



WACCAMAW REVIEW

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www.wrcog.org

Proudly introducing our newly redesigned website!

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments rolled out a newly redesigned website recently, featuring a wider array of content, a more contemporary look and a layout that's user friendly and easier to navigate.

The site, at www.wrcog.org, offers an abundance of information about the agency and the extensive range of programs and services it offers to the public and government agencies in Georgetown, Horry and Williamsburg counties. Those services include workforce development, grant administration, transportation planning, assistance for the elderly and their caregivers, and even loans for businesses, developers and community organizations.

"It really is a substantial list of disparate things that we help people with. A lot of those things, on the surface, people wouldn't necessarily expect to go together," said

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GSATS project is major step in solving Hwy. 501 issues

New northbound lanes that opened on Highway 501 in May were a key piece in a plan to alleviate congestion for motorists traveling between Myrtle Beach and Conway.

Completed through the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) Policy Committee's

regional transportation improvements process, the \$4.9 million project widened U.S. 501 from Tanger Outlets to Gardner Lacy Road.

"Already we're seeing results. It has relieved traffic tremendously," said Mark Lazarus, a member of the

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Economic Outlook Forum returns as an annual tradition

Area leaders in government, business and the hospitality industry got an expert overview of what the future may hold for the regional, state and national economies during a special event organized and hosted by Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments. The Regional Economic Outlook Forum attracted about 100 people to the Litchfield Beach and Golf Resort and featured a slate of well-known and respected experts, including Dr. Bruce Yandle, Dean Emeritus of Clemson University's College of Business and Behavioral Science.

Yandle predicted a national economic recovery by 2017, though he also anticipates a mild "credit crunch recession" in 2018. He also forecast a national recovery of the housing market by 2018, but said it might come sooner for some parts of the Waccamaw region. He talked about continuing recovery for retail sales and predicted growth in manufacturing, but said that industry in the future won't look anything like what people have



A panel addresses attendees at the Economic Development Outlook Forum in March.

*"In 40 years, we'll still
be the largest
manufacturing economy
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— Dr. Bruce Yandle

come to expect.

"Try to get manufacturing plants to locate in your region, but realize they won't create a lot of employment," he advised. "You won't see full parking lots

there." Improving technology in manufacturing continues to allow increased production with fewer employees.

"In 40 years, we'll still be the largest manufacturing economy in the world, but nobody will work there," Yandle predicted. "They will contract for all their services: trucking, maintenance, payroll."

For more information about the forum, the Economic Outlook Board or Waccamaw Regional, visit www.wrcog.org, or contact Tom Britton at (843) 546-8502 or tbritton@wrcog.org.

Services, programs and benefits available for senior citizens

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) celebrated May as Older Americans Month and National Arthritis Month. Staff coordinated with local agencies to distribute information to community members regarding benefits and programs available to them.

April saw the AAA/ADRC go through the procurement process to determine which agency would provide services. A request for proposals was sent out and five agencies responded. A committee meeting was held to discuss and rank

the submissions and make a recommendation, which was to continue using the current providers (Horry County's Council on Aging, Georgetown County's Bureau of Aging Services, and Vital Aging of Williamsburg County).

This year has also seen the re-launch of the Aging Advisory Council, which held its inaugural meeting in February. During the April meeting, a chairman and vice-chairman were elected. The council will help advise the Aging

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Announcing our new slate of officers!

Waccamaw Regional's Board of Directors recently selected new officers for 2014-2016. These individuals represent each of the three counties in our region.

New officers are as follows:

- Mr. Jimmy Kirby, Chairman
- Mr. Randal Wallace, Vice Chairman
- Mr. Murray Vernon, Secretary
- Ms. Peggy Wayne, Treasurer

For more information about Waccamaw Regional's board and staff, visit our website, www.wrcog.com.

Upcoming Board Meetings:

- August 11
- September 8
- October 13
- November 10
- December 8

Meetings begin at 7 p.m. in the conference room at 1230 Highmarket St., Georgetown. The public is always welcome.

20 years of service

Two Waccamaw Regional employees were recently recognized for more than 20 years of service. Please join us in thanking Mr. Tomas Langley, deputy director for Workforce and Economic Development, and Mr. Arnold Johnson, finance director, for their dedication to Waccamaw Regional Council of governments and the regions we serve.

Contest: Do you recognize this?



Does this site look familiar? This photo was taken somewhere in our three-county region. Be the first person to correctly identify the location, and you'll receive a plastic tumbler featuring our logo. Send in your answers to: webmaster@wrcog.org.

Seniors

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Department on how programs can best help the seniors of our region.

The Aging Department welcomed a new member, Laura Cason, the new Aging Programs Coordinator. Laura came to the department with great experience in program marketing and will be a great asset.

For more information on services and programs offered for seniors, visit www.wrcog.org.



Seniors are pictured enjoying programs at the J.J. Mitchum Center in Hemingway.

Career and job fair puts focus on veterans

Veterans in the Waccamaw Region held the attention of more than 30 local employers recently when they attended the 2014 Veterans Career and Job Fair, sponsored by the South Carolina National Guard, SC Works and the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments. For three years now, these agencies have pulled together to help local veterans get back to work and this year more than 230 jobs were up for grabs, with many employers hiring on the spot and/or scheduling interviews.

Tony Johnson, local veterans employment representative with SC Department of Employment and Workforce, said the Job Fair has continued to grow over the years, and employer attendance increased nearly 25 percent

over last year. They expect these numbers to continue to increase for years to come.

"As part of the 'Operation Palmetto Employment' initiative, we are working harder than ever to employ our state's veterans and National Guard members," said Scott Perez, veterans services representative with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program. "Our goal is to promote the hiring of veterans, active duty members, reservists and spouses throughout the Waccamaw region."

The Veterans Career and Job Fair was held on April 24 at the SC National Guard Armory in Myrtle Beach, and was attended by more than 100 local veterans and their spouses. In addition to meeting with prospective employers, veterans were able to receive résumé and interview assistance from local SC Works staff and gain a better understanding of training and employment opportunities offered by partner services. Job fair attendees and employers were also treated to lunch by Chipotle Mexican Bar & Grill, which attended the fair to recruit employees for its new location in North Myrtle Beach.

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of South Carolina, Horry-Georgetown Technical College, Startek, Bi-Lo, and US Food Services were just a few of the local employers looking to fill full- and part-time positions in the area. If you missed this year's event, you can look forward to next year, tentatively set for April 2015. For information, call Scott Perez or Tony Johnson at (843) 234-9675.



A sign points the way for job seekers.

Community Development Block Grants available

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments is looking for parties interested in applying for Community Development Block Grants in the approaching fall award cycle.

This cycle focuses on Community Enrichment and Neighborhood Revitalization.

Application requests are due August 15 by 5 p.m. Completed applications must be received by 5 p.m. on September 15.

Please contact Waccamaw Regional at (843) 546-8502 to discuss the application process or to receive further information.



GSATS project area expands into North Carolina

The committee in charge of creating long-range transportation plans for Horry and Georgetown counties has expanded its reach into North Carolina.

The Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) Policy Committee was recently granted responsibility for transportation planning in several areas of coastal North Carolina. These areas include Brunswick County and the Towns of Calabash, Carolina Shores, Holden Beach, Ocean Isle Beach, Shallotte, Sunset Beach and Varnamtown. The expansion of the GSATS region is the result of growth reflected in the 2010 census.

With the additional area and responsibilities also come additional funds. Funds for each state will be completely separated and will only be spent on projects in the state in which the funds originate. The only effect on areas served by the committee prior to the expansion is that the 20-member committee has grown to 24 members.

The new members, who will represent North Carolina communities added to the area, are



The North Carolina delegation of the GSATS Policy Committee (from left to right): Shallotte, NC, Alderman Walt Eccard; GSATS Chairman Rep. Nelson Hardwick; NCDOT Board Member John Lennon; and Holden Beach, NC, Mayor Alan Holden.

pictured above. For more information about the GSATS committee, visit www.gsats.org, or call (843) 546-8502.

Website

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Sarah Smith, executive director for Waccamaw Regional. "We do a lot of things people don't know about and we're trying to change that. We want people to see all we have to offer."

The website had been tweaked over the years since its introduction, but this was its first overhaul of appearance, content and organization.

The redesign is just one component of a year-long effort to clarify Waccamaw Regional's services and programs, and make the agency more visible and accessible throughout the



Shown above is a screenshot from the new Waccamaw Regional website at wrcog.org.

three-county region it serves. Waccamaw Regional unveiled a new logo earlier this year. The logo is already in use and has been well received.

Waccamaw Regional has also added social media to its means of communication. The agency

now has a presence on social media websites including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+.

For more information, visit www.wrcog.org, or call Waccamaw Regional at (843) 546-8502.

Highway 501

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policy committee and chairman of Horry County Council.

The committee is in charge of creating long-range transportation plans for Horry and Georgetown counties, as well as parts of coastal North Carolina.

Highway 501 has been ranked by the S.C. Department of Transportation as the most congested “strategic corridor” in the state. But not only that, it’s the most congested in the state by a wide margin, said Chris Clark, transportation program

manager for Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments, which provides planning staff for the GSATS committee.

“It’s leaps and bounds above even the No. 2 project,” he said.

The segment of 501 between SC-544 and Carolina Bays Parkway is more than 11 times more congested than the average highway of that type, and is 15 percent more congested than the project that ranked No. 2 on the list. The second most congested roadway was Highway 17 between Wesley Drive and West Oak Forest Drive.

The area in front of Tanger Outlets typically had the highest concentration of congestion and



while the widening project alone won’t solve the problem, it is an important step in the process

This project will work in conjunction with future projects, such as construction of new southbound lanes on Highway 501 and construction at International Drive, to further alleviate the problem. Read more at www.wrcog.org.



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Stay up to date with the latest news from Waccamaw Regional at www.wrcog.org!