



# FIVE COUNTY NEWS FROM 'R' VIEW

VOLUME VIII NUMBER 2

APRIL-JUNE, 2008

## ***Director's Dialogue***

One of the assignments I gave Baako Wahabu, our recent SUU intern, was to digitize a box full of historic documents I inherited from John Williams when he retired. John noted that former Commissioner Jerry Lewis had come across the documents as he was cleaning out his office upon leaving the Washington County Commission. One of the most treasured documents we found was the minutes of the first meeting of the Five County Organization held on April 5, 1956.

The meeting was called by the Iron County Commission, and included the commissioners and clerks from Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane and Washington counties. Other invites included the editors of all local and Salt Lake City newspapers, KSUB radio, Congressman H. Aldous Dixon, and representatives of the U.S. National Park Service, Dixie National Forest, the Utah State Road Commission, and the Utah Water & Power Board.

Participants discussed "the advisability of forming an organization . . . for the purpose of working collectively and unitedly for the development of the resources of the five counties especially and for progress and development of the entire Southern Utah Area."

A Board of Directors consisting of the chair from each of the five county commissions was unanimously appointed.

Discussion included the following topics:

- Proposed federal initiatives titled "Mission 66" and "Mission 64", touted as a means to improve facilities on public lands.
- The federal Highway Bill was discussed and supported.
- An Industrial Survey being conducted by the Utah State Committee on Industrial Development was supported.
- The Upper Colorado River Water Project was described.
- Airport funding for projects outside the Wasatch Front was proposed.

Public Lands . . . Transportation . . . Water . . .  
More Attention for Southern Utah

Isn't it fascinating that a half century later finds us discussing and deliberating about the same set of issues?!

Does this mean that the county commissioners 50 years ago failed to solve the problems of their watch? I think not. In my opinion, this shows that we continue to confront weighty concerns that transcend generational boundaries. Today's elected officials confront a new set of values and constraints compounded by a population base that has increased from about 31,000 in 1956 to more than 200,000 today.

I am encouraged and excited to see that elected officials continue to support the concept of "working collectively and unitedly" 50 years after the Five County Organization was created. Even in the face of rapid change that has affected some southwestern counties more than others, local officials still support regional approaches that benefit all of southwestern Utah.

Examples include the means by which federal Block Grant funds are allocated, regional in-home aging services, child care resource and referral programs, housing rehabilitation projects, senior corps and volunteer services, and coordinated transportation planning. Such programs show that the whole is indeed more than the sum of its parts.

We at the Five County Association of Governments are pleased to be part of a continuing tradition of coordination and cooperation.

It is my hope that when the Executive Director of the Five County AOG in 2050 looks back at historical documents from the turn of the 21st Century, he or she will be pleased to note that the spirit of cooperation of the mid-20th Century survived and thrives a century later. (Who knows . . . I may still be around, in my mid-90's, to assist in the critique!)

Future Steering Committee packets will include snippets from other important milestones in the history of the Association of Governments.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Human Services Public Forums, together with the AOG needs assessment, officially and successfully ended on March 20, 2008. Baako Wahabu, SUU Master of Public Administration Intern, says he was glad for the opportunity to be part of the organization of this important exercise which brought residents and elected officials in our communities together to brainstorm and to identify community challenges. He felt it was his privilege to work with government and other organizations in an effort to find solutions to the myriad of challenges facing our communities.



Mayor Art Cooper & Baako Wahabu

The enthusiasm of elected officials throughout the exercise clearly demonstrates that they have the welfare of their constituents at heart and that attitude *d e s e r v e s* commendation. In addition, residents and members of AOG

partner organizations who participated actively in the entire process also demonstrated that they care about the well being of their communities. Those who were willing but unable to be part of this year's exercise will have another opportunity next year to express their concerns and to hopefully be part of the process toward finding lasting and workable solutions to community needs. Undoubtedly, community members can offer very effective suggestions and recommendations about how to deal with unmet community needs because they have more knowledge and understanding than those on the outside. Individual contributions in the forums are very valuable, and Baako hopes that residents will get a bit more involved by participating in and contributing to meaningful subsequent forums.

Collectively, we can achieve a lot, but we begin as individuals. He still remembers some words of wisdom by a speaker in an advocacy meeting when she said, "If you think you are too small to make an impact, try sleeping with a mosquito."

Every member of the community can have a great idea about how to address our challenges, and so those who always make it to community meetings should go the extra mile to encourage their neighbors to attend and be part of the collective effort to address our needs. Actions, they say, speak louder than words.

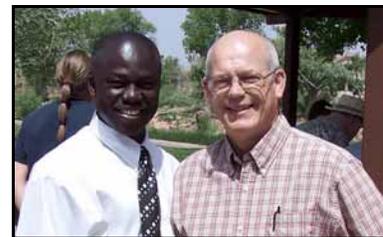
So, what is next, after the forums? Your guess is as good as mine. It is now time to get moving on with the ideas. As recognized by participants in the meetings, some solutions to community challenges lie within, and so we must not wait to be reminded again before we begin the implementation process. Procrastination is obviously the thief of time, so whatever can be done now must not be delayed without a justifiable reason. Those that cannot be started immediately must not be forgotten. The process is ongoing.

While AOG staff work on getting some of the issues raised during the forums addressed, residents need to do their part no matter how little it might seem. Opportunity to serve our communities goes with the responsibility to do it well and timely. Baako says he can tell with a degree of certainty that some community members have, over the years, played significant roles in different capacities in implementing policies and programs for the benefit of residents. This indeed is commendable.

Again this year, more residents have accepted various responsibilities and have expressed their commitments to be part of the continuing effort of making service delivery more accessible and affordable to citizens. An important lesson Baako learned regarding the public forums is the willingness of some residents to sacrifice for the benefit of the entire community.



Garfield County Public Forum Participants



Baako Wahabu & Ken Sizemore

Baako takes this opportunity to express his gratitude and appreciation first to Ken Sizemore, Executive Director, for establishing the internship program with SUU, and for giving him the opportunity as the

first intern to gain invaluable experience. Undoubtedly, the experience he has gained over the past four months will surely prepare him for future assignments in similar organizations. Baako also expresses a debt of gratitude to his supervisor, Beth Cottam, for her encouragement and support throughout the period. Finally, he thanks all AOG staff both in St. George and Cedar offices for their support. Baako says the staff are an awesome group of workers and he hopes to get the opportunity to work with others like them. He can't forget the love and care everyone demonstrated when he had his first dental experience, which he doesn't really like to talk about.

Baako concludes by saying, "To all the commissioners, leaders of agencies and institutions and residents of Five County area, I thank you for working with me and making my internship successful and enjoyable."

"Appreciation is a poor man's payment for service and so in my local Ghanaian Dialect (Nanunli) I sign off by saying 'Niiituma Pam' –Thank You Very Much! I will miss working with you, but I will never forget experience."

**Al Hassan (Baako) Wahabu**





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### ***Iron County Breaks Ground for New Senior Citizens Center in Parowan***

On Monday, April 14, 2008 elected officials, representatives, agency staff and citizens of Parowan and Iron County gathered on a very warm and sunny day in Parowan City on the site of the existing Iron County Ambulance Facility which is adjacent to the site where the new Iron County Senior Center in Parowan is being constructed.

The new 3,529 square foot senior citizens center will replace the existing center which is currently housed in the lower level of the Iron County Courthouse Building in Parowan. The building, designed by architect Robert Mercer, is now under construction and is anticipated to be at or near completion by the end of summer.

The new center is being brought about through the partnering of many agencies and funding resources. Details and features of this project, including how it was brought about through the diligence of all of those involved, will be featured in an upcoming newsletter.



## Staff Spotlights:



Christine McDonald

**Christine McDonald** has been named coordinator for the Senior Companion Program, taking over responsibilities from Stay C Litster who has served in this capacity for more than six years. In her new position, at the Volunteer Center of Washington County, McDonald will oversee the day-to-day operation of the program and looks forward to providing service to frail older adults, adults with

disabilities, those with terminal illnesses and caregivers who need regular short breaks from long-term caregiving duties.

To accomplish the program's goals, McDonald is responsible for recruiting, training, assigning and retaining a corps of senior men and women - currently numbering nearly 40 serving in various communities in Beaver, Iron, Kane and Washington counties - to offer companionship and friendship to isolated and frail adults, including assisting with simple chores, providing transportation to essential destinations; and, in numerous ways, adding richness to the lives of the clients they serve. In exchange for their 15-40 hours of service each week, Senior Companion volunteers receive a non-taxable, non-reportable stipend of \$2.65 per hour as well as limited meal and mileage reimbursement.

McDonald brings a bachelors degree in early education and child development from Brigham Young University to her new position. A former first grade teacher in Salt Lake City and a reading resource specialist in southern California before relocating to southern Utah to be closer to family, the wife, mother and grandmother of one, honed her customer service skills at Dixie College where she worked briefly in the central ticket office before accepting this position.

In her leisure time, Christine and her husband Jack enjoy hiking southern Utah's red rock country. She also enjoys sewing, home decorating, paper cutting and adding to her various collections.

The new program coordinator is excited by the challenge of doing something completely different from any of her previous employment experiences and looks forward to working with these "amazing volunteers who give so much of themselves to help others."



Ken Beals

**Ken Beals** was born in California in 1956. His parents moved to Utah in 1985, and he followed them to Utah in 1994.

He recently joined the Five County Association of Governments and is working with the Weatherization Program. He is glad to be a part of the staff at the AOG. He feels that it is most enjoyable to help

people by making their homes more energy efficient and to give something back to the public. In his spare time, Ken loves to hunt and fish.

## Affordable and Workforce Housing Planning Training Workshops Held



All Day Session in Cedar City

Professional city planners, city and county planning commissioners, city managers and elected city and county officials from throughout the five county region attended one of three scheduled training workshop sessions on April 16-17, 2008. These

workshops were coordinated by the Community Development staff of the Five County Association of Governments and conducted by staff of the Utah Workforce Housing Initiative. There was an all day session for professional planners and two evening sessions for elected officials.

The Utah Workforce Housing Initiative is a technical and training resource designed to help accomplish legislation passed in 1996 that established plans for the provision of moderate-income housing and for a program to assist local government in planning for such housing. Partners in the initiative include state government, the Utah League of Cities and Towns, key housing industry organizations, Envision Utah, community and industrial banks and others.

These housing plan preparation training workshops provided innovative planning guidance for planning professionals, elected officials and planning commissioners in adopting the housing component of that community's general plan.



Evening Session in Washington City

They were presented to help City officials facilitate the creation of housing affordable for the critical workforce in their community.



Evening Session in Cedar City

The workshops also provided training on using an innovative economic and housing needs projection model software. A new affordable housing planning guidebook was also highlighted.

-Gary Zabriskie



**HOUSING AND OPPORTUNITY THROUGH  
POSITIVE EMPOWERMENT**

HOPE's mission is to create sustainable housing opportunities for all. Services are provided for those who:

- are behind in their house payments;
- are constantly borrowing from Peter to pay Paul;
- are afraid of losing their home;
- the stresses of these circumstances are becoming too much to handle;
- are ready to move forward toward a resolution.

HOPE can help! We are a not-for-profit HUD-approved counseling organization whose purpose is to empower individuals with the knowledge, skills and resources necessary to get their lives back on track. We will work with your lender on your behalf. Our services are free. Call us right away, before it is too late. Phone (435)652-5978 or toll-free (800)757-0406. Our office is located in the Five County AOG office building at 1070 W. 1600 South, Bldg. B. St. George, Utah.

Visit our web site at: [www.housingandopportunity.org](http://www.housingandopportunity.org)

Please submit articles to Diane Lamoreaux via e-mail ([dlamoreaux@fcaog.state.ut.us](mailto:dlamoreaux@fcaog.state.ut.us)) or in writing to: P.O. Box 1550; St. George, Utah 84771-1550. For other information or services, please call (435) 673-3548 or visit our web site at: <http://www.fcaog.state.ut.us>

**Steering Committee Meeting  
Schedule:**

**Wednesday, June 11, 2008, 1:00 p.m.**

Kane County Courthouse  
Commission Chambers  
76 North Main Street; Kanab, UT

**Wednesday, August 13, 2008, 1:00 p.m.**

Panguitch City Office  
Council Chambers

Five County Association of Governments  
1070 West 1600 South, Building B  
P.O. Box 1550  
St. George, Utah 84771-1550