



FIVE COUNTY NEWS FROM 'R' VIEW

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Director's Dialogue



Kenneth L. Sizemore, Executive Director

One hallmark of organizational success is the ability to attract and retain well qualified and satisfied employees. I have been fortunate to come into the Executive Director position with a team of leaders and employees who excel in the programs they administer and receive regular accolades for their work.

The average tenure of our staff is eight years, with nine who have been employed for one year or less, and nine others who have worked for 15 years or more. The Leadership Team averages 15 years of service. Our longest tenured employee is **Bob Rasmussen**, the Chief Financial Officer, who has worked for the Association of Governments since December of 1979.

In December we honored a number of our long-term employees who have given so much to make southwestern Utah such a great place to live.

Collene Taylor retired from her position with the Senior Corps programs in November 2007 after 15 years of service with the Association. She was hired in 1992 to work with the Color Country Travel Region. Collene then moved into a receptionist position for a time, worked with Human Services programs and finally transferred to the Senior Corps programs. Many seniors remember Collene for her fine sense of taste in decorating for many events. She was the Association's interior design specialist! Health challenges in 2007 forced Collene to cut back her work hours and finally retire. We miss her, and wish her well.

Diane Lamoreaux was honored for 25 years of service. Her experience with the Association is a great example of

working up the ranks. She began her service as a secretary for the MX Policy Board during the efforts to site the MX missile system in the west desert. At the conclusion of the MX project, she transferred to the front desk at the Association, and eventually became the Executive Secretary for the Steering Committee. Her organizational abilities and willingness to learn allowed Diane to move into Community Development Block Grant administration, where she was promoted to Community Development Program Specialist. Diane was tested and became a Community Development Block Grant Certified Manager in 2007. She continues to serve as the Executive Secretary to the Steering Committee, and is regularly commended for her precise and detailed minutes.

Carrie Schonlaw was recognized for 10 years of service as the director of the in-home aging services program. She manages the largest group of Association employees, and is regularly commended for her attention to detail and professionalism.

It is truly a pleasure to work with such a dedicated and professional staff.

The new year has also brought some changes to the Steering Committee. **Dan McGuire**, Washington County Mayor representative, completed 5 years of service, and turned the reins over to **Lee Bracken**, Mayor of Enterprise. **Eugene Meyer**, Mayor of Milford (and one of the original signers of the AOG's Articles of Association) has asked **Robert Crow**, Mayor of Minersville, to take the assignment in 2008. **Jill Elliss** has taken a new assignment at the Dixie Business Alliance. Her replacement as a representative of Dixie State College is **Frank Lojko**, DSC Vice President (and a Leeds Town Council member).

The chair of the Steering Committee will rotate to Kane County in February. I look forward to working with Commissioner **Duke Cox**. We appreciate the service of these great public servants, and look forward to working with our new members.

Staff Spotlights:

SUU Master of Public Administration Intern Al Hassan (Baako) Wahabu



Al Hassan (Baako) Wahabu

Southern Utah University began a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree program in Fall Semester 2007. This degree program allows students and working professionals interested in public service as a career an opportunity to pursue graduate courses in southern Utah.

Courses have been

scheduled for evening hours, and at least one course will be broadcast to the Dixie State College campus through the EdNet system each semester.

In order to obtain the MPA degree, a student must complete a one semester internship with a public agency, or document applicable public sector experience. The Association of Governments has entered into an agreement with SUU to sponsor MPA student interns who have an interest in experiencing regional program delivery and working with local officials in southwestern Utah.

Our first MPA intern, Al Hassan (Baako) Wahabu, began work with the Association on January 7, 2008. Baako hails from Ghana, Africa, where he earned a teaching degree, and taught high school for two years. As he explored graduate education opportunities, a friend who had attended SUU recommended SUU as an excellent school with a small town atmosphere. After a two-year effort to arrange acceptance and visas, Baako enrolled in a Master of Education program.

Ghana is seeing the development of many Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) devoted to improving living conditions and social structures in the country. Baako enrolled for his second graduate degree at SUU in order to be prepared to be a leader in future NGO efforts back in Ghana.

During his four months with the Association, Baako will be helping Beth Cottam prepare for and host the Spring 2008 Public Forums. He will be preparing and conducting a regional Needs Assessment in conjunction with the Public Forums, and will prepare the documentation of outcomes.

Baako will also be compiling a digital history of the beginnings of the Five County Organization before the creation of the Association of Governments in 1972. He is scanning historical minutes and other documents that will be a valuable addition to our archives.

Please welcome Baako when he calls for information or invites you to participate in the upcoming Public Forums. We look forward to sponsoring many future MPA interns here at the Association of Governments.

2008 Meeting Schedule

The Five County Association of Governments Steering Committee will meet in regular session in 2008 on the following schedule:

Meeting Date	Location
Wednesday January 16, 2008 1:00 p.m.	Five County AOG Conference Room 1070 W. 1600 S., Building B St. George, Utah
Wednesday February 13, 2008 1:00 p.m.	Kane Co. Courthouse Commission Chambers 76 North Main Street Kanab, Utah
Wednesday March 12, 2008 1:00 p.m.	Beaver Co. Admin. Building Conference Room 105 East Center Street Beaver, Utah
Wednesday April 9, 2008 1:00 p.m.	Parowan Library Meeting Room 16 South Main Street Parowan, Utah
Wednesday May 14, 2008 1:00 p.m.	Panguitch Library Council Chambers 25 South 200 East Panguitch, Utah
Wednesday June 11, 2008 1:00 p.m.	Kane Co. Courthouse Commission Chambers 76 North Main Street Kanab, Utah
Wednesday August 13, 2008 1:00 p.m.	Panguitch Library Council Chambers 25 South 200 East Panguitch, Utah
Wednesday September 17, 2008 1:00 p.m.	Beaver Co. Admin. Building Conference Room 105 East Center Street Beaver, Utah
Wednesday October 8, 2008 1:00 p.m.	Parowan Library Meeting Room 16 South Main Street Parowan, Utah
Wednesday November 19, 2008 1:00 p.m.	Five County AOG Conference Room 1070 W. 1600 S., Building B St. George, Utah

There are no regularly scheduled Board meetings in July or December. Any necessary location changes will be published one week prior to meetings.

UtahSaves & IRS VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA) PROGRAM

As we go about our daily lives, we plan on the things we need to do, the bills that need paying, items that need replacing. We think of what we will be doing at work, or school, at home, and at play. We plan a little on what we will be doing in a day, a month, or a year. How many of us plan on what we will be doing with our money in a day, a month, or a year, or maybe even in 5, 10 or 20 years? What will I be driving? Where will we be living? What will our children be doing to take care of their financial needs? The bigger question might be - have I taught them to take care of their own needs? What kind of employment will I have? Will I be able to work and provide for my needs and those of my family? Or will I be just sitting around waiting for someone else to take care of me or my family? What will my health be like? Will I be able to pay for some of these changes in my life?

It's time to stop wondering and make changes in your life that will protect you! Where is your savings plan? Do you have a savings plan for any one of the crises that might accrue?

Financial advisors, clerical advisors and debt counselors have been telling us since the GREAT DEPRESSION of the 1920's that we need to have some savings and a savings plan. Are we prepared for the BIG ONE? (Not the earth quake, but some of the above items could rock us just as badly, if not worse.) Let's start slow. Do we have an emergency fund to take care of our needs if the car has problems or we need a plumber? Can we pay to fix the car or the plumbing or do we whip out the old credit card and incur more debt and finance / service charges to fix the problem? What happens when Junior goes on a mission or off to college? Can we put that on a credit card? What do you plan to do when it's time to retire?

Financial advisors and debt counselors advise us to start saving now. Even, if we only start with \$5 a week by cutting down on our soft drink consumption or eating lunch out. A little planning on what we can cut out of our spending adds up. We can work up to the point where we are saving the suggested amount each month of 10% of what we earn. If we start slowly and steadily it's hard to notice the difference each week. It might help to remember that interest on savings is only 4% APR but the interest on debt can be anywhere from 19.4% to 585% APR. (The 585% APR is if you use a Payday Lender.)

Tax season is coming up soon and many of us qualify for EIC (Earned Income Credit). What a perfect time to start a savings plan! Start that little emergency fund in your name, and the name of each one of your children. This little bit of savings can really help when things get tight. Another great savings is the IRS - VITA program. This program enables IRS certified volunteer tax preparers to e-file your returns for you for **FREE**. Electronic filing with the IRS costs you nothing and you get your refund deposited into your bank account within 7 to 14 days or 14 to 20 days if you require a paper check instead. Watch your local Wal-Mart for dates and times or just dial 2-1-1. This information is brought to you by UtahSaves and VITA.

Third Annual Dixie Transportation Expo



The Transportation Expo is an annual event provided to foster interactive communications among the public and transportation related entities regarding current projects, upcoming projects, planning processes and general transportation information.

The public is invited to stop in at the Expo to provide your concerns or ideas regarding the many current and future transportation projects in the St. George area. If you use the local/state road systems or I-15, walk, ride a bicycle or use public transit, your opinions and feedback are valued and needed.

Informative displays and updates on current, planned and potential transportation projects will be available to you. Representatives of the Utah Department of Transportation, City of St. George, Dixie Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Hurricane City, Ivins City, Santa Clara City and Washington City will be on hand to answer questions and gather feedback from you.

The Expo will be held in the Dixie Center, 1835 South Convention Center Drive, St. George on Tuesday, February 5, 2008 between the hours of 11:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

For more information contact Marc Mortensen, St. George City, at 435-627-4005 or Myron Lee, UDOT, at 435-893-4702 or by visiting the Expo website www.dixietransportationexpo.com

Redhawk Homes at Springdale Ribbon Cutting Ceremony & Open House



It's been a long time coming, but get ready to celebrate in Springdale. On February 15th Color Country Community Housing, Inc. (CCCHI) will showcase Redhawk Homes at Springdale. CCCHI is a southwest

Utah-based 501(c)3 organization which was originally established by the Five County Association of Governments (FCAOG) as a community housing development organization. Redhawk Homes is a mixed-income, single-family community featuring affordable (hard debt: \$150K), moderate income (workforce housing, hard debt \$240K), and full market-rate homes. Five and one-half years from concept to certificate of occupancy, this first group of homes, built beneath the stunning cliffs of Zion Canyon, is finally ready. **(continued on back page)**

Redhawk Homes (continued from page 3)

Community Development Block Grant funds allocated by the FCAOG assisted in developing the necessary infrastructure for this development.

CCCHI is extending a special invitation to a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house in scenic Springdale. They are holding the open house to coincide with the St. George Area Parade of Homes, one of the nation's premier home shows (the Parade of Homes is scheduled for February 15th-24th). While the homes at Redhawk will be open for tours during the regular Parade of Homes hours, CCCHI specifically invites you to attend the Open House on Friday, February 15th from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be a special Ribbon-Cutting ceremony at 12:00 Noon on the 15th to officially kick off the celebration. CCCHI will utilize the ribbon-cutting ceremony as an opportunity to give thanks to the many individuals and agencies who have been instrumental in supporting this project, with both financial and moral support. Please mark your calendar and come out to Springdale on February 15th!

This is but one of the many projects of Color Country Community Housing, Inc. More information on this organization and those projects can be found on the web at: <http://www.ccchi.net>

Please submit articles to Diane Lamoreaux via e-mail (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, February 13, 2008, 1:00 p.m.
Kane County Courthouse
Commission Chambers
76 North Main Street; Kanab, UT

Wednesday, March 12, 2008, 1:00 p.m.
Beaver County Administration Building
Conference Room

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