm Water Partnership Outreach

The Western Piedmont Storm Water Partnership is a collaboration between the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) and five participating municipalities in the region, including Hickory, Conover, Maiden, Morganton and Valdese.

A stipulation of having a state storm water permit is conducting educational outreach to the general public. The participating municipalities partner with the WPCOG to facilitate this outreach through events, workshops, and conferences.



The Western Piedmont Water Quality Conference is the largest outreach initiative of the partnership. The WPCOG partners with the Lenoir Rhyne Reese Institute for the Conservations of Natural Resources annually to put on this conference. The goal of the conference is to provide water quality outreach to local governments, non-profits, and interested citizens. This year's conference was held on Thursday, July 26th at Lenoir-Rhyne University.

WPCOG staff also aided the STEM West initiative with a week-long workshop for teachers in Alexander, Burke, and Caldwell Counties that included a presentation on water quality and stormwater and a poster contest where teachers across the region worked to create posters with storm water messaging.

Additionally, WPCOG Staff presented about the relationship between stormwater and water quality at the Education Matters Extreme Stem Tours. The STEM Tours provides STEM students with a behind the scenes look at how science, technology, engineering, and math are used in local industries. These tours are scheduled by WPCOG staff every year to present storm water information to students. This year, presentations were given to Grandview, Newton

Conover, River Bend, Mill Creek, Maiden, and Arndt Middle Schools, reaching around 450 students in total.

If your municipality is interested in joining the Western Piedmont Storm Water Partnership, contact Johnny Wear at 828-485-4283 or john.wear@wpcog.org.

Article by Becca Bleich

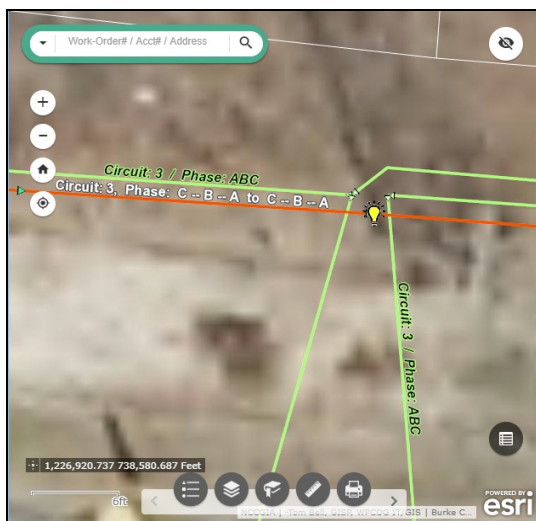
IT/GIS Services

Town of Drexel Unveils Mobile GIS for Utilities

The ability to locate utility features and see the attributes of each item in an online GIS (Geographic Information System) is an incredibly useful tool for any community. With proper training and equipment, town staff themselves can now view and update GIS data in the field using internet-connected tablets and smartphones.

During the past year, the Town of Drexel took full advantage of these advances in technology. With funding in part by a grant from the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Town teamed with the IT/GIS Services Department at WPCOG to conduct a comprehensive project to locate all of Drexel's water, sewer and electric infrastructure and place this information into a user-friendly GIS.

Before collection began, WPCOG staff met with Drexel Public Works personnel to determine which attributes to record for each type of feature. WPCOG IT/GIS also collaborated with West and Associates, Drexel's Town Engineers, to identify manholes that needed attention regarding their condition and water infiltration. For this, WPCOG built a web-based mapping application that enabled the engineers to use the internet to view pictures, video and attributes for each manhole opened by WPCOG staff. The app allowed the engineering firm to target manholes that required attention.



From July 2017 through July 2018, WPCOG IT/GIS staff were in Drexel using Trimble satellite positioning units to record the location and attributes of all utility features. By the end of the process, the team had collected 3,254 water features (e.g. meters, valves, lines), 2,434 sewer features (e.g., manholes, lines) and 5,511 electric features (e.g., poles, transformers, primary/secondary lines) totaling 11,199 items. Town and WPCOG personnel performed review and quality control during the collection process.

Additionally, WPCOG IT/GIS Staff created a custom GIS for the data using an online platform called ArcGIS Online by Esri, Inc. All of the collected features are stored in a web-accessible viewer application. The program is a password-secured web-

application, accessed from virtually any internet-connected computer or mobile device. The viewer application allows users to turn layers on-and-off, zoom into where the user is located, and investigate attributes of all nearby features.

WPCOG also digitized 74 architectural diagrams throughout the Town and spatially referenced them into the GIS. Now, Town staff can check the viewer to see if a given area has a drawing associated with it and view the diagram in its proper geographic location along with all the collected features.

To keep their GIS current as the Town grows, WPCOG IT/GIS staff trained Public Works personnel to use a compact, mapping-grade GPS unit and editing software on their iPads to update and maintain utility information in the GIS, such as when installing a new water valve or sewer line. Updated in real time, the new information is accessible instantly to all Town staff via the viewer application. WPCOG staff continue to maintain and support Drexel's GIS, adjusting the system to the Town's needs and providing training and support as necessary.

For more information regarding this project or GIS services in general, please contact IT/GIS Services Director - Scott Miller or GIS Analyst Tom Bell.

Article by Tom Bell



Regional Housing Authority EnVision Center Update

In June, The Regional Housing Authority (RHA) announced that HUD designated our agency as an EnVision Center. In implementing this designation, the RHA has been working closely with EnVision Center staff, local partners and stakeholders, as well as residents.

EnVision Centers will provide communities with a centralized hub for support in the following four pillars: (1) Economic Empowerment, (2) Educational Advancement, (3) Health and Wellness, and (4) Character and Leadership. The Economic Empowerment pillar is designed to improve the economic sustainability of individuals residing in HUD-assisted housing by empowering them with opportunities to improve their economic outlook.

To accomplish our goal of empowering our clients, we chose to communicate with our residents first to assess their needs. By deliberately involving the residents, their perspectives and recommendations, the RHA can build a program in which our low-income families will be encouraged to participate.

Our residents identified perceived gaps in services, and the RHA expressed those concerns to our partners. The Western Piedmont region has many agencies providing support to low-income individuals, but there is a lack of knowledge of those resources amongst the residents seeking help. The EnVision Centers will continue to work with HUD in regards to implementing a strategic plan to educate our residents on what resources are available. Motivating residents to be involved in identifying their obstacles and connecting them to resources to help them overcome those obstacles will be our main goal.

If you are interested in learning more regarding EnVision Centers, please contact Kala Guido 828.485.4282 | kala.guido@wpcog.org.

Article by Kala Guido

Transportation Another Round of Grant Funding Available for Local Transportation Projects

The Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) receives a direct allocation of approximately \$3 million annually in Surface Transportation Block Grant Direct Attributable (STBG-DA) funding. GHMPO uses the Local Administered Projects Program (LAPP) to prioritize and program local projects in the region that utilize STBG-DA funding. Eligible

projects can cover up to 80% of their costs with the program. Examples of previously awarded projects include the Hickory City Walk and the Morganton Greenway Downtown Connector.

On September 5, a workshop will be held at WPCOG for potential grant applicants. Attendees will learn about the grant application process, how projects are reviewed and recommended, and if awarded, how projects are administered by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Workshop materials can be accessed directly on the [Local Administered Projects Program page](#).

Article by Brian Horton

Workforce Development Board NCWorks Workforce Development Scholar

Sticking to Your Goals Pays Off! In May 2016 Justin came into the CVCC Alexander Center for Education seeking assistance with Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) from the NCWorks scholarship program. After being enrolled in the NCWorks scholarship program Justin suffered some major setbacks in his personal life and was unable to complete BLET on his first attempt. Despite those setbacks Justin showed pure determination in achieving his goals! With the career coaching of NCWorks staff and the willpower to face all of the obstacles that life threw at him; Justin successfully completed his second attempt at BLET! Justin never gave up on chasing his dream to become a law enforcement officer and is now happy to report he is officially a Taylorsville Police Officer. Congratulations Justin!



Learn more about Western Piedmont Workforce Development regional NCWorks Career Center impacts and accomplishments at www.westernpiedmontworks.org.

Article by Wendy Johnson

Area Agency on Aging Grandparents Raising Grandchildren



Each year, families throughout the United States celebrate National Grandparents Day on the first Sunday after Labor Day. The Area Agency on Aging Family Caregiver Support Program also takes advantage of this opportunity to highlight the number of grandparents taking a new detour in the course of their lives and taking on the role of parent for their grandchildren. The number of older adults taking on this role continues to grow.

Grandparents raising their grandchildren in North Carolina are in good company with families across the United States. According to the U.S. Census report, two and half million grandparents are raising 5.7 million grandchildren and have full parental responsibility. Those figures represent eight percent of all children in the United States.

Grandparents are committed to providing love, care and a stable environment for their children. Additionally, they share a common need and desire to find support, resources and education for their families. The Family Caregiver Support Program collaborates with organizations and businesses across the region to create "Summer Fun Packets" for "grandfamilies" in our region. Summer Fun packets included information about summer activities, camps and resources available across their county. Some organizations also offered free tickets or discounts to be included in packets for families. One of the goals of this project is to provide as much information as possible about reasonably priced or free activities for families to enjoy across their county during the summer. Grandparents now look forward to receiving their fun packets each summer!

The Area Agency on Aging Family Caregiver Support Program has also created a Back-to-School initiative specifically for grandparents raising grandchildren. School supplies are provided to families in our region. This program supports grandparents' efforts to provide stability and support for their grandchildren to begin their new school year.

Caregiver support groups provide an opportunity for families to connect, share encouragement with one another, and learn about community resources. The support groups in our area offer important connections for families:

Area Support Groups For Grandparents/Relatives Raising Grandchildren

Burke County:

Circle of Grandparents-Grandparent Raising Grandchildren Support Group

Thursdays, 5 - 7 p.m. Oak Hill Elementary (Dinner & childcare provided)

For More Information: Lisa Schell (828)502-9786

Catawba County:

Parenting The Second Time Around

Date: 1st Thursday of each month (September - June) (Dinner & childcare provided)

Time: 6-8pm

Location: Shurford YMCA, Conover

Contact: Family Caregiver Support Program, Mary Mitchell, 828-485-4256

As we look ahead to celebrating National Grandparents Day on Sunday, September 9, 2018, this is the perfect time to recognize grandfamilies and the grand efforts of grandparents.

Grandparents caring for their grandchildren have a unique opportunity to provide the security, love and support their grandchildren need. Realizing they are not alone, reaching out for community support and seeking support from other families is the cornerstone to building and strengthening their family for the path ahead. For more information about grandparents raising grandchildren, contact Mary Mitchell with the WPCOG Area Agency on Aging at (828) 485-4256.

Article by Mary Mitchell

Community & Economic Development

Seven Tips for Keeping a Healthy Home



Healthy Homes

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development • Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control



www.hud.gov/healthyhomes

Seven Tips for Keeping a Healthy Home

- 1. Keep it Dry**
Prevent water from entering your home through leaks in roofing systems, rain water from entering the home due to poor drainage, and check your interior plumbing for any leaking.
- 2. Keep it Clean**
Control the source of dust and contaminants, creating smooth and cleanable surfaces, reducing clutter, and using effective wet-cleaning methods.
- 3. Keep it Safe**
Store poisons out of the reach of children and properly label. Secure loose rugs and keep children's play areas free from hard or sharp surfaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and keep fire extinguishers on hand.
- 4. Keep it Well-Ventilated**
Ventilate bathrooms and kitchens and use whole house ventilation for supplying fresh air to reduce the concentration of contaminants in the home.
- 5. Keep it Pest-free**
All pests look for food, water and shelter. Seal cracks and openings throughout the home; store food in pest-resistant containers. If needed, use sticky-traps and baits in closed containers, along with least toxic pesticides such as boric acid powder.
- 6. Keep it Contaminant-free**
Reduce lead-related hazards in pre-1978 homes by fixing deteriorated paint, and keeping floors and window areas clean using a wet-cleaning approach. Test your home for radon, a naturally occurring dangerous gas that enters homes through soil, crawlspaces, and foundation cracks. Install a radon removal system if levels above the EPA action-level are detected.
- 7. Keep it Well-Maintained**
Inspect, clean and repair your home routinely. Take care of minor repairs and problems before they become large repairs and problems.

Announcements

Help North Carolinians Solve Problems Together at the 2018 Fall Emerging Issues Forum!

Did you know that being **engaged in your community** can help boost your community's economy? The proportion of people who report being attached to their communities can help predict economic growth - caring about where you live increases the odds that you will invest, spend, and hire there. However, North Carolinians are feeling disconnected, threatening our ability to solve major challenges and maintain economic competitiveness. North Carolina's cities and towns need residents invested and engaged in community life. We will be highlighting community initiatives from across the state and sharing their innovative strategies to engage their residents and solve local challenges.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN for the 2018 Fall Emerging Issues Forum, **ReCONNECT to Community: Solving Problems Together for a More Prosperous Future, September 17, 2018** in beautiful Asheville! Join leading national and local experts in civic and community engagement, education, local and state government, business, and nonprofit for "hands-on" information and strategies to re-energize residents, focusing on solutions that work.

For more information and to register, visit emergingissues.org/asheville today!

Calendar of Events

August

22 - Greater Hickory MPO TAC/TCC (2pm)

23 - Workforce Development Board Meeting (8:30am)

28 - WPCOG Executive Committee Meeting (6pm)

28 - CEDS Committee Meeting (3pm)

29 - Regional Managers' Meeting (12pm)

30 - Mayor/Chairman/Manager Meeting (6pm)

September

18 - WPAQC Meeting (10am)

25 - WPCOG Policy Board Meeting (6pm)

26 - Greater Hickory MPO TAC/TCC (2pm)

October

17 - Water Resources Committee Meeting (11am)

22 - Regional Aging Provider Meeting (2pm)

23 - WPCOG Executive Committee Meeting (6pm)

24 - Greater Hickory MPO TAC/TCC (2pm/3:30pm)

25 - Mayor/Chairman/Manager Meeting (6pm)

Stay Connected



1880 2nd Ave NW · Hickory, NC 28601 · 828.322.9191

www.wpcog.org