

regional NEWS



CELEBRATING 32 YEARS AS THE VOICE OF REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCIES IN ILLINOIS

Spring Issue 2009



Call to Action!

Reinstate money for the Comprehensive Regional Planning Fund

Submitted by Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Currently, the Governor's proposed budget does not include any money for the Comprehensive Regional Planning Fund, which is essential for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and other regional agencies across the state. We are requesting your assistance to seek a remedy with the Governor's office, the General Assembly, and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

The Facts

The Comprehensive Regional Planning Fund is not a legislator initiative, rather it is a fund created in Public Act 95-0677. In 2005, the General Assembly and the Governor passed legislation to create the Regional Planning Board (now named CMAP) by combining the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC). The bill received broad support from local elected leaders and the civic and business communities to integrate planning for land use and transportation in the seven-county region. The CMAP Board fulfilled the requirements of the 2005 Act, and in 2007 crucial follow-up legislation was passed that clarified some aspects of the Regional Planning Act while providing resources that were not included in the earlier legislation.

The follow-up legislation created a Comprehensive Regional Planning Fund with a \$5 million annual appropriation from the General Revenue Fund. These funds are disbursed by the Illinois Department of Transportation to metropolitan and rural areas across the state as follows: CMAP will receive 70 percent, the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) elsewhere in Illinois will share 25 percent, and the State's rural planning agencies will share 5 percent. This source of stable, dedicated funding is critical to effective comprehensive planning throughout Illinois.

The loss of funds would do significant harm to the region and the state. The Comprehensive Regional Planning fund provides an essential match of CMAP's federal transportation planning dollars. Without the match, our agency and region would forfeit close to \$11 million in federal planning funds. Furthermore, because CMAP is the region's MPO, the inability to match our federal planning dollars and manage the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) could jeopardize all of the region's federal transportation dollars and projects. This would include all of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, as well as any new state capital bill intended to leverage federally appropriated dollars.

The fund is also important because it supports non-transportation work. Without it, CMAP would no longer have the resources to continue our planning and policy development for housing, natural resources, water, economic development, and more.

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SAMPLE LETTER
(Personalize for your regional planning agency)

Dear XXXXX:

I am writing on behalf of _____ to urge that you help reinstate the State of Illinois Comprehensive Regional Planning Fund. Currently, the Governor's proposed budget does not include this funding, which is essential for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and other regional agencies across the state.

We are requesting your assistance to seek a remedy with the Governor's office, the General Assembly, and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

The Comprehensive Regional Planning Fund was created in Public Act 95-0677, as part of a 2007 revision of CMAP's 2005 authorizing legislation. The Act created a \$5 million annual appropriation from the General Revenue Fund intended as stable, dedicated source of funding for effective comprehensive planning throughout Illinois. These funds are disbursed by the Illinois Department of Transportation to metropolitan and rural areas across the state as follows: CMAP receives 70 percent, the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) elsewhere in Illinois share 25 percent, and the State's rural planning agencies share 5 percent.

Since 2005 when it was created legislatively with support from the region's municipalities and business leaders, CMAP has made significant progress in establishing a broad new framework for northeastern Illinois to conduct integrated planning of land use, transportation, housing, water, environment, and many other quality-of-life issues. The agency's GO TO 2040 process is developing the first comprehensive regional plan since Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago in 1909, and CMAP is coming to be viewed across the seven counties of metropolitan Chicago as the best hope for accommodating an additional 2.8 million residents expected by 2040.

This is certainly not the time to step away from the responsibility of comprehensive regional planning. Across Illinois and the U.S., citizens are demanding greater transparency in how public investments are made during these challenging times. The Comprehensive Regional Planning Fund is a cost-effective way for Illinois to help ensure that taxpayers get accountability. CMAP has aggressively taken the lead in coordinating a regional response to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) economic stimulus package. See <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/recovery/> for evidence of the real-world impact that the agency is having.

Loss of the Comprehensive Regional Planning fund would do significant harm to the region and state. In addition to the important non-transportation work that it supports, the fund provides an essential match of CMAP's federal transportation planning dollars. Without the match, our agency and region would forfeit close to \$11 million in federal planning funds. It would render CMAP unable to manage the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), jeopardizing all of the region's federal transportation dollars and projects. This would include all of the ARRA funds, as well as any new state capital bill intended to leverage federally appropriated dollars

We urge you to prevent this loss of funds and the significant harm it would do to the region and the state. Please let me know what _____ can do to help you convince the Governor and the General Assembly that the Comprehensive Regional Planning Fund must be preserved.

Sincerely,

We need your HELP!

Please contact the Governor, the legislative leaders, and your legislators to alert them that this loss of funds would do significant harm to your region and the state.

Emphasize the following:

This cut is a move in the wrong direction when all discussion of capital investments is centered on transparency and performance-based outcomes. Regional councils have begun to have a significant impact in helping the public understand how its precious tax dollars are spent for infrastructure, including the stimulus funding. To zero out the Comprehensive Regional Planning Fund would undermine accountability just when Illinois needs it most.

Governor's Office and Key Legislative Contacts

The Hon. Pat Quinn, Governor
State of Illinois
Room 207 State House
Springfield, Illinois 62706

The Hon. Michael J. Madigan
Speaker of the House
Room 300 State House
Springfield, Illinois 62706

The Hon. John Cullerton
President of the Senate
Room 327 State House
Springfield, Illinois 62706

The Hon. Tom Cross
House Republican Leader
Room 316 State House
Springfield, Illinois 62706

The Hon. Christine Radogno
Senate Republican Leader
Room 309A State House
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Also, be sure to send a copy to your State Senator and State Representative.



Recovering toward a new vision

by **Fred Abousleman, Executive Director**
National Association of Regional Councils (NARC)

Many localities and states are well on the road to spending down stimulus funding on “shovel ready” projects provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Debate in Washington and throughout the world continues over the effectiveness of this kind of massive infusion into the economy at such a rapid pace. The key question will be how effective this spending is in creating and maintaining new jobs, filling the gaps in needed infrastructure improvements, forging a path towards sustainable development and helping the economy recover. Will the recovery dollars truly create three million new jobs and strengthen our local, regional and national economies? One thing is for certain, ARRA reinvigorated the awareness and federal-state-regional-local dialogue of the need for significant investment to preserve, build and secure critical infrastructure. It also began to lay the foundation for a new policy direction that focuses on American economic survivability and success directly tied to infrastructure.

The voice of regions and local governments continue to be heard on infrastructure needs through NARC and our local government association partners. NARC released a Regional Infrastructure Investment snapshot report that identified over \$25 billion in ready-to-go regional projects. In fact, in examining only four regions in Illinois, over \$1 billion in projects could be moved within six months. These numbers speak to just a fraction of the total amount needed in national long-term investment in our regions. The Urban Land Institute and the American Society of Civil Engineers both estimate we are under-funding our infrastructure by up to \$1 trillion. They also point out that we rank well below the average for preservation and funding among developed countries. There are solutions to bridge these development gaps, ensuring our short term investments are profitable, and creating long-term momentum for economic competitiveness.

So, what do we need?

We first need a new national vision – a reinvigorated sense of competitiveness that prioritizes our community investments as benefits rather than as costs. We need a new and redefined partnership with the local, state and federal governments that minimizes jurisdictional competitiveness for scarce resources and creates opportunities for national prosperity. We need regionally strategic infrastructure investments that maintain a strong focus on the priorities of local communities, act in partnership with regional planning organizations, and provide transparency in the process, where taxpayers and users of the infrastructure can see where their money is spent. We need an infrastructure investments directed into a system that doesn't create winners and losers, but rather unifies all levels of government to achieve important national goals such as safety, the environment, interconnectivity and commerce.

Over the next year significant legislation and policy will come out of Washington that will have direct impact on your regions and your communities. The authorization of the surface transportation bill, new climate change and energy legislation, water legislation, economic development priorities

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and funding of the Economic Development Administration, a push toward “Livable Communities,” as well as monitoring the current and preparing for a second possible recovery effort are just the surface of the 2009 Washington agenda. All of these initiatives depend on the ability of our nation to prioritize national needs and to leverage federal, local and state dollars. While Congress and the Administration came together to fund the recovery bills, will they find the same drive to fund the very programs the recovery dollars are supposed to bolster – infrastructure, development, housing, and social programs? This is a difficult proposition as our traditional funding streams dry up and we continue to grapple with an economic downturn. The immediate fix of raising taxes to fund infrastructure and other core programs (as a number of commissions and experts point out) is not politically expedient this year or next. However, this “perfect storm” in our economy also provides new opportunity to rethink our investment strategies.

Each of us must make the case that long term and sustainable investment is a priority. We desperately need a more effective and efficient federal government that partners with us. We need to reclaim our global advantage through innovation and inventiveness that help create new opportunities. We must reclaim the outflow of energy dollars through investment in domestic energy production and alternatives. We must create new jobs through investment in new energy, manufacturing, and knowledge sectors. We need to also make “smarter” investments in communications, transportation, and other backbone infrastructure. How can we do this? A simple answer – through greater regional collaboration, cooperation and partnerships. As the regional hubs of community activity, we can offer cost savings through program delivery and integration of our jurisdictional planning efforts to maximize new investment. We can bolster local, state and federal dollars by linking our urban, suburban, and rural communities into interdependent and powerful regional economies. While the stimulus can get many regions back on



While the stimulus can get many regions back on their feet – what comes after is where regions make significant strides toward a new American vision.

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NARC urges you to be a strong regional advocate and example of success. Join with us in providing your stories of leadership, innovation and achievement through our Public Awareness Campaigns, visits to Washington, and through continued dialogue and alliances with other regions across the country. We look forward to continue our work with the Illinois regions to educate and assist in moving a new vision forward in Washington. It is an honor to serve Illinois regional planning organizations and we look forward to the many opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Please visit www.NARC.org or email fred@NARC.org for more information or assistance.

National Association of Regional Councils **43 Annual Conference and Exhibition**

May 31 – June 3, 2009
Hyatt Regency Denver Convention Center
Denver, Colorado

Register today online at www.NARC.org.

Drawing the line

SCIRP&DC participates in U.S. Census Participant Statistical Areas Program

In 2008, the U.S. Department of Census developed a program entitled the Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP) to address the issues of population growth and decline in localized areas within Census block and Census tract boundaries. After years of listening to the concerns of local, and state, governments regarding the fairest and most consistent manner to record population for the 2010 Census, federal officials created a program that would allow local input in the review and potential redrawing of Census block and tract boundaries.

As part of this initiative, the South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission (SCIRP&DC), as a federally recognized planning entity was asked by the U.S. Bureau of Census to participate in the 2009-2010 PSAP (Participant Statistical Areas Program) provisions. After attending a training seminar in December 2008 sponsored by Census officials, the SCIRP&DC staff was given a modified GIS software program to help review and plot proposed boundary changes. In addition, this program would allow District staff to directly upload data to a site via the internet where Census officials could immediately review and incorporate any proposed changes. The process began earlier this year by allowing regions, such as the SCIRP&DC five county area of Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper and Marion counties to review current census tract, block and subdivision designations and to recommend geographic boundary changes for such areas, if and where necessary.

As part of the federal preparations for conducting the 1990 Census program, census tract and block designations were assigned without any input from the local or county governments, and while following the appropriate boundary protocols such as using geographical landmarks, city and township boundaries, etc. the final boundary designations resulted in track and block formations that were disjointed and bore little resemblance to local neighborhoods. In addition to geographically disjointed areas, the program attempts to rectify high growth and larger population centers that have experienced shifts in population that exceed the maximum population limits that were adopted by the U.S. Department of Census for the Census 2010 initiative.

By creating a partnership with MAF-TIGER, a company that provides GIS mapping solutions for the USDA and FEMA, PSAP was able to provide all local governmental participants with mapping software that gave direct control over the review of current Census tract and block jurisdictions and the ability to make adjustments to such local boundaries. In our five county District, maps identifying any problem areas, along with boundary definitions and a letter of explanation were sent to all local assessment officials.

These officials from each county were asked to review the identified areas and, with the assistance of the District staff, were then able to ask questions and recommend changes, which were submitted to the US Department of Census for review and approval in late March 2009. After review and dis-



The PSAP attempts to rectify high growth and larger population centers that have experienced shifts in population that exceed the maximum population limits that were adopted by the U.S. Department of Census for the Census 2010 initiative.

cussion with all affected local officials, a series of questions regarding the boundaries reflected in Census block and tract designations were submitted to Chris Hardy, the District's PSAP representative. Only one proposed change in the five county areas was recommended. However, the questions submitted represented a series of clarifications of area designations for all five counties comprising the District. There were no required changes that resulted in major population shifts in any of the five counties served by the Commission. Therefore, all proposed changes were volitional.

All assessment officials will be given notification through the SCIRP&DC offices of the acceptance of these changes by Census officials along with a revised map of the new census tract and block boundaries. District staff requested additional copies of the MAF-TIGER software that is available for loan to county and local government officials.

If you have questions regarding proposed criteria for geographic entities covered under the Participant Statistical Areas Program or the program details, contact the Geographic Standards & Criteria Branch at 301-763-3056, or e-mail geo.psap.list@census.gov.

County gets grant for courthouse lighting work

Coles county regional planning commission assists with the grant application

About 1,700 light bulbs have been replaced at the Coles County Courthouse over the last year or so, nearly every light in the building. And because of a grant to do the work, the county will be reimbursed for its costs to go along with the expected savings from the improved efficiency of the new lighting.

The county qualified for a grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and will be reimbursed for up to \$40,000 it spends on materials and labor for the project. Jeff Lahr, a planner with the county's Regional Planning and Development Commission, said the reimbursement will probably come to about \$37,000.

The 10-year-old foundation began with an endowment from Commonwealth Edison and works to improve energy efficiency, develop renewable energy and enhances natural areas, according to its Web site. Coles County received one of the grants the foundation awards for historical courthouses.

"We don't know what we'll see in savings but it if comes in as anticipated, it will be worth it," said County Board member Phil Wilson, chairman of the board's Building and Grounds Committee. "We'd be very happy, especially since it didn't really cost us anything." Lahr said the project, which also included replacing about 900 ballasts in light fixtures in the courthouse, is expected to save about \$16,000 a year in lighting costs. "The whole goal is to save energy," he said.

The county received the grant in May of last year and has until the end of April to do work that will qualify for the reimbursement. Part of the expense was the use of a consultant, Casner Independent Lighting of Tower Hill, to help determine what work was needed.

"We already had an idea of what lights needed replacing and what we would be replacing them with," Lahr said.

The work involved replacing incandescent bulbs with fluorescent ones, upgrading ballasts so smaller but brighter bulbs could be used in some fixtures and replacing fixtures in some offices in the courthouse. The county's maintenance staff did the work and went "above and beyond" their normal duties to finish the project, Wilson said. Wilson also said the county will probably try for additional grants from the foundation to try to improve



Coles County Courthouse maintenance department workers Ted Briseno, foreground, and Jeff Drake reinstall the bulbs in one of the newly upgraded lighting fixtures on the third floor of the courthouse in Charleston. Ken Trevarthan/Staff photographer.

lighting at the county jail and possibly the animal shelter.

The planning commission handled the grant application, and Lahr said the commission can help other governments if they want to apply, adding that he can be contacted with requests at 348-0521. The foundation also has a Web site with more information, www.IllinoisCleanEnergy.org.

Wilson also said the county recently upgraded the courthouse's heating system. Future energy efficiency work being considered, including work on the courthouse's boiler and replacing windows, could possibly be funded with savings from the lighting improvements, Lahr added.

Reprinted with permission Journal Gazette Times-Courier. Dave Fopay, Staff Writer.

Slow It Down! New book addresses how to calm traffic with humps, lumps, bumps, and other techniques.



An estimated 100,000-plus speeding tickets are issued daily across the U.S. Communities must address how to make their streets safe not just for automobile users but for other users such as pedestrians and bicycle riders. The *U.S. Traffic Calming Manual* is the first comprehensive how-to manual developed specifically for U.S. communities to slow down traffic or to reduce traffic volume on a given road. The manual is available for purchase through the American Planning Association's **PlanningBooks.com**.



Behind the Scenes, Behind the Progress

**By Matt Chase, Executive Director
National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)**

Regional councils are now competing in a performance-driven, fiscally-constrained and fast-paced environment that demands that they, both collectively and individually, dedicate more time and resources to effectively communicate their unique and distinguished professional competences, leadership networks and performance results.

It goes without saying that regional council leaders must remain focused on retaining highly skilled staffs, fostering regional dialogues and actions of local officials, maintaining fiscal discipline and public accountability, and most importantly, delivering services and programs aimed at improving the quality of life and economic opportunities for the American people.

What is often lost, however, is that regional councils must modernize and upgrade their public image and appearance to maintain our industry's credibility with elected officials and their staffs, funding agency leaders and program staff, and strategic coalition partners. Professional and organizational substance is at the core of regional councils, but style is playing an increasingly influential role in determining if we even get a foot in the door!

According to previous NADO research, the typical regional council budget consists of nearly 50 percent federal funds, 25 percent state funds and a mix of local government dues and special project resources for the remaining portion. This means that the fate of our regional councils is usually in the hands of politicians, agency program officers and other funding providers.

In the current age of instantaneous electronic communications, it is vital that regional councils spend sufficient time and

resources to develop effective, timely and quality information dissemination tools. These include traditional vehicles like annual reports, periodic newsletters and program progress reports. But they must also involve professionally designed Web sites, concise and value-added email newsletters, online collaboration tools and media strategies.

Regional councils must modernize and upgrade their public image and appearance to maintain our industry's credibility with elected officials and their staffs, funding agency leaders and program staff, and strategic coalition partners.

In today's world, we often make a first impression with an elected official, funding agency or a citizen without even knowing it. Before you hire a new employee, arrange a congressional visit or apply for a grant, what is the first thing you do? Most of us conduct a cursory "Google" search to see if we can find any useful information on the Web. So, your organization's image is being increasingly shaped by your Web presence (or lack of presence) and facade.

Whether your organization is building a new Web site, laying out a new annual report, publishing your latest Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) or submitting a grant application, appearances matter! If you want your target audience to pick up your regional plan and read it, it better look

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Recent NADO Reports:

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: An Analysis of Federal Community, Economic, Infrastructure, Human Services and Transportation Programs
- NADO News Special Report: Inside the FY2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act
- Kentucky Council of Area Development Districts: Progress in Motion
- New Mexico Association of Regional Councils: Partnerships, Progress and Promise
- Oregon's Economic Development Districts: Creating Opportunities for Regional Prosperity
- Metropolitan and Rural Transportation Planning: Case Studies and Checklists for Regional Collaboration
- Rural Local Officials Consultation Assessment Guide: Evaluating Your Knowledge and Input into the Statewide Transportation Planning Process

Visit www.NADO.org to learn more.

professional and worth the time. If you want visitors to explore your Web site, it better be user friendly, visually appealing and easy to find on search engines like Yahoo!, Google and Wikipedia. If you want business leaders and government officials to read and use your annual report, it better have a concise executive summary, tell a compelling story and keep the readers attention through color, professional images, quality design, and of course, proficient writing.

Regional councils are in the service and communications industry. If you conduct an Internet search on your organization and nothing pops up, you're in trouble because it means you are invisible to most of the outside world. If you find some results but the source is someone other than your own site, you are letting someone else control and deliver your message. If a site pops up looking like the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (sapdc.org), Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center (coastalgeorgiarc.org) or Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District (smpdd.com), you are making progress in the public relations game.

As highlighted on the homepage of the Central Midlands COG (centralmidlands.org), regional councils have been successfully- and are comfortable-following the philosophy "Behind the Scenes: Behind the Progress." At the same time, we need to make sure our key constituents view us as competent, results oriented and worth the investment of time, money and support.

Regional councils are among the most performance-driven organizations. They just need to improve the packaging and marketing of these unmatched results!

NADO advocates public policies that strengthen local governments, communities and economies through the regional solutions, partnerships and strategies fostered by the national network of regional planning and development organizations. Visit NADO.org and RuralTransportation.org to learn more about NADO.



Mark Your Calendar

Join more than 750 policy officials, executive directors and senior program staff of the nation's regional councils at the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) 2009 Annual Training Conference.

August 29 - September 1, 2009
Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers • Chicago, Illinois.

Participants will learn about key industry trends and program innovations while engaging in interactive training sessions and peer learning exchanges. Visit NADO.org to register today.



Wanxiang America to manufacture solar panels in Rockford *Company brings 60 new jobs and 200-acre solar farm to region*

On March 23, Governor Pat Quinn announced a \$2 million investment package to support Wanxiang America Corporation's plans to establish a high-tech, solar panel manufacturing facility in Rockford. This project will result in the creation of at least 60 new jobs in the fast-growing solar energy industry.

"Illinois is the perfect location for companies looking to stay ahead of the curve in an increasingly competitive economy," said Governor Quinn. "This investment creates important jobs in the renewable energy sector and supports a business that harnesses the sun's power, undoubtedly the best and most abundant source of renewable energy available."

Wanxiang America seeks to develop its renewable energy business in the U.S. with the Rockford solar panel operation. As part of the agreement, Wanxiang America is proposing to construct one of the largest solar farms in the country by leasing up to 200 acres on airport property in a public-private cooperative. Wanxiang currently has 4,100 employees in the U.S. and more than 45,000 globally.

"Wanxiang America appreciates Illinois' positive business environment and skilled labor force," said Mr. Pin Ni, president of Wanxiang America Corporation. "As the U.S. moves towards energy independence, our Rockford-based solar panel manufacturing operation and the jobs it creates will help Illinois remain at the forefront of the renewable energy industry."

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is administering the business investment package with an array of incentives and grants estimated at \$2,075,000. The state's support comes from the Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) program, Employer Training and

Investment Program (ETIP), plus grants from the Recycling Expansion and Modernization (REM) and Renewable Energy programs.

Along with the State of Illinois, the City of Rockford developed this project as a joint development agreement with Winnebago County and the Chicago-Rockford International Airport.

"We worked hard to bring these jobs to Rockford. Because of our strong alliance with the State and our local partners, we won this project in a national search as we redevelop our local economy," said Rockford Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey. "We look forward to growing our industrial partnership with Wanxiang in the years ahead."

"This unique development with Wanxiang builds off of Winnebago County's alternative energy vision to create jobs for our local economy," said Scott Christiansen, Winnebago County board chairman.

"Alternative energy jobs are at the forefront of our local economic development efforts and a major component of President Obama's stimulus package," said Mike Dunn, Chicago-Rockford International Airport board chairman. "This solar farm shines the national spotlight on Illinois, the Rockford area, and our unique energy co-op."

Pictured signing the agreement (left to right): Rockford Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey, Director Sue Mroz of Winnebago County Regional Planning & Economic Development, Governor Pat Quinn, Chairman of Great Rockford Airport Authority Mike Dunn, and COO of Wanxiang America Corporation Gary Wetzel.

Look Ma! No Poles!

Making the case for deploying national wireless networks

by Rita R. Stull, President, TeleDimensions, Inc.

Last year, in southwestern Ohio, we were hit with violent sixty mile an hour bands of wind from hurricane Ike which hit Texas, yet affected us hundreds of miles away in Cincinnati. No rain – just unbelievable winds that took out utilities for weeks in some neighborhoods. The Governor declared a national disaster, and once more Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) dollars poured in to stand up poles and restore power and telecom. Just two months ago, an ice storm took down utilities in the North East – once again closing down communities for several weeks. Is the nation going to endure outages in perpetuity as taxpayers subsidize a fragile, 165-year-old utility pole infrastructure that topples at the whim of nature's wind and ice storms?

Whose Land is This? How should we handle utility poles in the future? Can we eliminate them? What takes their place? Utility poles are located in public right-of-way which is nine feet of land on each side of every road. Let's look at who controls and maintains the nation's four million mile national highway system? 75.2 % of roadways are under the jurisdiction of local governments, 4.3% are under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, 20.5% of the total 3,933,985 miles, including the entire Interstate System, are controlled and maintained by the State governments. So government has the authority to assign the location of utilities in the public right-of-way and the federal government can mandate highway right-of-way management to states and local entities.

Gimmie Shelter: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) could leverage it's 'highway infrastructure' and 'smart grid electric' project investments by implementing a policy I call "JULIET", an acronym for "Joint Underground Location of Infrastructure for Electric and Telecommunications" – which is an underground conduit system. JULIET's mandated purpose is to house all electric and telecom wires underground in conduits. JULIET would replace the nation's antiquated utility pole infrastructure-so we could finally say "Look Ma! No Poles!"

OK! How Much Will It Cost? Let's launch JULIET by issuing stimulus grants and loans. JULIET would become the nationally mandated conduit system installed in public-rights-of-way or utility corridors. JULIET deployment loans would be paid back from fees levied on conduit tenants-fees that would be less than pole attachment and maintenance costs when factored over time. Implementing the JULIET fee structure allows the conduit system to become self-sustaining without imposing an additional burden on tax payers.

JULIET could become the signature, 21st Century conduit infrastructure that saves the most money and makes deploying the national fiber/wireless networks and smart grids feasible. Conduit availability transforms power and fiber upgrades by



eliminating pavement cuts, thus finally making deployment affordable. Conduit costs \$5,000 per rural mile and \$15,000 per urban mile when installed while pavement is open. Once conduits are in place, pulling new fiber infrastructure through reduces project deployment costs from \$100,000 to \$30,000 per urban mile-a by 70% savings.

Installing conduits simultaneously with every road, bridge, dam, railroad, water, sewer, gas or electric project adds \$15,000 to the cost of every urban project mile-a rounding off number for most construction projects. However, once JULIET is in place, fiber and electric lines can be pulled through conduits in the future without cutting streets ever again-forever.

Bonuses That Everyone Will Like: Locating electric and fiber underground significantly improves service reliability and security-no more weather instigated outages. Smart electric grids need fiber to support computer managed electric generation and distribution networks. Wireless, WiFi and WiMax networks use fiber backbones for signal backhaul. Millions in FEMA dollars wouldn't be needed to restore outages because there are no poles and wires to fall down in wind or ice storms. Local economies stop dead during outages causing businesses and hourly workers to lose millions in income-most of which is not reimbursable by FEMA. So, let's stop senseless waste and finally put all utilities underground.

Wow! It's Beautiful! America the Beautiful. Let's restore the beauty of our living spaces and our vistas. Imagine the visual improvements resulting from a 'no poles' policy. JULIET helps America save money, improve services and look her best-an affordable, transforming make-over for the 21st Century.

Teledimensions, Inc. is a public sector, telecommunications and community media consulting firm. Ms. Stull has over twenty years experience in public sector telecom management and consulting. She specializes in designing comprehensive telcom policy and plans for local governments. She can be reached at 513-381-3393 or ritastull@fuse.net.



Bi-State Regional Commission staff are coordinating a coalition of local government and private sector representatives committed to clean air and protection of the health of citizens in the Bi-State Region and have been addressing exceedences of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) in Muscatine and Scott Counties, Iowa and Rock Island County, Illinois.

Background

Preliminary data for the calendar years 2005-2007 indicated that two monitors in the Region measured values that violated the NAAQS for 24-hour PM_{2.5} (particulate matter of 2.5 micron size or smaller). There are two other Davenport, Iowa monitors and a monitor in Rock Island, Illinois located in close proximity to the offending monitors reading under the standard or "in attainment". Just recently, US EPA Regions 5 and 7 recommended designating the majority of the incorporated areas in Rock Island, Muscatine and Scott Counties in non-attainment for PM 2.5.

The two industries noted have committed to reducing emissions and have developed multi-million dollar emission control plans in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. In addition to the efforts of the industries, the Bi-State led coalition is dedicated to many voluntary activities to improve air quality including scientific study and public education. Regarding scientific study, Midwest states have experienced state-wide exceedences in unusual seasonal conditions involving day time winter temperatures above freezing and night time temperatures below freezing which produce heavy fog. The coalition joined together to fund a University of Iowa study which was initiated in September 2008 to further review the emerging science of these particles.

Public education and encouraging voluntary measures of local governments, businesses and individuals to improve air quality are continuing. Over the past 10 years, Bi-State has staffed the Quad City Air Quality Task Force.

Activities have included:

- "Aware of Air" Brochure Development and Dissemination
- Alternative Fuels Workshop and Teacher Training Workshop

- Travel Demand Management Information
- Newspaper Advertisements
- Development of Voluntary Ozone Flex Plan
- CNG Bus and Biodiesel Bus Utilization for Public Transit
- Trip Chaining Television Advertisements
- Public and Private Employer Outreach Projects and Meetings
- QC Transit Web Portal Development/Transit Marketing and an Ambassador Program and Fair
- Local Government Joint Purchasing Green Initiatives for Janitorial Supplies
- Numerous Local Government Departmental Green Initiatives and Policies

Future Public efforts will entail:

- Expanding Air Quality Task Force to the Bi-State Region and other NAAQS
- Collaborating with Chicago Clean Cities Program
- Developing and Adopting Idling Policies/Ordinances
- Expanding Burn Bans in the Region
- Provision of Alternative Fuel and Bike/Pedestrian Access Workshops
- Continued Development of Multipurpose Trail Network for Alternative Travel Modes
- Collaboration with Quad City Health Initiative

Due in part to these efforts, the Quad-Cities Transportation Advocacy Group (QC TAG) awarded the Bi-State Regional Commission top honors in the category of "Best other transportation program or improvement made" for work in support of Complete Streets, greenways and trails, transit initiatives, and air quality. Mayor Don Welvaert attended the ceremony and accepted the award on Bi-State's behalf.

The Bi-State Regional Commission has deployed scientists and policy makers throughout the region to help develop a plan to protect human health and the environment. This issue is of the utmost importance to Muscatine and Scott Counties, Iowa and Rock Island County, Illinois. The Region is committed to clean air and will continue to take the steps needed to improve air quality.



Illinois leads the way in Recovery road funds

Illinois ranks first in the number of projects and the amount of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) dollars approved by the Obama Administration. So far, Illinois has received funding approval for 249 projects worth \$606 million, more than any other state, according to federal transportation officials. These awarded projects are expected to create and retain an estimated 9,000 jobs.

"Illinois is proud to lead the way in this important recovery effort," said Governor Quinn. "But this is just the start. Illinois will continue to use stimulus funds to create jobs right now while also investing in the future of our transportation system."

To date, \$6.5 billion of the \$27.5 billion has been approved nationally in the federal recovery package for highways and bridges. Earlier this week, President Obama announced more than 2,000 transportation projects that won federal approval for stimulus money.

"We have been working diligently to get the lists submitted so that we don't lose a dollar," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Gary Hannig. "We are ready and committed to building better roads and we look forward to an active construction season."

Examples of Illinois projects include \$29 million to replace a bridge and build a new interchange on Interstates 55 and 70 in Madison County and \$5.5 million to resurface a portion of Route 137 in northeast Illinois.

Each state has until June 17 to use the first half of their share of highway funds for "quick-start" projects or risk losing the money.

Visit www.dot.il.gov/stimulus/index.html for a complete list of projects that IDOT submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

news & views

USDA releases first-ever study detailing national economic impact of cooperatives

The USDA has helped produce a comprehensive new study and database assessing the national economic impact of cooperatives. The study, *Research on the Economic Impact of Cooperatives*, is the result of extensive research that began in 2006. It shows more than 29,000 American cooperatives generate revenues of more than \$654 billion and employ more than 2 million workers. Historically, cooperatives have been extremely important to rural America, serving as economic engines and innovators. This study shows how significant their impact is nationwide. The data and findings from the study are at <http://reic.uwcc.wisc.edu>.

ARRA funding to accelerate cleanup in Waukegan

The U.S. EPA announced \$10 million to \$25 million in new funding through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 for the Outboard Marine Superfund site in Waukegan, Ill. The money will accelerate the hazardous waste cleanup already underway at the site. EPA will use the Recovery Act fund to conduct the demolition of the PCB-impacted facility and excavate and dispose of PCB-contaminated soil and sediment. For more information visit www.epa.gov/superfund/eparecovery/outboard_marine.html.

EPA releases drinking water infrastructure needs gap information

EPA has released its Drinking Water Needs Gap information. The Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment, which is done every four years, reflects data collected in 2007 from states. Results from the assessment are used to develop a formula to distribute the agency's annual DWSRF grants. To obtain a copy visit www.epa.gov/safewater/needsurvey.

Congratulations!

... to proud grandparents Charlotte and Doug McDermand on the birth of their first grandchild Braylen Ryan McDermand born today, April 21 at 6:16 a.m. According to Doug, papa Ryan and mama Courtney are exhausted but extremely happy, aunt Kelly and grandma Charlotte are beaming... and grandpa is still recovering!



ILARC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday, May 21, 2009

10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

President Lincoln Hotel & Conference Center
701 E. Adams Street • Springfield, Illinois

Online resource helps with climate change

Searchable database profiles communities' energy use and climate change strategies

Communities want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but often struggle with how to go about implementing the necessary changes. The American Planning Association (APA) in partnership with the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) has created a new online, searchable database to help communities learn about how others have started to address energy and climate issues and find pertinent resources.

The Planners Energy and Climate Database offers information on the variety of approaches that communities have taken to address energy and climate change issues. Available at the fingertips of planners, community leaders, and local officials are such resources as case studies, ordinances, plans, and other notable examples of local and regional efforts.

The database currently features more than 150 resources that cover energy and climate change efforts from across the country. Additional resources are added regularly, and users are encouraged to recommend materials and resources for inclusion. A number of search parameters are available, enabling users to filter information regionally, state-by-state, by community size, planning tool, topic, or keyword search.

"The database provides information on a variety of resources, organized into a user-friendly application," said Suzanne Rynne, AICP, manager of the Green Communities Research Center at APA. "We hope our work will help communities and planners understand how they can address these issues."

The database is part of a multi-year research effort designed to assist communities with cutting greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to a changing climate, and transitioning to renewable energy resources.

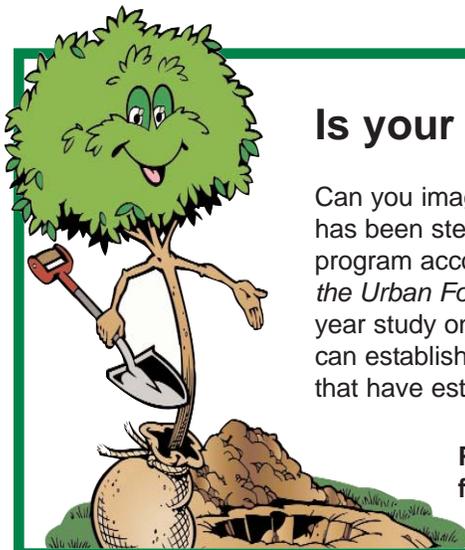
The upcoming report, *Planning for a New Energy and Climate Future*, will focus on how communities can integrate energy and climate change into planning and feature case



studies from across the country. The report, developed in collaboration with the University of North Carolina at Asheville and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, will be available Fall 2009.

Funding for this research project has been provided by the Surdna Foundation, the George Gund Foundation, and APA's Environment, Natural Resources and Energy Division. For more information about the project and other project resources, visit: www.planning.org/research/energy. To submit a resource for the database, e-mail energy@planning.org.

This research project is being conducted under the auspices of APA's Green Communities Research Center, one of APA's National Centers for Planning. The center engages in research, policy, outreach and education that advance green communities through planning. For more information, visit www.planning.org/nationalcenters/green/.



Is your community planning for trees?

Can you imagine your community without trees? Urban tree canopy in metropolitan areas has been steadily declining. Your community is at risk without an integrated urban forestry program according to a new report by the American Planning Association (APA). *Planning the Urban Forest: Ecology, Economy, and Community Development* is the result of a three year study on the impacts and benefits of urban forests. The report details how communities can establish and maintain an urban forestry program. The report profiles 13 communities that have established successful urban forestry programs including **Urbana, Illinois**.

Planning the Urban Forest is available through APA's PlanningBooks.com for \$60. 154 pages. ISBN: 978-1-932364-57-6. www.planning.org.

ITTF awards grants to boost emergency communications

Funds will aid development, planning, and exercising of interoperable communications plans

Grants totaling more than \$1.4 million have been awarded to 14 Illinois counties to enhance communications between emergency responders during disasters. The Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF) recently announced the grants, which can be used for the development, planning, training and exercising of county-wide emergency communications plans. The grants are supported by federal homeland security funds through the Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP).

"During a disaster, responders from several emergency response disciplines and even several jurisdictions are often called upon to respond," said Andrew Velasquez III, director of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). "The ability of those responders to communicate with other response agencies during an emergency is key to effective response. These grants represent another step forward in our continuing effort to enhance emergency responder communications."

Counties receiving grants include:

Cook (\$600,000)	Lake (\$132,000)
Will (\$95,000)	DuPage (\$84,000)
St. Clair (\$71,000)	McHenry (\$69,000)
Madison (\$65,000)	Kane (\$58,000)
Sangamon (\$56,000)	Champaign (\$54,000)
McLean (\$47,000)	Peoria (\$37,000)
Rock Island (\$37,000)	Winnebago (\$26,000)

The goal of IECGP is to improve interoperable communications in response to natural disasters, acts of terrorism and other man-made disasters. The funding will enable the local units of government to implement preparedness activities in support of Illinois' Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) to further enhance interoperability.

Counties selected to receive the grants will be required to submit to the state a Tactical Interoperable Communications



The U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced that Illinois will receive more than \$2 million for IECGP funding in federal fiscal year 2009. The allocation will enable the state to make additional grant awards later this year.

Plan (TICP) that coordinates with the Illinois SCIP. Each participating county must establish or enhance an existing governance body with representatives from every municipality within the county that represent the responder organizations, including law enforcement, fire, emergency management, emergency medical services and telecommunications experts. This multi-discipline/multi-jurisdictional governance body will coordinate development of the county's TICP.

When completed, each county TICP also must be validated through a full-scale or table-top exercise. Additionally, the counties are required to develop and submit to the ITTF an inventory of emergency communications frequencies used by public safety agencies in their jurisdiction. All grant-related activities must be completed by June 30, 2010.

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