



Land-of-Sky Regional Council



annual report

2012

Executive Director

On Track for Regional Success

As our nation emerges from a challenging economic recession, the Land-of-Sky region is experiencing significant job growth. Among recent job creation announcements, three national breweries have chosen to locate in Western North Carolina (WNC), bringing with them more than 350 new jobs. Two reasons cited by these employers for choosing to locate in the area were the high quality of life and spirit of regional cooperation. We are certainly reaping the benefits of working together.

Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) has worked with our local governments for the past 46 years to enhance and protect WNC's quality of life through regionalism. Our organization's success in the past few years can be directly attributed to an expansion of regional cooperation. We find ourselves partnering more with organizations, such as AdvantageWest and Southwestern Commission, to attack our region's challenges together and find solutions that have greater impacts throughout WNC. This renewed commitment to working together has LOSRC on track for continued regional success.

LOSRC is a government entity that works with Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties and their municipalities. We offer a forum for local government officials and community leaders to come together to address the challenges which we face in WNC.



The 2012 LOSRC Annual Report highlights a few of our programs that have impacted the lives of many citizens in WNC. We trust it will give better insight into our organization and the spirit of cooperation that exists between our local governments.

We offer this report to our community as an opportunity to review this year's accomplishments and celebrate our successes.

Joe McKinney, Executive Director



Council

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Jason Chappell

First Vice-Chair

Terry Bellamy

Second Vice-Chair

Holly Jones

Secretary

Bob Davy

Treasurer

Debbie Ponder

At-Large Member

Bill O'Conner

At-Large Member

Letta Jean Taylor

*Served part of the Fiscal Year

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Henderson County

Bill O'Connor
Anthony Starr

Madison County

Debbie Ponder
Eddie Fox

Transylvania County

Jason Chappell
Kelvin Phillips

Economic Development Representatives

Buncombe County

George Morosani

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Carol Bartlett
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Village of Flat Rock

Dave Bucher
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Town of Fletcher

Bob Davy
Mark Biberdorf

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Town of Laurel Park

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James Ball

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John Chandler

Town of Marshall

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Town of Rosman

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Roger Petit
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Jerry VeHaun
Jason Young
James Eller

Aging Programs

Representative
Charles Dickens

Volunteer Services

Representative
Kathe Harris

Madison County

Jerry Plemmons

Madison County

Simone Bouyer

Transylvania County

Mark Burrows

Transylvania County

Rodney Locks

Land-of-Sky Expands Services and Reorganizes to Better Serve Local Governments and Service Providers

In 2011, Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) implemented a series of programmatic changes designed to better serve local governments and service providers in the four-county region. The organization worked in partnership with Buncombe County to assume administrative responsibilities for two important programs, the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board and Mountain Mobility. In addition, LOSRC reorganized two departments, Volunteer Services and Area Agency on Aging (AAA), to strengthen the service delivery system in a challenging budget environment.

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board (MAWDB) is a partnership of private business executives and the leading workforce development organizations in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania counties. Its purpose is to provide policy, planning, oversight and funding for local workforce development programs and address workforce issues as they emerge within the region. Specifically, the MAWDB provides leadership in designing a workforce development system that helps individuals prepare for and secure suitable employment while helping businesses understand the local labor market. They also help develop training programs to improve the success of their employees.

Since 1974, Buncombe County had served as the lead administrative agency for the MAWDB. Recognizing the program had grown to a regional scale, the county asked LOSRC to assume the administrative functions of the organization in July, 2011. The decision provides stronger opportunities for regional collaboration and partnership among the four counties.

Another program that shifted from Buncombe County to LOSRC in 2011 was the administrative functions for the county's transportation program, Mountain Mobility. Established in 1989, Mountain Mobility has increased the level of transportation services available to Buncombe County citizens. They also provide transportation to clients of human service agencies, departments of local governments, and the general public for people residing outside of the City of Asheville.



During the 2010-11 budget process, Buncombe County examined options for improving services by partnering with a private contractor to operate the transportation program. As a result, the county contracted with McDonald Transit Associates, Inc. for operational services, while choosing LOSRC to provide the required administrative functions (reporting, grant writing, monitoring). Similar to the decision to move workforce services to LOSRC, Buncombe County believed the move will better support a regional transit vision and improve coordination in the four-county area.



Two other programs that experienced significant changes this year at LOSRC were the Area Agency on Aging and the Volunteer Services Department. These programs were consolidated into the Aging and Volunteer Services Department. LeeAnne Tucker, previous Director of the Volunteer Services Department, now directs the collaboration. Given uncertain budget times on the federal level, a decision to combine departments was made to ensure both programs would be sustained in the event of budget cuts.



LOSRC continues to provide quality services to local governments and service providers in the four-county region. The addition of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board and Mountain Mobility, as well as the consolidation of the Area Agency on Aging and Volunteer Services Department, will enhance opportunities for future regional cooperation.



LOSRC's **mission** is to work with local governments, the Region's leadership, state and federal agencies, service providers, and volunteers to foster desirable **social, economic, cultural** and **ecological** conditions in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties.

Right: The Building Futures program in Transylvania County helped Justin Barrett get work experience while continuing his education.



Below: On-the-Job Training places Joshua Shreve at MetalCraft, Inc.



Mountain Area Workforce Development Board

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board (MAWDB) is a partnership of private business executives and the leading workforce development organizations in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania counties. The purpose of the MAWDB is to provide policy, planning, oversight and funding for local workforce development programs and address workforce issues as they emerge within the region.

Programs and Services:

Job Seeker Services - Provides employment resources such as assistance with job searches, skill-building workshops and career development planning.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs - Provides financial assistance for eligible persons to receive additional workforce training.

Youth Programs - Provides career planning, life skills and financial/education assistance for students ages 16-21.

Business Services - Provides recruitment, screening and referral of qualified job candidates to local businesses. Also administers On-the-Job Training funds to connect job candidates with employers seeking to train new employees.

LOSRC Welcomes Workforce Development Services in 2011

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board (MAWDB), a partnership of private business executives and leading workforce development organizations in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties, became a part of Land-of-Sky Regional Council in July, 2011. The purpose of the MAWDB is to provide policy, planning, oversight and funding for local workforce development programs and address workforce issues as they emerge within the region.

The MAWDB and JobLink Career Centers are actively involved in the workforce development aspects of business expansions and the establishment of new business facilities.

Services include:

- hosting and supporting job fairs
- coordinating employer interview days
- conducting customized screening, recruiting and selection sessions to fill job openings
- administering WorkKeys/Career Readiness Certificate Testing
- securing Incumbent Workforce Training grants and
- developing On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts.

In Henderson County, Legacy Paddle Sports, Continental Teves and Selee Corporation received extensive JobLink services in 2012. In total, over 400 candidates received formal assessments and more than 200 jobs were filled for the three companies.

In Buncombe County, JobLink provided a job skill assessment, WorkKeys®, for 202 candidates to support the expansion of Thermo Fisher Scientific. In addition, the MAWDB assisted in organizing job fairs which recruited more than 3,000 applicants for the Linamar start-up. JobLink also recruited and screened 32 candidates for Market Share 52, of which 15 were hired.

Across the region, the OJT program provided 34 job-seekers with employment in 2012. Staff also assisted four companies in securing nearly \$43,000 to provide training for 27 key employees through Incumbent Workforce Training grants.

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board

A-B Tech Community College, Maple Building
340 Victoria Road, Asheville, NC 28801
Phone: 828-255-2525
www.mountainareaworks.org

A Career Transition through Training

While living in Virginia, Joshua Shreve had not been able to complete high school and worked as a cashier to help support his family. After moving to Western North Carolina, Joshua approached one of the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board's JobLink Centers for career guidance.

JobLink conducted several assessments and determined that Joshua possessed high mechanical reasoning and spatial relation skills. As a result, the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program placed him in employment with MetalCraft, Inc.

The story of Joshua Shreve is an example of how training can change lives.

The OJT program matches employers with eligible individuals who receive specific job training for up to 26 weeks. The goal is to assist job-seekers in obtaining full-time employment with a career path while helping employers off-set the costs of hiring and training new employees. In 2011, OJT successfully placed 34 applicants in jobs that matched their interests and skills.

Joshua Shreve is currently making progress on the completion of his GED. For the first time in his life, he is on a career path that is enjoyable and has a promising future.

As part of Mountain Area Workforce Development Board, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) offers two distinct types of training options for eligible dislocated workers and low-income adults. In addition to On-the-Job Training (OJT), tuition assistance is available for traditional classroom instruction through community colleges.

Making a Difference in Transylvania County

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board contracts with each county school system in the region to help at-risk students stay in or return to school to earn their diplomas. Using career counseling and paid work experience, these in-school programs teach youth the essential link between education and real life career success.

The Building Futures program in Transylvania County is helping high school students reach their educational goals. Through funding from the Workforce Investment Act, the program provides career planning and work experiences to at-risk students.

After considering dropping out of school, Transylvania County student Justin Barrett was referred to the Building Futures program by his principal. Workforce Development Program Case Manager Todd Anderson felt Barrett was a perfect candidate for the program because of his school issues and the challenges of living on his own.

Anderson was able to place Barrett in a work experience contract with a local auto shop, Hometown Automotive, in Brevard, which is owned and operated by Kenny and Sheila Byrd. This was a perfect fit because Barrett was able to learn about auto mechanics while continuing to pursue his high school diploma.

Kenny Byrd, along with employee Colby McAllister, has been an important part of Barrett's life as supporters and mentors during his work experience. "Justin showed signs of improvement on his attendance and attitude at school. He would tell me all the time that he loved his job," Anderson said.

This program made it possible for Barrett to earn his diploma from Rosman High School and get a jump start on his new career. He is currently attending Blue Ridge Community College to obtain an Associate's Degree in Automotive Technology.

MAWDB is dedicated to **education, training, employment and business** services.



Region Receives “Clean Cities” Designation

In the summer of 2012, the four counties of Land-of-Sky Regional Council and Haywood County received an official “Clean Cities” designation from the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Clean Cities Program. The DOE Clean Cities Program was established to reduce our nation’s dependency on foreign oil, improve air quality and create clean energy jobs.

Above: A series of community meetings gathered input from local residents to develop the Blue Ridge Bike Plan.



Right: Attendees discussed ways the region can better prepare for natural disasters, such as rock slides, which impact critical transportation corridors at the I-40 Open Access conference.



Since 2004, the Land of Sky Clean Vehicles Coalition has helped reduce petroleum use by over 1 million gallons in the five counties through the use of alternative fuels and advanced technology vehicles. Public and private entities converted their fleets to alternative fuels including biodiesel, ethanol, propane autogas, compressed natural gas and electricity or purchased fuel efficient gas-electric hybrids. While there were about 100 alternative fuel vehicles in the region in 2004, there are now over 1,300 alternative fuel vehicles and another 1,400 hybrids. The U.S. DOE recognized these efforts and designated the Land of Sky Clean Vehicles Coalition as the 85th Clean Cities Coalition in the nation.

One example of the Coalition’s work is the **Carolina Blue Skies and Green Jobs Initiative**, which helped secure over \$1M in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for four natural gas vehicle projects. The City of Asheville purchased 25 natural gas vehicles (NGVs) and expanded their natural gas vehicle fueling station. Mission Hospital purchased five NGVs including two shuttle-buses. The City of Hendersonville deployed five natural gas trucks. Henderson County obtained two new NGV pickup trucks and expanded their natural gas fueling station. These investments reduce operating costs and create savings of about \$1.50-\$2.00 per gallon less than gasoline or diesel fuel.



Henderson County obtained two new NGV pickup trucks and expanded their natural gas fueling station.



Local Government Services

The Local Government Services Department provides an array of planning, development, grant writing, facilitation and project management services to our member governments. They also coordinate and manage regional economic, community development, and environmental projects.

Specialities:

Growth Management - land use, water quality/quantity, working lands, cultural and historic sites, conservation, waste/recycling

Transportation - urban and rural, transit, bike and pedestrian, greenways, roads, rail, air quality

Housing - rehabilitation, affordable, green built

Energy - renewable, efficiency, alternative fuels

Brownfields - assessment, cleanup, redevelopment

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Waste Reduction Partners - industrial, institutional and commercial waste reduction, energy efficiency

Bicycling Towards Tomorrow

Bicycling is important to the economy of Western North Carolina (WNC). Each year thousands of people visit the region to ride for recreation and take part in bicycling activities such as the Hot Doggett, Fletcher Flyer, and Blue Ridge Breakaway. In partnership with the Southwestern Commission, Land-of-Sky Regional Council is developing the Blue Ridge Bike Plan (BRBP) which will foster healthier communities, stronger local businesses, and commuter opportunities in WNC by promoting access to safe bicycling options. The BRBP will encompass the counties of Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Madison, Swain and Transylvania.

Made possible through a \$250,000 grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the BRBP is being led by a 25-member Executive Committee and 60-member Steering Committee representing local governments, organizations, businesses, and community members. A kick-off meeting was held in November 2011 to elect committees and identify goals, needs, and desired outcomes.

In early 2012, approximately 450 people responded to an online survey about regional bicycling needs. In addition, more than 150 people attended community meetings in the summer of 2012. Input from the committees and community members will lead to the development of a robust action plan to guide future local and regional bicycle transportation planning and investment for our region.

GroWNC Promotes Regional Economic Competitiveness

Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) has launched a three-year planning effort focused on economic competitiveness and job creation for our region. A Consortium of over 65 organizations and local governments, GroWNC is focusing on the core areas of Economic Development, Energy, Health, Housing, Land Use, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Transportation, and Communications.

A Project Team and Workgroups have been gathering community input, examining existing plans, and crafting regional growth scenarios that will allow communities to choose how they develop in the future.

At a series of community meetings, residents participated in activities to identify strategies, actions and early implementation projects. These suggestions are being reviewed for final recommendation by a Steering Committee, LOSRC Board, and participating member governments and organizations.

Opportunities for community involvement in GroWNC are ongoing, and include such activities as conducting “Community Road Trips” with small groups, completing individual surveys, sharing stories through the GroWNC website, or following the project on Facebook and Twitter. For more information about upcoming opportunities and preliminary findings, go to www.gro-wnc.org.

Regional Response to Rockslides

Rockslides are frequent occurrences in Western North Carolina, often leading to major interstate closures, which costs the region millions of dollars a day. The region lacks a plan that specifically addresses rockslides on Interstate 40 (I-40). In December 2011, Land-of-Sky Rural Planning Organization (LOSRO), in coordination with various agencies in North Carolina and Tennessee, hosted the second I-40 Open Access conference in Maggie Valley. This was as a result of the success of the 2010 conference held in Newport, Tennessee.

Conference speakers and attendees discussed ways the region can better prepare for natural disasters which impact critical transportation corridors. Experts in the field discussed efforts to prevent these events and identify problem areas that are more susceptible to rock and landslides. Possible funding options for a regional plan were also examined. A diverse array of over 40 state and local stakeholders were in attendance and ranged from engineers and geologists to tourism professionals and chambers of commerce members.

Assistant State Geologist and Chief of the North Carolina Geological Survey in the North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, Dr. Kenneth Taylor provided the keynote address for the conference. Dr. Taylor stressed the importance of preparedness, communication and cooperation among various departments prior to rockslides and similar events. Interagency coordination is critical to ensuring the region will be adequately equipped to respond to future rockslides.



Land-of-Sky Regional Council Plays Host to NCAMPO Transportation Planners

In May 2012, Land-of-Sky Regional Council and French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization hosted over 300 transportation planners and engineers for the 19th annual North Carolina Association of Metropolitan Planning Organization's (NCAMPO) conference, Sustainable Transportation for the New Normal. The conference featured 18 break-out sessions and seven mobile workshops which gave participants the opportunity to attend educational sessions, visit Asheville and experience the walkable and lively setting.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Secretary Eugene Conti, Deputy Secretary for Transit Paul Morris, American Planning Association President Mitchell Silver, and Atlanta Senior Policy Advisor for Transportation Tom Weyandt were some of the keynote speakers who brought their updates and perspectives on the direction of transportation policy and planning to the group. Session presenters and other attendees came from across the nation.

As part of the conference, Buncombe County and the City of Asheville featured their partnership to support bicycle and pedestrian planning. City and County staff highlighted activities in the Land-of-Sky region to promote awareness, education and behavioral changes as it relates to transportation choices. Strive Not to Drive, Downtown on the Move, and Eat Smart/Move More are examples of programs that the City and County promote as part of this partnership.

Improving Living Conditions in Madison County

For many years, Edward Norton volunteered his time checking on elderly home-bound residents in Madison County. As a result of declining health, he was no longer able to volunteer or maintain his home. Mr. Norton turned to Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) for assistance.

Through the North Carolina Division of Community Investment and Assistance, LOSRC administers Madison County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. On a three year cycle, the Division provides Scattered Site funding to counties for rehabilitation, replacement, clearance, and urgent repairs for low income residents with severe housing needs. To help prioritize funding needs, County Commissioners have established a selection committee to review applications for housing rehabilitation.

In 2011, the Madison County Selection Committee approved the replacement of Mr. Norton's home with a new energy efficient manufactured house. As a result, he now has a secure, healthy living-environment.

From 2008 to 2011, Madison County's CDBG funds provided assistance for 12 homes, significantly enhancing the living conditions of community members. The county's next Scattered Site award is scheduled for 2012. Applications for urgent repairs will be accepted in early 2013.



Left: Before and after pictures of Edward Norton's home in Madison County.

Below: LEAP Task Force finalized the regional planning process through a tabletop exercise.



Above: As part of the NCAMPO conference, a Bike Mobile Tour gathered for a ride around Asheville.

Progress Through Partnership: EvolveEnergy^P

In Fiscal Year 2011, Western North Carolina emerged as the state leader in clean energy companies per capita and installed renewable energy capacity. Given the region's existing \$3 billion annual energy dollar-drain, this emergence represents a significant opportunity to keep valuable energy-dollars within the region while also driving job creation and helping local businesses and communities reach their energy goals. In order to fully capitalize on the benefits of clean energy, the EvolveEnergy Partnership—one of the country's first regional clean energy coalitions—was established to provide regional vision and leadership.

On October 17, 2011, over 200 clean energy professionals from across the 31-counties of western North Carolina gathered to celebrate the official launch of the EvolveEnergy^P. The event featured presentations from project partners highlighting clean energy success stories and the innovation, policy, finance, and development services provided through the Partnership. Together, these services provide an innovative platform for business and community leaders to promote regional self-sufficiency and community resiliency through clean, locally produced energy solutions.

The launch event was one of several major clean energy achievements for the region. Project partners played a key role in recruiting Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., a national private sector leader in clean energy, to the region. FLS Energy, an Asheville-based solar company, was named the 46th fastest growing business in the country by "Inc. Magazine". In December, the Partnership was named a top five business story of the year by Asheville Citizen-Times. In total, over 220 new jobs were created and 21 new start-ups formed and/or businesses expanded through the work of the EvolveEnergy^P!

Local Governments LEAP Ahead of Fuel Shortages

In 2008, a series of natural disasters, highlighted by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, severely disrupted production and distribution of fuel in the Gulf states, the primary source of transportation fuel for Western North Carolina (WNC). The disruption, compounded by the high cost of delivery to the mountains, led to fuel rationing for basic services such as medical, fire, police, water and sewer.

Recognizing the need for improved preparedness and coordination of resources, the City of Asheville and Land-of-Sky Regional Council led a coalition of WNC municipalities in the formation of the Energy Assurance Task Force to create a Local Energy Assurance Plan (LEAP). The Plan provides local government and emergency officials with a guide to respond to fuel shortages in a timely fashion.

In coordination with 23 local governments in the five-county region, the Task Force developed a fuel assurance plan to improve cooperation, identify and address needs, and investigate strategies to increase fuel availability in WNC. Through the process, outreach materials and an action report were developed for local government staff and exercises were held to train stakeholders.

LEAP has enhanced our region's resiliency when facing future fuel crises. The project was funded through a United States Department of Energy grant through the State Energy Office.



The EvolveEnergy^P project includes 31 WNC counties and is sponsored by: U.S. Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration, NC Rural Center, and the Appalachian Regional Commission.





RIDE-ing with Mountain Mobility

Buncombe County's Mountain Mobility transportation program is designed to reduce duplication of transportation services for older adults and disabled persons. In July 2011, Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) was asked by the County to manage administrative duties for this transit program. Through the partnership, LOSRC provides support for County staff in financial/statistical reporting related to grant funding, as well as applying for new grants.

LOSRC's contract includes implementation of the County's "Ridership Independence for the Disabled and Elderly" (RIDE) discount voucher program. The program is currently in a test phase with nearly 51 participants enrolled. The RIDE Program offers increased independence, while helping bridge the gap for ground transportation options. Qualified participants can purchase a transportation voucher valued at \$10 for \$2.50, which can be redeemed by five transportation providers in the County including taxi and limousine services.

Mountain Mobility serves over 30 human service agencies and organizations including:

- Buncombe County Departments of Aging Services, Child Care Services, and Social Services;
- Asheville Transit;
- Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College;
- CarePartners Adult Day Center;
- Council on Aging of Buncombe County;
- North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation;
- As well as other organizations including several nursing homes and adult care facilities.

Majority of the Mountain Mobility buses have lifts to serve persons using mobility aids and all Trailblazer buses have bike racks.



Mountain Mobility

Mountain Mobility was established to reduce the duplication of services needed by human service agencies while increasing the level of transportation services available to Buncombe County citizens. Mountain Mobility provides transportation services to clients of human services agencies, departments of local governments, and general public transportation services for persons residing outside the City of Asheville.

Programs:

Trailblazer Routes - Three routes include North Buncombe, Black Mountain and Enka-Candler. These routes are open to anyone that wants to ride and the fare is 50 cents to board.

Senior Pass Program - Provides a free monthly bus pass for eligible seniors age 65 or over who are willing and able to use Asheville Transit System's fixed route bus services to meet their transportation needs.

RIDE Program - Provides a transportation option to residents for whom public transportation is either unavailable or inaccessible. The program allows eligible customers to purchase private transportation provider services at a significant discount.

 MOBILETY 828.250.6750	 R.I.D.E. Ridership Independence for the Disabled and Elderly		\$10 OFF YOUR FARE
	PROVIDER COMPANY: _____ VEHICLE NUMBER/DRIVER: _____		
VOUCHER NUMBER: _____ SINGLE USE VOUCHER VALID FEB 1, 2012 - JAN 31, 2013	TRIP DETAILS		TOTAL
Passenger Name: _____ From: _____ To: _____ Date: _____	START: AM _____ PM _____ FINISH: AM _____ PM _____ PASSENGER'S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____	FROM: _____ TO: _____ PRINT NAME: _____ VOUCHER NUMBER: _____	\$ _____
<small> Vouchers are non-transferable and are for use by eligible participants only. Only original vouchers will be accepted. MAXIMUM 1 voucher per trip. Passenger must show ID to driver. NO CASH VALUE </small>			

To contact Mountain Mobility for more information about the RIDE program or any other service, contact:

828-250-6750

Information & Eligibility - Option 5
 Reservations - Option 4

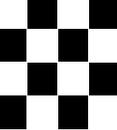
Monday - Friday / 8 am - 5 pm

Regional Accomplishments

- LOSRC was awarded a **\$300,000** Revolving Loan Fund Grant from the Environmental Protection Agency. Funds will be used for a low interest loan to remediate a former industrial site.
- FBRMPO funded transportation studies which includes Haywood County Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, Black Mountain Town Square Study, Waynesville South Main Street Study, and the Buncombe Greenways Master Plan.
- LOSRC completed the WNC Forest Products Cooperative Marketing Project, a **\$1.97 million** project from the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service. The 18-county project provided grants to 14 small forest-based businesses that led to the creation or retention of 164 jobs for under and unemployed forest workers. The project included business, network and market development for emerging products.
- The Living Healthy Program served 110 community members living with chronic health conditions by teaching ways to take control of their health during 1 leader training and 12 community workshops.
- LOSRC secured **\$249,803** in funding for the development of a two year Regional Bicycle Plan (now the Blue Ridge Bicycle Plan). The 7-county project is designed to create a commuter and recreation network, prioritize infrastructure improvements, and propose recommendations through a community-driven process.
- FBRMPO staff helped select and oversee the Transportation Demand Management Study for the Asheville region.
- Through the AAA and the WNC Fall Prevention Coalition's partnerships, 360 older adults were screened for fall risk at Building Better Balance Screenings. The Matter of Balance Program reached over 40 older adults to address the fear of falling.
- AAA partnered with the Health Adventure to provide Tai Chi for Arthritis - an evidence-based balance building program, in which 175 older adults participated.
- FBRMPO staff initiated collection and analysis of baseline data for the Travel Demand Model update, including tax parcel data and employment and demographics data for the five-county region.
- AAA secured **\$6,286** in funding from Duke Energy and Progress Energy which provided 283 fans and 17 air conditioners to older adults in need through the Fan/Heat Relief Program. The Council on Aging of Buncombe County, the Council on Aging for Henderson County, and Western Carolina Community Action – Brevard distributed these fans and air conditioners.
- LOSRC partnered with NC's utilities and other partners to secure a **\$500,000** EV Community Readiness Planning Grant from the US Department of Energy to develop a statewide EV roadmap and four regional EV plans including one for the Asheville region.
- Home Medical Equipment, Inc. received **\$3,780** from the Family Caregiver Support Program to install personal emergency response systems and fund monitoring for up to 1 year for caregivers of people at high risk of falling. 8 families were served in Buncombe County and 1 family in Henderson County.
- AAA collaborated with other organizations to promote Active Aging Week reaching over 600 older adults in the region through numerous free options for physical and wellness activities during the last week of September, 2011.
- Park Ridge Health received **\$20,000** in funding from the Family Caregiver Support Program to provide respite for caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's Disease or a related dementia. 10 families were served in Buncombe County, 6 families in Henderson County, 1 family in Madison County and 5 families in Transylvania County.



The French Broad River



- LOSRC secured **\$36,193** in Brownfields assessment funds for the former WNC Stockyard site in the River Arts District. The site will be part of the New Belgium Brewery development.
- The Mountain Area Workforce Development programs served 397 Buncombe County residents. Trainees earned a total of 229 credentials. 106 adults completed training and 76 entered employment. 49 youth completed their participation, 42 graduated and 7 entered employment. During FY-2012, WIA expenditures supported Buncombe County residents totaling over **\$1.34 million**.
- LOSRC secured **\$44,952** in Brownfields assessment funds for the Asheville Buncombe County Christian Ministry.
- The Council on Aging of Buncombe County, Inc. received **\$21,000** to provide respite for 31 caregivers and case assistance for 40 caregivers.
- Senior Community Services Employment Program provided job search training and part-time employment worth **\$106,290** to 30 older adults placed in 15 organizations. 3 participants were placed into unsubsidized employment.
- HCCBG and county funds provided **\$2,429,312** in funding for services that supported over 2,500 older adults living independently in their homes. Through this funding, 489 older adults were given nutritional meals, 56 participated in Adult Day programs, 370 received in-home health care and home repair services, 430 received financial education and counseling, 992 received transportation services, 20 received incontinence supplies, and 9 received emergency response alarms.
- Foster Grandparent Program saved the county more than **\$1.3 million**. 79 Foster Grandparent volunteers served over 73,816 hours to assist special needs or at-risk children achieve their short and long-term goals.
- Senior Companion Program saved the county more than **\$817,880**. 50 Senior Companion volunteers served over 43,504 hours to assist older adults with one-on-one care in their homes, assisted in Adult Day Care Centers and provided respite to family Caregivers.
- US DOE funding of **\$58,000** provided to Buncombe County for conversion of 10 sheriff department cruisers to propane autogas.
- Senior Companion Program received **\$3,910** from the Family Caregiver Support Program to provide respite for 2 caregivers.
- LOSRC secured **\$35,000** in Brownfields assessment funds for Swannanoa Valley Properties. The site is intended to be redeveloped as a mixed use development.
- The Mountain Area JobLink Career Center served 2,968 clients who made 9,142 visits to the center in FY-2011. The center conducted 122 workshops and had 1,544 participants in attendance.
- The Asheville JobLink Career center is included in the operations of the Asheville Division of Workforce Solutions (formerly the Employment Security Commission). Numbers show Asheville Workforce Solutions/JobLink topped 25,000 customer visits during the last program year. Registrations as new/renewal customers totaled 8,455 individuals. At least 1,800 persons were recorded as having entered employment.
- Regional Ombudsmen responded to 178 complaints or concerns regarding long-term care, 412 technical assistance calls and provided 31 education/training sessions. 46 Community Advisory Committee volunteers contributed 783 hours and made 210 visits to long-term care facilities. These volunteers provided a financial value of **\$15,856** in services to the county.
- RSVP saved the County more than **\$620,625** with 228 volunteers giving over 33,012 hours to local government and non-profit agencies.
- LOSRC secured **\$18,872** in Brownfields assessment funds for Eagle Market Streets Development Corporation for a mixed use development in the historic downtown neighborhood known as "The Block."
- WRP engineers conducted 28 efficiency assessments for non-profits, institutions and businesses in the county. The recommendations would save over **\$127,000** in annual utility costs. WRP also provided technical assistance for Energy Star certification for 36 Buncombe County Schools which will result in **\$40,000** reduction in natural gas costs.
- LOSRC secured **\$689,151** in funding through the Carolina Blue Skies and Green Jobs Initiative grant from the US Department of Energy to the City of Asheville for natural gas vehicles and fueling station expansion and **\$93,000** to Mission Hospital for natural gas vehicles.

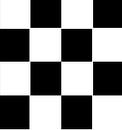


Buncombe County Courthouse & Asheville City Hall

- Foster Grandparent Program saved the county more than **\$114,049**. 7 Foster Grandparent volunteers served over 6,308 hours to assist special needs or at-risk children achieve their short and long-term goals.
- LOSRC secured **\$37,972** in Brownfields assessment funds for the City of Hendersonville to support the redevelopment of Southside Gateway Park.
- CDBG funds supported the expansion of the Warm Company by providing **\$200,000** for the construction of an interconnection with the Hendersonville sewer system. The expansion of this facility resulted in the creation of 8 new jobs.
- The Hendersonville JobLink Career Center operates as part of the former Employment Security Commission (now Division of Workforce Solutions). The combined operation served approximately 8,000 customers and recorded nearly 16,500 visits. An estimated 817 customers obtained employment and 50 entered career training programs.
- Senior Community Services Employment Program provided job search training and part-time employment worth **\$19,070** to 5 older adults placed in 3 organizations.
- HCCBG and county funds provided **\$889,359** in funding for 15 different services that helped support over 600 older adults living independently in their homes. Through this funding, 381 older adults were given nutritional meals, 16 participated in Adult Day programs, 107 received in-home health care and home repair services, and 151 received transportation services.
- RSVP saved the County more than **\$570,110** with 186 volunteers giving over 30,325 hours to local government and non-profit agencies
- The Henderson County JobLink Career Center at Blue Ridge Community College served 1,931 clients and recorded 5,019 customer visits during FY-2011. The center conducted 55 workshops with 299 attendees.
- WRP engineers conducted 3 efficiency assessments for non-profits, institutions and businesses in the county. The recommendations would save over **\$15,300** in annual utility costs.
- Senior Companion Program saved the county more than **\$123,065**. 11 Senior Companion volunteers served over 6546 hours to assist older adults with one-on-one care in their homes, assisted in Adult Day Care Centers and provided respite to family Caregivers.
- WRP provided follow-up technical assistance on ARRA project awards totaling **\$373,400**.
- State Energy office funding of \$x provided to City of Hendersonville for electric vehicle charging stations.
- LOSRC secured **\$147,505** in funding through the Carolina Blue Skies and Green Jobs Initiative grant from the US Department of Energy to Henderson County for natural gas vehicles and fueling station expansion and **\$219,704** to the City of Hendersonville for natural gas vehicles.
- The Family Caregiver Support Program provided **\$11,000** for respite and **\$4,600** for case assistance to Pardee Pavilion and the Council on Aging for Henderson County. 3 caregivers received respite and 5 received case assistance.
- Mountain Area Workforce Development programs in Henderson County served 371 residents in training programs and 72 participants completed their participation. 42 adults found jobs. 37 youth completed their program, 34 graduated and 4 entered employment. Henderson County Workforce Investment Act training programs expended nearly **\$627,000** during FY-2012.
- Regional Ombudsmen responded to 77 complaints or concerns regarding long-term care, 144 technical assistance calls and provided 9 education/training sessions. 26 Community Advisory Committee volunteers contributed 1,268 hours and made 97 visits to long-term care facilities. These volunteers provided a financial value of **\$25,677** in services to the county.

Henderson County Courthouse





- Madison County JobLink Career Center at the A-B Tech Marshall Campus served 591 clients who made 1,940 office visits during FY-2011. The career center offered 47 workshops and had 228 customers in attendance.
- EECBG supported the installation of solar PV panels on the Mars Hill Library by providing **\$76,000** in grant funds. This project resulted in an energy savings of 5.62 MWh per year.
- CDBG, ARC, USDA and NC Rural Center provided **\$2,000,000** in grant and loan funds to support the interconnection of the Town of Mars Hill and Weaverville Public Water Systems.
- The Senior Companion Program received **\$3,210** from the Family Caregiver Support Program to provide respite for 1 caregiver.
- Senior Community Services Employment Program provided job search training and part-time employment worth **\$15,262** to 2 older adults placed in 2 organizations.
- CDBG provided **\$200,000** in recovery funds to support relationships between public and private housing providers throughout the 26 western counties of which Madison County was the lead. The grant funds were used to support the development of 1 local housing needs workshop in each COG Region (4 workshops), 1 housing summit with 107 attendees, foreclosure counseling and a web-based client intake system.
- HCCBG and county funds provided **\$290,700** in funding for 9 different services that helped support over 200 older adults living independently in their homes. Through this funding, 321 older adults were given nutritional meals, 36 received in-home health care and home repair services, and 161 received transportation services.
- Senior Companion Program saved the county more than **\$242,802**. 13 Senior Companion volunteers served over 12,915 hours to assist older adults with one-on-one care in their homes, assisted in Adult Day Care Centers and provided respite to family caregivers.
- CDBG supported Madison County Affordable Housing Rehabilitation and Relocation by providing **\$400,000** in funds for housing rehabilitation, relocation/ replacement and urgent repairs for aging housing units in Madison County. The project resulted in the rehabilitation of 2 units, replacement of 2 units and urgent repairs to 8 units.
- RSVP saved the county more than **\$26,169** with 16 volunteers giving over 1,392 hours to local government and non-profit agencies.
- EECBG supported the Multi-governmental Partnership between Madison County, Marshall and Mars Hill project by providing a grant of **\$144,718** to retrofit inefficient lighting, heating systems and building envelope components. Annual energy savings are estimated greater than **\$25,000**.
- Regional Ombudsmen responded to 7 complaints or concerns regarding long-term care, responded to 38 technical assistance calls and provided 1 education/ training session. 15 Community Advisory Committee volunteers contributed 510 hours and made 15 visits to long-term care facilities. These volunteers provided a financial value of **\$10,328** in services to the county.
- The Mountain Area Workforce Development training program served 40 participants. Of those, 10 completed their participation and 4 secured employment. Other participant's education and training efforts are ongoing. 43 youth were served, 17 completed their participation, 14 graduated, and one has secured a job. Workforce Investment Act program expenditures for FY-2012 totaled **\$199,205**.
- WRP engineers conducted 3 efficiency assessments for non-profits, institutions and businesses in the county. The recommendations would save over **\$47,800** in annual utility costs.
- The Madison County Department of Community Services received **\$10,000** for caregiver respite. 6 caregivers received respite. WRP provided follow-up technical assistance on ARRA project awards totaling **\$145,000**.

Madison County Courthouse



- Mountain Area Workforce Development programs served 86 adults and 40 youth. Of the adults, 35 completed their training and services programs, and 20 have secured jobs. Among the youth participants, 20 completed their participation, 17 graduated, and 2 have entered employment. FY-2012 Workforce Investment Act expenditures in Transylvania County totaled just under **\$129,000**.
- HCCBG and county funds provided **\$374,214** in funding for 12 different services that helped support over 300 older adults living independently in their homes. Through this funding, 115 older adults were given nutritional meals, 38 participated in Adult Day programs, 133 received in-home health care and home repair services, and 58 received transportation services.
- CDBG supported the Broad River Terrace Housing Development project to construct water, sewer and storm water infrastructure for a multi-family affordable housing development by providing **\$250,000** in grant funds. The project constructed 62 affordable housing rental units.
- WRP engineers conducted 3 efficiency assessments for non-profits, institutions and businesses in the county. The recommendations would save over **\$189,000** in annual utility costs.
- Transylvania Community Hospital Home Care received **\$18,000** from the Family Caregiver Support Program to be used for in-home and adult daycare respite at KOALA. 10 caregivers received in-home respite and 7 received adult daycare respite.
- The Senior Companion Program received **\$2,880** from the Family Caregiver Support Program to provide respite for 1 caregiver.
- RSVP saved the County more than **\$202,946** with 100 volunteers giving over 10,795 hours to local government and non-profit agencies.
- Senior Community Services Employment Program provided job search training and part-time employment worth **\$16,169** to 2 older adults placed in 2 organizations.
- LOSRC secured **\$24,677** in Brownfields assessment funds for the City of Brevard to redevelop the former Driver Training Facility for public use.
- Senior Companion Program saved the county more than **\$88,322**. 5 Senior Companion volunteers served over 4698 hours to assist older adults with one-on-one care in their homes, assisted in Adult Day Care Centers and provided respite to family Caregivers.
- LOSRC provided facilitation, survey development and analysis, and reporting assistance to the City of Brevard to gather community and business input for their Community and Economic Development Strategy.
- Regional Ombudsmen responded to 22 complaints or concerns regarding long-term care, responded to 32 technical assistance calls and provided 3 education/training sessions. 9 Community Advisory Committee volunteers contributed 109 hours and made 22 visits to long-term care facilities. These volunteers provided a financial value of **\$2,207** in services to the county.
- The Transylvania County JobLink Career Center at the Community Services Building operates as part of the Employment Security office. The combined operations served well over 1,600 clients and recorded nearly 8,200 client visits and made nearly 4,700 job referrals. An estimated 300 referrals succeeded in obtaining jobs, and 17 were placed in short-term training programs.
- LOSRC secured a **\$60,000** Urban Waters Restoration grant from EPA for the City of Brevard to intergrate watershed planning and a stormwater inventory with a small area plan.
- Foster Grandparent Program saved the county more than **\$6,354**. 1 Foster Grandparent volunteer served over 338 hours to assist special needs or at-risk children achieve their short and long-term goals.



Transylvania County Courthouse



Above: Mayor of Brevard Jimmy Harris cuts the ribbon for the RSVP Volunteer center with Rodney Locks and Artie Wilson.



Above: Jerry Plemmons receives the Kathleen Godwin Cole award, pictured with Madison County Manager Steve Garrison and Chair of the Madison County Commissioners Debbie Ponder.



Below: SCP volunteer Michael Koon



Volunteer Services

The Volunteer Services Department connects today's over 55's with the people and organizations that need them most. We help them become mentors, coaches, or companions to people in need, or contribute their job skills and expertise to community projects and organizations.

The Volunteer Services Department is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, and independent federal agency created to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation.

Programs:

Retired Senior & Volunteer Program (RSVP) - Connects senior volunteers with service opportunities in their communities that match their skills and availability.

Senior Companion Program - Brings together senior volunteers with adults in their community who have difficulty with the simple task of day-to-day living.

Foster Grandparent Program - Connects senior volunteers with children and young people with exceptional needs.

A Veteran Gives Back

Michael Koon has served as a volunteer at the Charles George VA Medical Center-Asheville since 1972. A dedicated volunteer and Vietnam veteran, Michael takes public transportation to spend thirty-two hours a week at the VA. Since 2000, he has volunteered more than 11,453 hours, valued at over \$208,000!

In recognition of his commitment, Michael was presented with the 2011 Charles George VA Volunteer of the Year Award, one of many awards he has received over the years. Despite this recognition, he remains humble about his service to his fellow veterans.

In November 2011, Michael became a Land-of-Sky Regional Council's Senior Companion Volunteer where he now receives a small stipend in return for his volunteer service.

Additionally, Michael has been active in a Post-Traumatic Stress Support Group at the VA. His experience as a Vietnam veteran helps others cope with the trauma that they have suffered overseas. When asked why he volunteers, he replied, "They were here for me when I came back from Vietnam, and I want to be there for them."

Volunteer Services Program Promotes Diabetes Awareness

In 2012, Land-of-Sky Regional Council's (LOSRC) Volunteer Services Program received grant funds to increase awareness and provide screenings for diabetes. LOSRC is one of 15 Senior Corps programs nationwide to receive a Medicare Diabetes Screening Project (MDSP) award. The MDSP is a national coalition of patients, nonprofit organizations, and corporate partners leading the way in encouraging seniors to improve their health by being checked for diabetes.

"We are thrilled to receive this award from the MDSP because it allows us to increase the outreach to seniors in the region," said Patti Cameron, Lead Coordinator of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. "Increasing awareness of diabetes and the need for appropriate screening is in line with our mission and complements other disease prevention and health promotion activities already underway through LOSRC's Area Agency on Aging."

The Volunteer Services Program will use the grant to reach its goal of providing outreach and screening to 1,000 seniors. Efforts will include in-service training provided to Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Program volunteers as well as an awareness booth at the 2012 Wellness Expo. Along with benefiting from the grant, Senior Corps volunteers will obtain the educational tools to provide outreach to their neighbors, clients and faith communities.

Plemmons Receives Kathleen Godwin Cole Award for Volunteerism

Madison County native Jerry Plemmons was awarded the Kathleen Godwin Cole Award for Volunteerism at the monthly Land-of-Sky Regional Council meeting on April 25, 2012. Established in 1990 in memory and honor of Kathleen Godwin Cole, this award is given annually to one volunteer, age 55 or better, who has made major contributions to better our region.

Plemmons has a great passion for community development as demonstrated by the magnitude of hours he volunteers engaging with the people of the region to make communities a better place to live. He has an innate ability to speak with a diverse group of people on multiple topics tied to community and economic development.

Plemmons once stated “I believe so strongly in community development that what I’d really like to see is a reinvigoration or a retooling of this whole community concept. Build community in its truest form—getting folk in a certain geographic area to come together and work on common issues and common problems in a spirit of creativity, [and] do interesting and innovative things to make their community the most livable and most enjoyable possible.”

Plemmons has served on the Land-of-Sky Regional Council board for numerous years primarily as an economic development advisor. He has been actively involved as a volunteer in Madison County and Western North Carolina creating community and economic development opportunities including work with Smokey Mountain Development Corporation and CarolinaWest Economic Development. Mr. Plemmons also currently serves on the Madison County Economic Development Board, Hot Springs Health Program Board, Madison County Chamber of Commerce, and Mountain Area Work Force Development Board.

Friesland Chosen as National Peer Mentor

In September 2007, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) created a peer-to-peer mentoring program for Senior Corps Program Directors who have been “on the job” for less than two years. The purpose of the program is to partner new managers with more experienced ones through one-on-one mentoring. In 2011, Stacy Friesland, Land-of-Sky Regional Council’s Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) Manager, was identified as a National Peer Mentor.

Because Land-of-Sky Regional Council has operated a very successful Foster Grandparent Program for many years, Stacy was able to share the organization’s best practices with the new FGP managers. Through the mentoring program, CNCS provided Stacy with pre-service training, travel reimbursement, and an honorarium to provide assistance to Big Stone Gap and Roanoke, Virginia, program managers.

Pam McAdams, Director of the Local Office of Aging’s Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Programs in Virginia expressed her gratitude for Stacy’s guidance and expertise as a Program Manager. Ms. McAdams said, “Stacy spent time on the phone with me and traveled to Roanoke to spend two days teaching and guiding me! Her patience and willingness to share her knowledge and experience has been invaluable. I will always be grateful for her willingness to share knowledge and experience. It has truly been a lifeline for me.”

RSVP Volunteer Center Opens in Brevard

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is a national service program of the Corporation of National and Community Service. RSVP’s purpose is to connect people that are age 55 or better with nonprofits, faith-based, and other community organizations. Locally, RSVP is sponsored by Land-of-Sky Regional Council serving Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties.

Through a campaign to better support non-profit organizations and volunteers in Transylvania County, RSVP reached out to its partnering agencies and volunteers to determine how best to serve their community. The unanimous answer was the need for a visible presence to help promote volunteerism in the community through the development of a Volunteer Center.

On May 3, 2012, RSVP opened its first Volunteer Center located at Silvermont Opportunity Center in Brevard. At the Center, RSVP volunteers take the lead on recruitment, events and planning. This endeavor would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of countless RSVP volunteers, Western Carolina Community Action (WCCA), Silvermont Opportunity Center, Brevard Police Department and the United Way of Transylvania County. On hand to cut the ribbon and officially open the Center were Mayor Jimmy Harris and Councilman Rodney Locks of Brevard and Transylvania County Manager Artie Wilson.



Above: Participants prepare for the Fashion show at the Fun Friday for Family Caregivers.



Left: Aston Park Administrator Loretta Faircloth beside their new sensory enrichment cart.

Below: Participant during a Virtual Dementia Tour.



A Window into the World of Dementia

Caring for someone with Dementia requires empathy, patience, and kindness, but how can one truly be empathetic without having experienced Dementia? In response to this challenge, the Virtual Dementia Tour (VDT) was created by Second Wind Dreams® to better understand the behaviors and needs of those with Dementia.

VDT can improve communication and care for those in our region seeking to understand the physical and mental challenges of those with Dementia. In March of 2012, a team of Land-of-Sky Regional Council's Area Agency on Aging staff completed the VDT facilitator training, certifying them to lead trainings in our region. They now have a better understanding of the behaviors and needs of those suffering from Dementia.

VDT is a hands-on, experiential tool kit simulating conditions of Dementia such as impaired vision, hearing, and cognitive skills to build sensitivity and awareness of the challenges faced by those living with Dementia. The tour is recommended for caregivers, families, or anyone seeking to understand the physical and mental challenges of those with Dementia.

A Brighter Future for Lionel Heath

Land-of-Sky Regional Council's (LOSRC) Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) provides short-term training and job placement services for older adults seeking suitable employment. SCSEP provides part-time paid work experience in community service and non-profit organizations as well as opportunities to obtain meaningful unsubsidized employment in the private sector.

Lionel Heath, an earnest and enthusiastic man in his late 50s, contacted SCSEP staff in October, 2010. At the time, Mr. Heath was living on the street during the day and sleeping in a shelter at night. While he had found no employment at the time, he had made many efforts to find work.

SCSEP enrolled Heath and quickly placed him as Maintenance Assistant doing community service at Battery Park Apartments, an apartment complex for older adults. While still living at the shelter, he was able to take SCSEP-sponsored computer technology training.

In February 2012, he received an unsubsidized part-time position at Vanderbilt Apartments as the Maintenance Assistant and established permanent apartment housing. A true testament to the success of the SCSEP, he went from homelessness and unemployment to independence and a brighter future.

Area Agency on Aging

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) helps determine the needs of older adults and works with counties to plan services to meet those needs. The goal of providing these services is to enable older adults to live independently in their own homes.

Programs and Services:

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention - Develops and supports evidence-based health promotion programs.

Family Caregiver Support Program - Provides information and support for family caregivers.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program - Protects residents' rights and advocates to improve the quality of care for people in nursing and adult care homes.

Senior Community Service Employment Program - Job-training and employment program for older adults.

Technical Assistance - Provides support to agencies and persons responding to the needs of older adults.

Senior Tar Heel Legislature - Trains and coordinates representatives from the region.

Fun Friday for Family Caregivers

On November 4, 2011, Land-of-Sky Regional Council's (LOSRC) Family Caregiver Support Program partnered with 23 organizations to provide a day of frivolity and fun in celebration of National Family Caregiver Month. The stress and strain of taking care of someone can make for a tiring and emotionally draining experience for caregivers of the frail elderly. Studies have shown that finding humor in everyday situations actually helps reduce stress.

Caregivers often state that being able to laugh at things and find humor in what they do is the best medicine of all. This event gave caregivers the opportunity to laugh, relax, and enjoy a catered lunch. The day's festivities included a humorous fashion show, a lively Hee-Haw skit, African drumming and other activities.

Many caregivers expressed their appreciation, stating they could not remember when they had laughed so much and felt so good. Due to its popularity, LOSRC has decided to make this an annual event and will partner with child care and aging services providers in order to reach and support kinship caregivers and caregivers of special needs children and caregivers of older adults.

The Diverse Faces of Aging

As the Western North Carolina population ages, our communities face more challenges due to increasing diversity, which extends beyond language, skin color and ethnicity to include sexual orientation and other marginalized populations. Land-of-Sky Regional Council's (LOSRC) Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is working to proactively address the diverse needs of older adults with the intention of equitable access to community, social and health care resources.

The Area Agency on Aging has taken a lead in the development of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) Elder Advocates task force. The task force, comprised of legal and health care professionals and members of the LGBT community, aims to improve the quality of life for LGBT elders in the region. This year an LGBT elder resource list was created to identify available health and human service resources. The task force also created an LGBT sensitivity training to help professionals better identify and serve this growing segment of the aging population. This training will be offered in October of 2012 in alignment with Blue Ridge Pride Festival and a showing of the award-winning documentary "GenSilent".

The AAA has also taken a primary seat in participating in the Buncombe County Health Equity team. The team now has two new Master Trainers trained in "Tomando Control de su Salud" - the Spanish version of the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSM) - and is working with Asheville Buncombe Institute for Parity Achievement and area churches to provide greater access to Chronic Disease Self-Management Programs to African American seniors.

Another way in which AAA is addressing health equity is through the expansion of the CDSM program to those with HIV and AIDS through the "Positive Self-Management" program. As the number of older adults with HIV and AIDS grows, AAA is partnering with Western North Carolina AIDS Project to support older adults living well with this disease.

Aston Park Health Care Center Awarded Grant for Art Cart

As part of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, Land-of-Sky Regional Council supports five Community Advisory Committees (CAC) who help advocate for residents of nursing and adult care homes. The CAC's are county-based and Commissioner-appointed teams of volunteers who visit homes to help resolve complaints and insure the Residents' Bill of Rights is being followed.

To enhance their efforts to advocate for the highest quality of life for residents, the Buncombe County Nursing Home CAC created a \$500 competitive "Quality of Life Grant" for nursing homes. The inaugural award was presented to Aston Park Health Care Center to provide individualized activities for room-bound residents by purchasing a sensory enrichment cart also known as the "Art Cart".

The "Art Cart", stocked with evidence-based therapeutic items such as stimulating aromatics and tactiles, is brought to individuals at their bedside. Sensory stimulation has proven to have a positive effect on behaviors associated with cognitive impairments such as agitation, sleep disturbances and communication. While residents interact with the cart, trained staff use their observations to build tailored care plans for each resident.

A Tribute to Charles Grimes

In May 2012, the Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) family lost a dear friend and dedicated Board member with the passing of Charles Grimes. Mr. Grimes had served as Commissioner for the Town of Biltmore Forest for more than twenty-five years and was a member of the LOSRC Board of Directors since 1989. He was appointed Chairman of the Council in 1996.

Mr. Grimes was one of the founding members of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization and was a strong advocate for enhanced transportation in Western North Carolina. He also served as a volunteer fireman and was a champion for improved fire protection in his community. As a result of his significant contributions to strengthen cooperation within the region, Mr. Grimes received the Robert G. Parrish Intergovernmental Relations award in 2007.

Commissioner Grimes never met a stranger. His charm and character were infectious, which earned him the nickname "Pal". Through his tireless service to the community, he touched the lives of hundreds of people. His colorful attire, quick wit, and faithful attendance were a part of LOSRC Board meetings for the past 23 years. He was a true ambassador for the Town of Biltmore Forest and Land-of-Sky Regional Council. Western North Carolina has truly lost one of its best pals.



Region B

Land-of-Sky Regional Council's Region

Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) is one of 16 regional councils in North Carolina, which bring together programs, issues and solutions that affect neighboring counties and municipalities. LOSRC began in 1966 and is made up of chief elected officials - mayors and county commission chairpersons and alternates - from member governments, one private representative of economic development interests in each county and four at-large members. LOSRC serves Region B, which is composed of the following:

Buncombe County

City of Asheville
Town of Biltmore Forest
Town of Black Mountain
Town of Montreat
Town of Weaverville
Town of Woodfin

Madison County

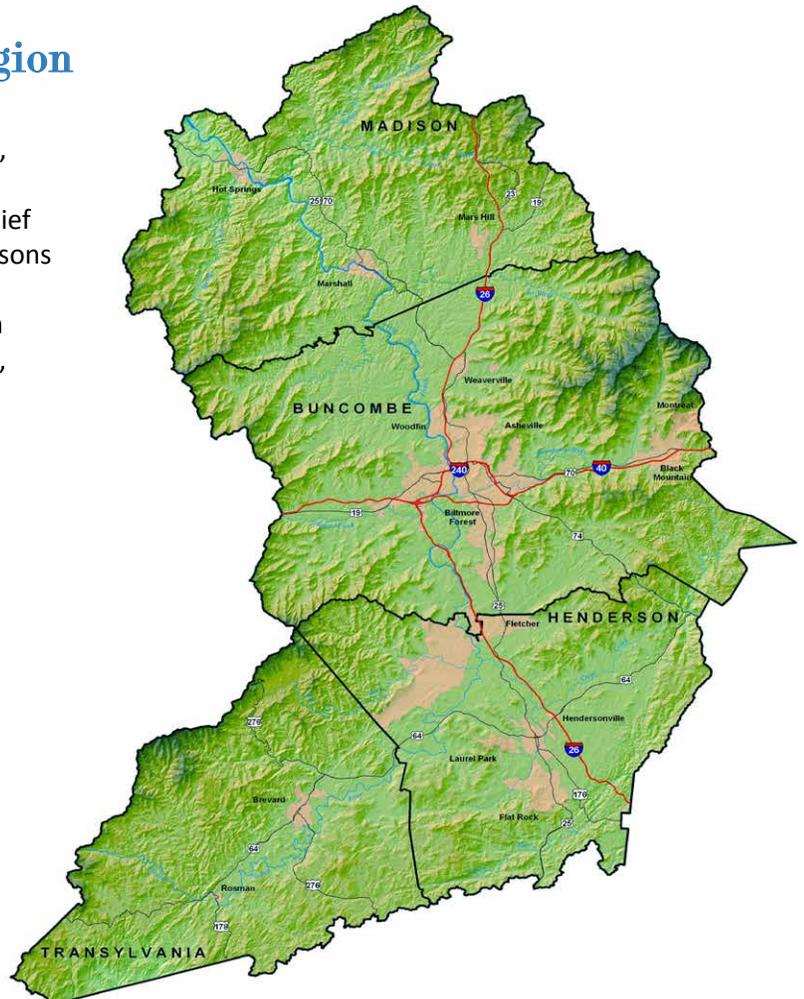
Town of Hot Springs
Town of Marshall
Town of Mars Hill

Transylvania County

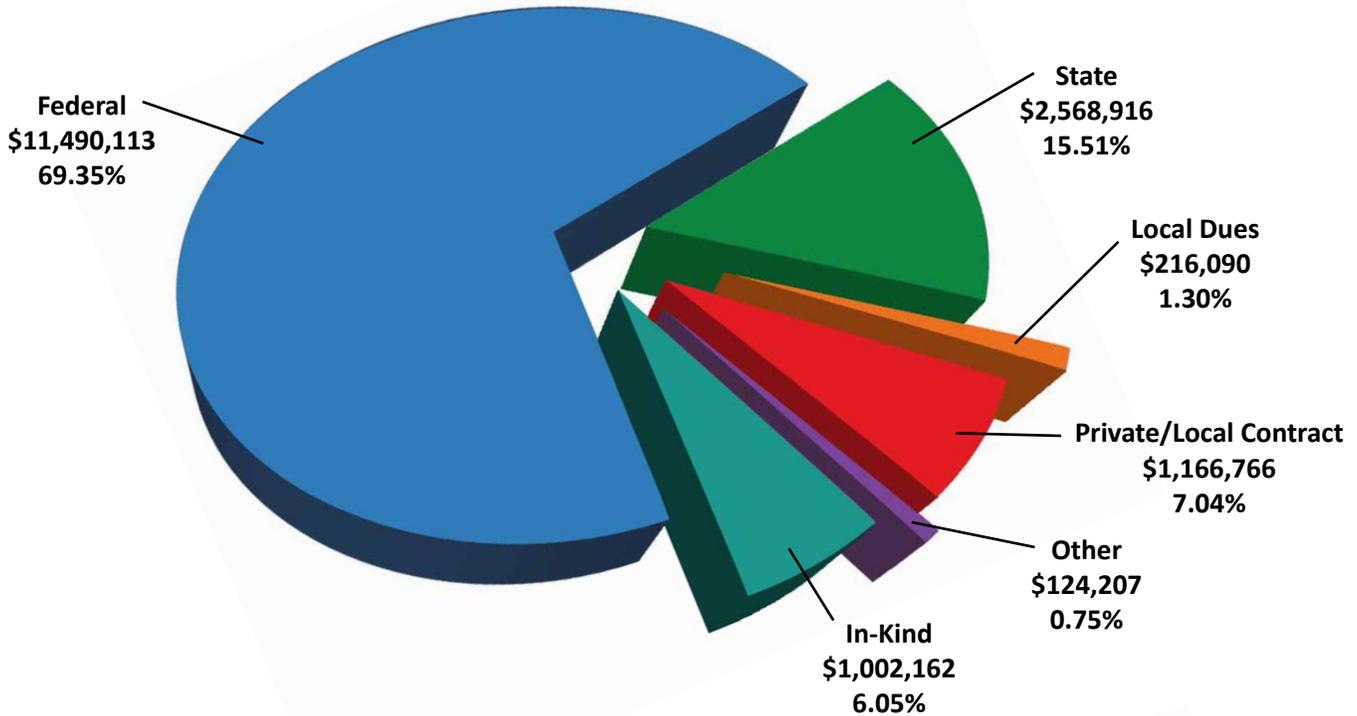
City of Brevard
Town of Rosman

Henderson County

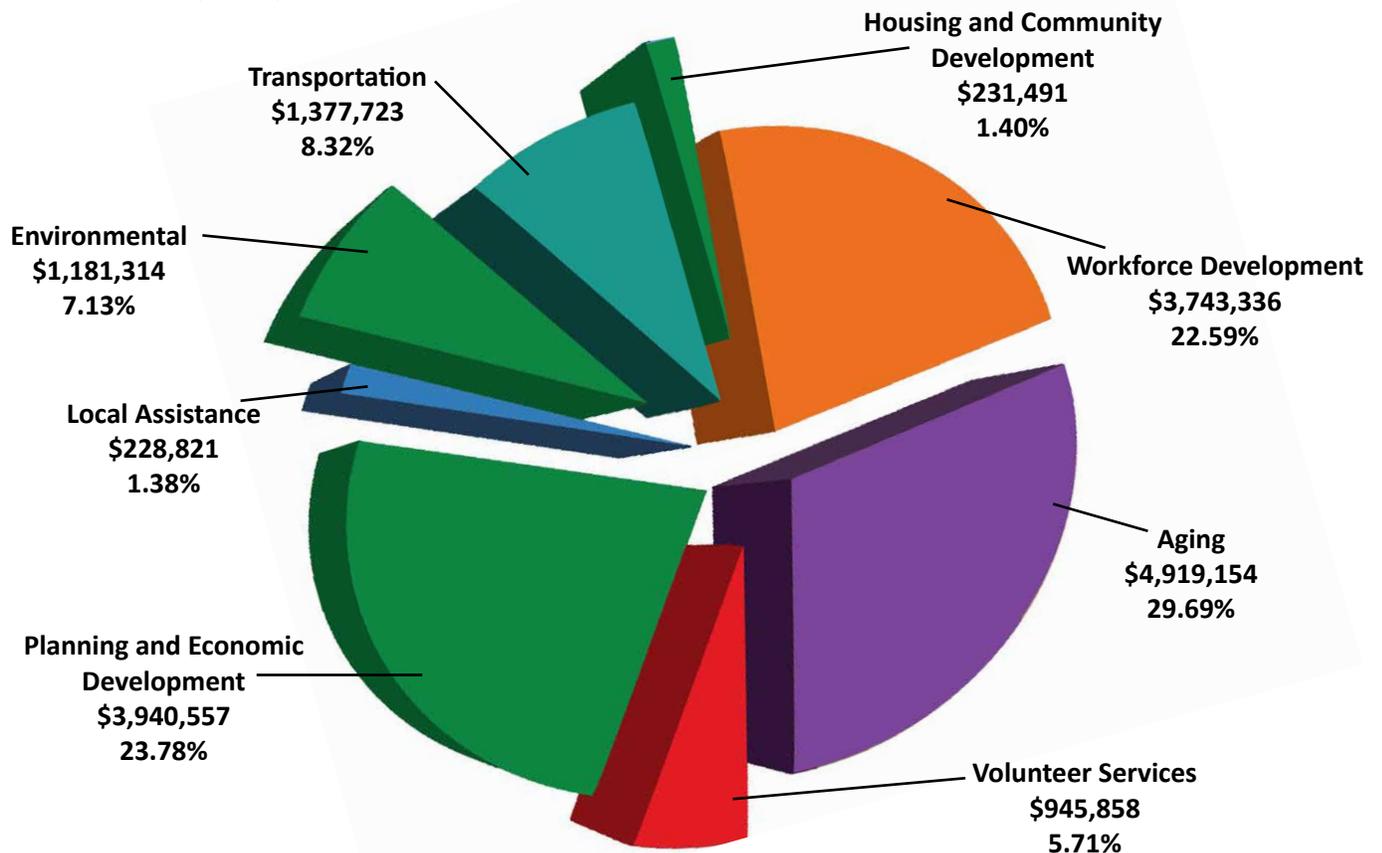
Village of Flat Rock
Town of Fletcher
City of Hendersonville
Town of Laurel Park



FY 2012 Budgeted Revenues \$16,568,254



FY 2012 Budgeted Expenditures \$16,568,254



Finance



Back Row L - R:

Arlene Wilson - Accounting Specialist*
Amber Spanton - Budget Analyst

Front Row L - R:

Rose Sabo - Accounting Specialist
Peggy Barnes - Finance Officer
Wanda Clark - Accounting Assistant

Not Pictured:

Sherry Christenson - Accounting Specialist*

Aging and Volunteer Services



Back Row L - R:

Jennifer Atkinson - Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) Coordinator
Carol McLimans - Family Caregiver Resource Specialist
Rebecca Chaplin - Aging Program Specialist, Health Promotion & Disease Prevention / Senior Centers
Tracy Ash - Senior Companion Program Manager
Terry Collins - Regional Ombudsman
Patti Cameron - Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Lead Coordinator

Front Row L - R:

Pat Hilgendorf - Caregiver Program Associate
Lee Ann Smith - Regional Ombudsman
Christina Giles - Aging Project Assistant
Brenda DeLaCruz - Aging and Volunteer Services Project Assistant
Stacy Friesland - Foster Grandparent Program Manager
LeeAnne Tucker - Aging and Volunteer Services Director
Linda Kendall Fields - Community Resource Connections (CRC) Coordinator
Shanaia Powell - Aging and Volunteer Services Coordinator
Sherry Christenson - Aging Program Specialist, Contracts / Monitoring / ARMS

Not Pictured:

Barbara Hinshaw - Regional Ombudsman
Margaret Stanley - Aging Program Specialist, Contracts / Monitoring*

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board



Back Row L - R:

Derrick Edwards - On-the-Job Training (OJT) Job Developer
Phil Monk - Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Director
Zia Rifkin - Administrative Assistant
Sharon Souther - Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Training Counselor
Stacy Peek - Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Training Counselor
Rodney Emler - Resource Center Coordinator
Tami Sprinkle - Administrative Assistant

Front Row L - R:

Kim Cox - MIS Specialist
Ellen Westbrook - JobLink Coordinator
Jean Keen - Finance Director
Vicki Jennings - Youth Services
Barbara Darby - On-the-Job Training (OJT) Project Manager

Not Pictured:

Maria Spadaro - NC CRC Specialist

Mountain Mobility



L - R:

Rebecca Bedingfield - Administrative Assistant
Hope Bleecker - Senior Transportation Planner
Geri Ballew - Administrative Coordinator

Administrative Services



Back Row L - R:

Michelle Barber - Clerk to Council, Administrative & Marketing Coordinator
 Janice Payne - Administrative Services Assistant
 Bonnie Smith - Administrative Services Assistant

Front Row L - R:

Danna Stansbury - Director of Marketing & Administration
 Christina Giles - Communication Specialist
 Joe McKinney - Executive Director
 Brett Satz - Information Systems Specialist

Council's core values

- **regionalism**
- **well-being** of the Region
 - healthy people
 - healthy economy
 - healthy ecosystems
- Excellence in **public service**
- **technical competence**
- **compassion**
- strong **local governments**
- leadership, **teamwork**, and creativity
- **continuous improvement** and self-renewal
- **family-friendly** work environment
- **fiscal accountability**

Local Government Services



Back Row L - R:

Patrick Harper - Regional Planner, Energy
 Vicki Eastland - Transportation Specialist*
 John Connell - Housing Specialist
 Jon Beck - GIS Planner
 Russ Jordan - Energy Program Manager, Waste Reduction Partners (WRP)
 Justin Hembree - Interim Director of Local Government Services*
 Terry Albrecht - Director of Waste Reduction Partners, NC Department of Environment & Natural Resources (NCDENR)
 Erica Anderson - Regional Planner, Forest Products / Regional Bike Plan

Front Row L - R:

Kate O'Hara - Senior Planner, Brownfields Program Manager
 Lyuba Zuyeva - Transportation Planner, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
 Paul Black - MPO Director
 Dee Hanak - WRP Office Manager



L - R:

Karen Kiehna - Senior Planner, Housing
 Linda Giltz - Regional Planner, Land Use / Growth Management
 Denese Ballew - Regional Planner, Local Energy Assurance Plan (LEAP)
 Brian Taylor - Regional Planner, Clean Energy / Solid Waste
 Bill Eaker - Environmental Services Manager
 Carrie Runser-Turner - Senior Planner, GroWNC

Not Pictured:

Ben Morrell - Housing Assistant
 Kristin Peppel - Conservation Planning Consultant
 Natalie Murdock - Transportation Planner, Rural Planning Organization (RPO)
 Tracy Wahl - Brownfields Project Manager (NC DENR)
 Ron Townley - Director of Local Government Services*

Lending Our Support to the Region's Communities

