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Western Piedmont Council of Governments

Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968

February 2016

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Workforce Development

Business Services: Recruitment, Retention, Results

Since April 2015, Western Piedmont local area NCWorks Career Centers have supported businesses with over 55 recruitment events across the four counties. Our staff is here to connect businesses with talent. Our no-cost business services can provide the following recruitment, retention and results you need.

BUSINESS SERVICES: Recruitment, Retention, Results

At no-cost to you, your local NCWorks Career Center can provide innovative technology, reliable expertise and excellent customer service so you can remain focused on growing your business and meeting your customers' demands.

We currently offer three Recruitment Service options:

Your Site Recruitment Event - We work closely with your HR Staff to provide a team of our Career Center workforce professionals to set up a recruitment event at your facility which can include the following:

- Develop recruitment event flyers for posting internally/externally
- Mass job postings to NCWorks.gov
- Pre-Screening for qualifications
- Extra staff to help with logistics of crowd control at the site the day of the event
- Assistance with any data entry the day of the event
- Where applicable On-The-Job-Training funding for eligible applicants that can help offset training costs

Career Center Recruitment Event - We work closely with your HR Staff to provide a team of our Career Center workforce professionals to set up a recruitment event at your local Career Center which can include the following:

- Develop recruitment event flyers for posting internally/externally
- Mass job postings to NCWorks.gov
- Pre-Screening for qualifications
- Extra staff to help schedule interviews so that you have time to process
- Assistance with any data entry the day of the event
- Where applicable On-The-Job-Training funding for eligible applicants that can help offset training costs

Virtual Recruitment - We will provide a Career Center staff person to assist you in setting up the Virtual Recruiter tool in NCWorks.gov:

- A Career Center Staff Member to personally assist you
- Online Recruitment
- Email notifying you of matching candidates to your job skills

Get Started

1 Choose your recruitment option:

- Your site
- Career Center Event
- Virtual Recruitment

2 Meet with a Business Services Team Member:

3 Enter job opening in NCWorks.gov:

- Job entered

4 Prepare for interviews:

- List of company benefits
- Copy of up-to-date job descriptions
- Interview questions
- Applicant pre-assessments
- Applicant screening requirements

5 After event debrief:

- Adequate amount of applicants
- Screening requirements met
- Position filled

Contact us today to learn more about how NCWorks Career Center recruiting and screening services deliver dependable results through innovative technology. Your Career Center Contact: _____

NCWorks Career Centers are an equal opportunity employer and provider of employment and training services. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request.



Article by Wendy Johnson

Area Agency on Aging Helping People with Medicare, Save Money

The objective of the Medicare Improvements Patient and Providers Act (MIPPA) is to provide outreach and application assistance to persons who may be eligible for the federal Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) and Medicare Savings Programs (MSP). These programs help Medicare recipients save money on their

prescription drug cost and their Medicare premiums and copayments. The WPCOG Area Agency on Aging continues to promote the "Relay for Extra Help" campaign across the region where many citizens are potentially eligible for these cost-saving programs:

- The **Extra Help Program** - or the Low-Income Subsidy Program (LIS) - helps qualified Medicare beneficiaries pay for their Medicare prescription drug program costs, such as premiums, deductibles and coinsurance. Eligibility guidelines for LIS are based on income and assets; the 2015-16 guidelines for this type of assistance are:
 - Limits for an individual: Income \$1,471.25/ month. Assets \$13,640
 - Limits for a married couple: Income \$1991.25/month. Assets \$27,250

To apply call SHIIP, the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program or your local County Senior Center for assistance completing the application. Applications are processed, and eligibility is determined by the Social Security Administration. SSA will notify you if you qualify for assistance and, if you do, at what level.

- The **Medicare Savings Program** (MSP) help qualified Medicare beneficiaries pay for their Medicare Part A and Part B health care cost, such as premiums, deductibles and coinsurance. There are different levels of assistance through MSP. Even if you don't qualify for full assistance (full Medicaid), you might be eligible for coverage of some of your medical expenses.
- **Full Medicaid**, also known as Medicare Qualified Beneficiary (MQB-Q); Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB); or as "Dual Eligible" provides a broad range of health services and coverage assistance. Eligibility guidelines are more complex than for other types of Medicare assistance, and the income limit is based on 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level:
 - \$11,770 for an individual
 - \$15,930 for two people in the household
- **Medicare Qualified Beneficiary** (MQB-B), also known as Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB) assistance. The eligibility guidelines are based on income and assets. The 2015-16 eligibility guidelines for this type of assistance are:
 - Limits for an Individual: Income \$1,177/month. Assets \$8,780.
 - Limits for a married couple: Income \$1,593/month. Assets \$13,930.

To apply contact your local Department of Social Services (DSS) office or your local county Senior Center for assistance in completing the application.

Assets that are not counted in determining eligibility are your home, car, and burial assets of up to \$1,500 in value per person. Resource and income levels may change annually.

For more information about the Extra Help Low-Income Subsidy (LIS) program or the Medicare Savings Program (MSP), contact Anita Roberts, Aging Specialist with WPCOG Area Agency on Aging at 828-485-4265 or anita.roberts@wpcog.org.

Contacts for assistance in the region are:

- Alexander County Senior Center - 828-632-1717
- Alexander County DSS - 828-632-1080
- Morganton-Burke Senior Center - 828-430-4147
- East Burke Senior Center - 828-397-3397
- Burke County DSS - 828-438-3500
- Caldwell Senior Center - 828-758-2883
- Caldwell County DSS - 828-426-8200
- West Hickory Senior Center - 828-328-2269
- Catawba County DSS - 828-695-5600
- Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) 1-855-408-1212 www.ncshiip.com
- Social Security Administration (Hickory Office serves all counties in the region) 828-877-1615

Community & Economic Development

Mortgage Payment Program Continues: State Receives Additional Funding

In late November 2015 the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) announced that all of its Hardest Hit Fund (HHF) programs would be ending on January 15. Nearly all of the funding that NC had received in 2010 had been awarded to help struggling NC homeowners. However, a few weeks later Congress appropriated additional HFF funding and NCHFA announced NC would be able to continue assisting homeowners in trying to prevent foreclosures using its programs.

On Feb. 19 the US Department of the Treasury announced that \$2 billion in Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) funds would be allocated for the HHF program. In its initial phase \$1 billion in funding will be distributed using a formula based on state population and HHF use. North Carolina was granted \$78,016,445.

In the second phase housing finance agencies (HFA) must submit an application by March 11, 2016, asking for additional funds. NCHFA hopes to apply.

"The new funds mean we won't have any lapse in our foreclosure prevention services," said Sherry Long, WPCOG's Assistant Executive Director.

To date, 726 Mortgage Payment Program loans have closed with WPCOG staff assistance.

Homeowners in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba who have experienced a hardship and are concerned about their mortgages should call (828) 485-4268.

Article by Kim Duncan

Community & Regional Planning

Catawba Valley Household Travel Survey

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) are kicking off a 13 week household travel survey that will provide vital information necessary to set transportation priorities for the next 20 years. The survey, Catawba Valley Connection, will be conducted by Westat, a nationally recognized research firm, on behalf of WPCOG and NCDOT.

Transportation agencies will use the data to better understand changes in household travel and project citizens' future travel needs. This is the first time this type of survey has been done for the Greater Hickory MPO, making vital to our area's future transportation improvements.

"The Catawba Valley Connection survey will paint a picture of why people travel and how they plan their daily travel activities," said State Transportation Rep Daniel Sellers. "It will provide WPCOG and its transportation partners with up-to-date information to identify where to invest limited transportation resources."

Over the next 13 weeks, randomly selected households will receive a letter inviting household members to participate in the study by providing some demographic information and filling out a travel diary. The diary will detail household activities for 24 hours; information can be provided online or by phone. The information provided will be converted to statistical data and used only for study purposes. All information will remain confidential.

"Public participation is the key to effective transportation planning," said John Marshall, WPCOG Director of Planning & Transportation. "These households will share information that will result in easier and safer travel, less congestion and more access and choices for every citizen in the valley."

For more information about the survey, call 855-631-2701 or visit travelcatawbavalley.com.

Contact:

John Marshall

WPCOG Director of Planning, Transportation & Natural Resources

john.marshall@wpcog.org

828.322.9191

IT/GIS Services**Staff Profile: Trey Schweitzer - Meeting GIS Needs of Local Governments**

In 2003, Jack S. "Trey" Schweitzer began his career at WPCOG, using his geography skills to help local governments to use GIS to map and organize their utility assets. Trey is native of Memphis, Tennessee, where he was raised, until moving to Asheville, NC during his teen years. After high school, Trey attended Appalachian State University (ASU), where he earned a BA in Geography and Planning in 2003. While there, Trey was part of a GIS team from ASU that studied glacier dynamics and geomorphology in the South American nation of Bolivia.

Upon his arrival at WPCOG in 2003, Trey was at the forefront of the COG's efforts to locate and catalog utility features using high-accuracy GPS units, which was a very innovative venture at the time. Trey helped to map and create GIS systems for sewer and water features in Maiden, stormwater features in Valdese, electric features in Newton and stormwater features in Lenoir. In 2006, Trey left WPCOG to work in various locales around the globe, which included teaching English to students in China and working as an English-Portuguese translator and teacher for corporate executives in Sao Paulo, Brazil.



In 2015, Trey returned to North Carolina with his wife (who he met in Brazil) and returned to the WPCOG as a GPS Technician. During the past year, Trey has been working with the COG's IT/GIS team to create a comprehensive GIS system for the Town of Maiden. Using the latest GPS technology, Trey has been in the field mapping the water, sewer and electric infrastructure for the Town. Trey has worked closely with various sections of the Town's Public Works Department to coordinate collection and verify information. He has also been vital in ensuring that all of the GIS data collected and software can be easily used by Maiden staff using iOS, Apple Inc.'s operating system, which is used widely by Town personnel. Trey has also scanned and georeferenced hundreds of as-builts and legacy maps for Maiden, which will also be available to view in the Town's GIS.

Upon completion of the initial GPS collection, Trey will work with other COG team members in implementing mobile GPS collection web-applications for Maiden. These applications will allow Town personnel to view, collect and edit utility features in the field using small GPS units along with mobile tablets and smartphones. Trey and other COG members will train and support Maiden staff in using these applications to update and maintain their data as the Town's infrastructure changes in the future.

WPCOG's IT/GIS Department is pleased to have Trey on-board to help us meet the GIS needs of our member governments. If you'd like to contact Trey, his email is trey.schweitzer@wpcog.org.

Article by Tom Bell

Regional Housing Authority **Section 8 Waiting List Opening**

Pre-applications for the waiting list will be accepted for 3 days only - Tuesday April 19, Wednesday April 20 and Thursday April 21, 2016. Applications must be submitted by mail or in person. We WILL NOT accept applications by fax or email. Starting April 5, 2016, applications for rental assistance will be available online at www.wpcog.org. Applications will also be available at the Department of Social Services in each county we serve - Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba. For mailed applications: envelopes must be post marked no earlier than April 15 and no later than April 19. Walk-in applications will not be accepted before Tuesday April 19 or after Thursday April 21. For additional information call 828-485-4282 or 828-485-4210. Check the website for details on where to get applications and how to return them, www.wpcog.org.

Announcements



Save the Date for Our 2016 Summit!

NC TOMORROW
BUILDING COMMUNITIES
FOR TOMORROW'S JOBS



2016 SUMMIT

SAVE THE DATES

APRIL 18 - APRIL 19

North Raleigh Hilton

Raleigh, North Carolina

Registration Opens 1/1/16 at:

NCREGIONS.ORG

Book a hotel room in advance:

tinyurl.com/NCRCOGHotel

NC RCOG
ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT
CREATIVE REGIONAL SOLUTIONS



For more information, visit ncregions.org

From Mercury Vapor to High Pressure Sodium to LED's
There's a lot going on with Lighting

Please join us for an informative workshop on Lighting,
and Smart Saver Incentive Programs
Presented by Duke Energy

Monday, March 7, 2016 | 11:30 - 1:30

Western Piedmont Council of Governments Office
1880 2nd Ave NW, Hickory, NC 28601

Lunch will be provided*

Please RSVP to Zenylisse.melendez@duke-energy.com
or 704-395-4465 by Wednesday, March 2

**If you are subject to any law prohibiting the provision or receipt of food or beverages, please contact [Zenylisse Melendez](#) to arrange to be invoiced for \$10, the cost based on the per person fair market value of the event. You may also visit the registration desk at the event to be invoiced or pay by cash/check.*

UNC School of Government Webinars

We are excited to announce a wonderful training opportunity for the Western Piedmont region. Burke County has recently been awarded a Commerce Fellows Training Grant, which includes access to a variety of UNC School of Government pre-recorded webinars. WPCOG has been asked to host and to invite other area local governments to view and receive the benefits of these training webinars.

We will begin by showing the "Human Capital Matters" series. Please see below for webinar titles and viewing dates.

Human Capital Matters (5 individual modules):

- Succession Planning for Local Government Organizations:
Tuesday, March 1, 10 am - 12 pm @ WPCOG
- Effective Disciplinary Procedures:
Wednesday, March 9, 10 am - 12 pm @ WPCOG
- Value Based Customer Service:
Tuesday, March 22, 10 am - 12 pm @ WPCOG
- Diversity and Inclusion: Successfully Leveraging Differences in Local Government Organizations:
Wednesday, March 30, 10 am - 12 pm @ WPCOG
- Employee Performance Evaluation 101:
Tuesday, April 5, 10 am - 12 pm @ WPCOG

If you or any of your staff would like to participate in the viewing of all or any of the webinars listed above, please let me know. Everyone is welcome.

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