



REGIONAL REVIEW

Volume 13, Issue 2

Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson
Metropolitan Planning Commission

Spring 2012

BETHANY IS SITE OF ANNUAL WEST VIRGINIA REGIONAL PLANNING CONFERENCE



Mark Henne, President for the Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council, welcomes statewide conferees on May 15th @ Bethany College's Mountainside Conference Center

From May 15-17, 81 federal, state and local representatives met at Bethany College's Mountainside Conference Center to hear strategic program updates and to informally exchange ideas and practices. Hosted by the Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council, all 11 regional councils were represented while key presentations were made by the West Virginia Development Office and West Virginia Broadband Mapping Program. West Virginia's regional councils were created from the 1971 West Virginia Regional Planning & Development Act. The Act mandates that West Virginia be divided into 11 regions to serve as "*development districts*" to more effectively use the State's resources and maximize small communities chances of attracting federal dollars.

Given the uniqueness of the Conference Center, the rural beauty of Bethany and the relevance of presentations, the event received high marks from conferees. Thanks to the BHJ Conference Team for their months of work preparation.

Key presentations may be found by accessing BHJ's website www.bhjmpc.org. Be patient. It takes about 20 seconds to download a Power Point presentation.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A common BHJ mantra is maximizing benefits through partnerships. With this theme in mind, read our newsletter articles. Add up the parties involved. Add up the benefits received.



- The West Virginia Regional Planning Conference @ Bethany College. May 15-17. Hosted by BHJ, 81 state-wide attendees participated in this two-day event. Eleven regional councils were represented. Multiple federal-state officials were in attendance.
- Rideshare Live Broadcast @ Follansbee. May 8. Organized by BHJ, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission and Froggy Radio 103.5, this celebration of "Commute Options Awareness Month" promoted costs savings through van-pooling and carpooling.
- Regional Access Mobility Partnership (RAMP). Since 2007 and meeting on a quarterly basis, 12 agencies are expanding opportunities, saving dollars and better providing local van, taxi and bus service. These agencies include the Area Agency on Aging, BHJ, Change Inc., Checker Transportation, Healthways, Jefferson Behavior Health, Prime Time, Steel Valley Regional Transit and Weirton Transit.
- Weirton Event Center. Officially opened on May 11. Through the organizational leadership of the Top of West Virginia Convention and Visitors Bureau and the financial support of multiple agencies and local businesses, this once vacant and dilapidated school site in Weirton has returned.

Beyond these partnership articles, the long-range transportation plan article provides hints at transportation projects to come. For the full-report ("2035 Regional Transportation Plan: Review and Appraisal") refer to BHJ's website www.bhjmpc.org

- Access improvements at Veterans Memorial Bridge
- New Ohio River Bridge
- Redesign of Intersection at Freedom Way
- Improvements to Lovers Lane
- Three Springs Drive from US Route 22
- Brady Avenue/ University Boulevard
- Colliers Bridge Replacement

John C. Brown
Executive Director

THE 2012 RIDESHARE/FROGGY LIVE BROADCAST

Since 2004, the month of May has been designated as “Commute Options Awareness Month” by CommuteInfo, BHJ’s partner in promoting ridesharing. During the month, extra attention is focused on the promotion of commuting options available to commuters travelling to and from work and/or school. According to CommuteInfo, the overall goal for the month is to further encourage more people regionally to use an alternative commute (transit, vanpools, carpools, biking and/or walking) to get to work or school. May was chosen as this special month since it includes National Transportation Week, National Bike to Work Day, National Employee Health and Fitness Day, and National Clean Air Week. CommuteInfo staff, partners, and collaborating organizations help support the month-long celebration.

Many events are held throughout the month to encourage people to consider ridesharing. For the fourth year, BHJ participated in the promotion by joining with FROGGY Radio 103.5 for a live action broadcast. This year’s activities were held at Sheetz on Route 2 in Follansbee, WV. Prizes were given away, including ten \$20.00 gas cards donated by Sheetz who also provided shirts, cards for free or discounted “meals to go” and specialty drinks and other items. Those who stopped by were able to spin the FROGGY birthday wheel for a chance to win cash. And, of course, Mr. FROGGY was there giving out hugs and having photos taken with his fans.

Lisa Kay Schweyer, CommuteInfo program developer from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, was there to talk to people about the program. Lisa Kay said, “We enjoy participating in events like this, since it allows us the opportunity to talk directly with commuters, share information about commuting alternatives and answer questions about their unique commuting situation.”

The program is a success as evidenced by these facts: In 2011, CommuteInfo's vanpool and carpool participants kept nearly 800 cars off the road each workday. For a typical 30-mile round trip to work and a vehicle that averages about 25 miles per gallon, each day that vehicle is left at home and the commuter rides in a CommuteInfo vanpool or carpool instead, the commuter can save over a gallon of gasoline. At the current price of almost \$4 per gallon, that adds up to over \$1,000 in savings per year. Over 660 commuters already ride to work daily in CommuteInfo's 53 registered vanpools. The 241 registered carpools carry an additional 525 commuters a day.

To learn more about how you can cut your commuting costs, call 1-888-819-6110 or log onto CommuteInfo’s website at www.commuteinfo.org.



MEET OUR NEW FINANCE MANAGER!

On April 2, BHJ welcomed our new finance manager, Rhonda Howell. Rhonda comes to us from S.R. Snodgrass, A.C., CPA's where she worked as a staff accountant since February 2001. Prior to that, she worked as an accountant for Walden Industries, Inc. fka Belot Concrete Block.

Rhonda attended Jefferson Technical College where she graduated with honors obtaining an Associates Degree of Applied Business in Accounting.

Rhonda lives in Wintersville, OH with her husband Bob who is the owner of Howell's Radiator, Air Conditioning and Auto Repair and Howell's Army Surplus Store. They have two daughters. Cassandra (Cassie) is a humane officer for the Jefferson County Humane Society. Katrina (Katie) lives in Virginia where she is a family nurse practitioner for Faquier Hospital.

Her interests are many. She loves spending time with family and friends. She also enjoys anything outdoors, reading and her church.

Rhonda is excited about her new position at BHJ and eager to learn the dynamics of the agency. She says, "I think the people at BHJ would like the tri-county area to understand what they do. They are proud of the work they perform and feel that it is important. I would like to better understand and help the agency to reach those goals. I suspect that better planned roadways and bridges could be a deciding economic factor for our area."

In the short time she's been with us, Rhonda has already proven to be a good fit for the agency. She has the experience and knowledge to keep the agency on a sound financial track. Welcome aboard, Rhonda. We are glad you're a part of us,.

WEIRTON EVENT CENTER



Weirton Event Center Site April 2005 (left) and April 2012 (right).

On May 10th, the Top of West Virginia Convention and Visitors Bureau formally opened the Weirton Event Center. Located adjacent to the Weirton Municipal Building, the three acre site is a welcomed downtown focal point. Promoted as an event center and farmers market, over \$300,000 in local funds was donated. Preliminary site preparation was financed in 2005 and 2007 through a \$150,000 brownfield assessment clean-up grant. The grant is managed by the Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council. Starting May 25 and Friday evenings throughout the summer, a free concert series is featured while the farmers market will open in July. Vacated as a school site since 1991, the building was demolished in 2010.

ACCESS OHIO 2040—ODOT WANTS YOUR INPUT

The following information is provided by the Ohio Department of Transportation and can be found at www.transportation.ohio.gov/accessoh.us

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is in the process of updating its long range statewide transportation plan, Access Ohio 2030. The updated plan, Access Ohio 2040, will direct Ohio's transportation investments for future and help ensure that Ohio meets its goals "to provide easy movement of people and goods from place to place."

Access Ohio 2040 will *guide* transportation decisions by:

- Providing an overview of the transportation, economic, social, and environmental trends affecting Ohio;
- Establishing a framework for multimodal transportation system investments that will influence and respond to these trends; and
- Identifying corridors where transportation system needs converge to guide future project decisions.

Access Ohio 2040 will *inform* transportation decisions by:

- Providing an inventory of Ohio's transportation assets;
- Forecasting transportation conditions, needs, and costs;
- Identifying existing revenue streams and fiscal challenges in meeting transportation needs; and
- Developing innovative funding strategies for meeting future challenges.

Access Ohio 2040 will *support* transportation decisions by:

- Documenting current ODOT programs, policies, and procedures for improving Ohio's Transportation network; and
- Building upon performance benchmarks for core ODOT programs.

We want your help. To ensure Access Ohio 2040's success, ODOT will conduct a proactive and ongoing public and stakeholder engagement process. Ohioans' input is desired and highly valued.

Please direct any questions or comments to:

Scott Phinney | Administrator
Office of Statewide Planning & Research
1980 West Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43223
Phone: (614) 644-9147
access.ohio.2040@dot.state.oh.us

In addition, a Steering Committee has been formed comprised of individuals who represent organizations that serve various segments of Ohio's population. Having a clear understanding of the needs of their constituent groups and can represent those needs to ODOT, their role is to advise ODOT on the direction and content of the Access Ohio 2040 plan; share project information and materials with others; attend steering meetings and review and provide input on project materials. Jefferson County Engineer Jim Branagan is the local contact and can be reached at:

Jefferson County Engineers Office
598 State Route 43
Steubenville, OH 43952-7069
Phone: (740) 283-8574



BHJ RECEIVES AUDITOR OF STATE AWARD

Thanks to the work of former BHJ Finance Manager Joan Cresap, a recent financial audit of the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission by Auditor of State Dave Yost's office has returned a clean audit report. BHJ's excellent record keeping has earned it the *Auditor of State Award*.

BHJ Executive Director Dr. John Brown says, "This award is a vote of confidence. Excellence through BHJ starts and ends with accurate and timely financial reporting. It leads to informed and better decision making. It creates confidence in our regionally cooperative effort.

The *Auditor of State Award* is presented to local governments and school districts upon the completion of a financial audit. Entities that receive the award meet the following criteria of a "clean" audit report:

- ♦ Must be a GAAP entity without a CAFR (Certified Annual Financial Report) that timely files their financial reports with the Auditor of State;
- ♦ The audit report does not contain any findings for recovery, material citations, material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, Single Audit findings or questioned costs;
- ♦ The entity's management letter contains no comments related to:
 - Ethics referrals
 - Questioned costs less than \$10,000
 - Lack of timely report submission
 - Reconciliation
 - Failure to obtain a timely Single Audit
 - Findings for recovery less than \$100

MIKE PAPROCKI, BHJ TRANSPORTATION STUDY DIRECTOR COMMENDED BY VILLAGE OF MINGO JUNCTION

The Village of Mingo Junction, OH recently honored Mike Paprocki, BHJ transportation study director, by passing a resolution to commend him for his help in obtaining funding to repair the Commercial Street Bridge. The total cost of the project was \$1,406,984. The project, which took approximately a year to complete, was paid for by the Public Works Commission: State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) and Municipal Bridge funds. Shelly & Sands, Inc. was the contractor.



Before and After

*The photo on the left
was taken in 2005.
The completed project
in 2012 as shown on
the right.*



COORDINATED TRANSIT SERVICE ALMOST A REALITY

The Regional Access Mobility Partnership (RAMP) is one step closer to providing non-emergency medical transportation without duplication of services. The goal to have a single point of access for transportation, human services information and referral needs on a regional level whereby each agency involved (transit and human service) will share cost and operation is near completion. The software that will be used, TransSched, was purchased from Enghouse Transportation at a cost of \$60,000. Steel Valley Regional Transit Authority (SVRTA) and Weirton Transit Corporation (WTC) each contributed \$30,000 some of which was ARRA funding.

Since January, Shawn Price, BHI senior engineering technician, has been overseeing the installation of the software and training the users. Mr. Price says that of the 12 agencies participating, initially four to five will be using the software in the first year. Currently, WTC and SVRTA are using it but not to full capacity.

Weirton Transit Manager Kevin Beynon said, "The software has already been installed in the WTC computer and training has commenced. We're growing fast, and this initiative will help us keep track of our routes better, eventually sharing information if necessary to better provide the service."

Beynon also said the TransSched software couldn't be coming at a better time. He said the number of riders continues to grow as figures show ridership up 23.5 % over this time last year and up 19.8% for the fiscal year to date. He attributed some of the increase to the new students being transported by the service as well as more than 700 new regular riders.

Frank Bovina, transit manager for SVRTA, thinks this is something that has potential. He said, "I would say it's a step in the right direction. It's not the remedy yet. The best thing about it is it demonstrates the willingness for all the other agencies to work together."

EMERGENCY LANDSLIDE PROJECTS COSTLY

What's the cost of a landslide repair? Four major landslides in Jefferson County this past year resulted in a total cost of \$66,000,000.

John Scott Highway in Steubenville, OH—\$6,000,000

Wellsville, OH—\$10,000,000

Rayland, OH—\$30,000,000 (approximate)

Brilliant, OH—\$20,000,000 (approximate)

Both the John Scott Highway and Wellsville projects are complete. James White Construction was the contractor for John Scott while Beaver Excavating did the work in Wellsville.

The Rayland slide will sell in July. Drilling is complete with plans to be completed in ten months on the Brilliant slide.

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**Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan
Planning Commission**

Spring/Summer

SPRING/SUMMER CALENDAR

June 13	Brooke-Hancock Brownfield Task Force Meeting WesBanco, Weirton, WV	4:30
July 2	Executive Committee	Noon
July 4	Holiday—Office Closed	
August 6	Executive Committee	Noon
September 3	Labor Day—BHJ Office Closed	
September 4	Executive Committee	Noon
September 26	Technical Advisory Committee Full Commission	10:30 Noon

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Appalachian Regional Commission
www.arc.gov

Brooke County Economic Development Authority
www.brookewv.org

Brooke Pioneer Trail Assoc. Inc
www.brookepioneertrail.org

Business Development Corporation of the
Northern Panhandle
www.bhbdc.org

CHANGE, Inc.
www.changeinc.org

City of Steubenville
www.cityofsteubenville.us

Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce
www.jeffersoncountychamber.com

Ohio Department of Transportation
www.dot.state.oh.us

Progress Alliance
www.progressalliance.com

State of Ohio Government Information
Www.ohio.gov

State of West Virginia Government Info.
www.wv.gov

Top of WV Convention and Visitors Bureau
www.topofwv.com

U.S. Census Bureau
www.census.gov

U.S. Department of Transportation
www.dot.gov

U.S. Economic Development Administration
www.commerce.gov

Village of Wintersville
www.wintersville.net

Weirton Area Port Authority
www.wapainc.org

Weirton Chamber of Commerce
www.weirtonchamber.com

West Virginia Department of Transportation
www.transportation.wv.gov

West Virginia Development Office
www.wvdo.org

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