



CENTRALINA REGIONAL COUNCIL

THE CENTRAL LINES

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UPCOMING EVENTS

May 10	Centralina Board of Delegates Meeting: FY24 Workplan
May 18	Centralina Learns: Strategy & Metrics for a Successful Annual Grant Plan
May 19	Centralina Subcommittee: Advancing the Plan Meeting
May 31	Centralina AAA Webinar Series: Beyond Driving with Dignity
June 8	Centralina Learns: Mobility, Energy & Environmental Justice
June 13	Centralina AAA Webinar Series: How to Be a Disability Ally

CAPITOL CORNER

**The Energy Efficiency and Conservation
Block Grant Program**



The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program is a one-time allocation of \$550 million, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, available to states, local governments and tribes for energy efficiency and conservation projects. The U.S. Department of Energy is currently accepting applications for formula grants and for competitive grants. Funding can be used for

a wide variety of projects that lower energy costs, reduce carbon emissions and energy use and improve energy efficiency. Project investments include clean energy strategic plans, building audits and retrofits, electric vehicles (EV) and EV infrastructure, distributed energy technology, street lighting replacement, renewable energy resources and more.

[Learn More](#)

Centralina Annual All-Staff Retreat



On April 24th, Centralina staff gathered together at TechWorks Gaston for our annual all-staff retreat to build meaningful connections with one another, collaborate on ideas to enhance our #OneCentralina culture and plan for FY24. We look forward to implementing these recommendations in the new fiscal year to continue our efforts to expand opportunity and improve quality of life.

FEATURED ARTICLES

*The Transportation Issue:
Celebrating National Mobility Month*



May is mobility awareness month, a time to bring attention to the millions of Americans living with mobility limitations. According to the [CDC](#), one in four U.S. adults – 61 million Americans – have a disability that impacts major life activities. The most common disability type, mobility, affects one in seven adults. We need to find solutions to help our neighbors and visitors easily get where they need to go. Mobility issues shouldn't stop anyone from getting to their destination.

We are committed to leading regional transportation and mobility initiatives like [CONNECT Beyond](#) to ensure our regional transportation and mobility systems work harmoniously, making the greater Charlotte area more equitable and economically competitive. Centralina's subcommittee, Advancing the Plan, meets bimonthly to steward regional conversation and action that advances plan implementation (see [this flyer](#) for implementation updates). Read more about mobility in our region below and be sure to check out our [mobility-themed articles](#) on our website including [Transit as a Women's Issue](#) and [Navigating Post Pandemic Transportation](#).

Supporting the Deployment of Clean Transportation in NC

For decades, the United States has been working to move past its dependence on fossil fuels. One of these earliest efforts to move the nation towards cleaner transportation options started with the Energy Policy Act of 1992, which aimed to reduce the country's dependence on petroleum and improve air quality. The act established the Department of Energy's Clean Cities program, which created coalitions around the country that, to this day, work in their local communities to help evaluate transportation needs, grow the use of cleaner fuels and vehicles, improve fuel efficiency and reduce harmful emissions. Today, there are more than 75 coalitions including the [Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition](#) (CCFC), which is housed within Centralina Regional Council. This article highlights the efforts made on the state level to help promote cleaner transportation and how CCFC is furthering these initiatives in our region.



[Learn More About Clean Transportation](#)

[Transportation Resources](#)

Centralina Area Agency on Aging has a variety of mobility resources on its website and a video mini-series that covers:

- Transportation Challenges, Barriers and Considerations
- AARP Resources for Older Drivers
- How to Find Transportation Options in North Carolina

The following mobility themed Centralina Learns sessions for local governments are available on our **Member Portal**:

- Transportation in a Post-Pandemic World
- Transportation Demand Management
- Creating Mobility-Friendly Places
- Mobility Hubs 101: Creating a Successful Hub

Supporting the Code Enforcement Needs of Small Towns: A Weddington Success Story

Most communities in our region do not have the need or financial resources for full-time code enforcement staff. To help support these local governments, Centralina offers on-call staff from the Centralina Community Economic Development (CED) department. Read how our team helped the Town of Weddington handle a recent violation and how CED can help your community enforce code compliance.

[More About Code Enforcement](#)

CEDS Executive Summary

The region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a five-year strategy that guides priorities for economic development and outlines a coordinated growth approach that builds on the region's strengths, addresses barriers to future growth, prioritizes key regional industry clusters and emphasizes collaboration. It is primarily a roadmap for the public sector – local governments, county economic development organizations, workforce development boards, community colleges and universities – but relies heavily on collaboration with and action by the private sector. Want to learn more about the three goals without reading the **full 66-page report?** Check out our Executive Summary.



Greater Charlotte Region's
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
2023 – 2028

PROSPERITY FOR ALL
Executive Summary



[View the CEDS Executive Summary](#)

Centralina AAA Develops Resources to Address Transportation Issues and Expand Options

As our region grows, our population is also aging, which adds increased demands on public, private and



volunteer transportation options. According to the American Journal of Public Health, individuals can expect to live between six to 10 years retired from driving, so access to transportation is of particular importance for older and disabled adults. In fact, transportation is regularly identified among the top unmet needs among older and disabled adults. In response,

Centralina Area Agency on Aging (AAA) developed a variety of resources to increase awareness of this unmet need as well as link consumers to appropriate transportation alternatives. In honor of National Older Americans Month and National Mobility Month, we're highlighting these timely resources that showcase our ongoing commitment to promoting transportation considerations that affect older and disabled adults.

[Learn More About Our Transportation Resources](#)

Building an Age-Friendly North Carolina

Last week, leaders from the aging field were invited to Raleigh for Governor Cooper's signing of **Executive Order No. 280** aimed at building an age-friendly state. Part of this order focuses on implementing transportation projects that improve the coverage, quality, reliability and convenience of public transportation to create connected communities with diverse transportation options. Centralina Area Agency on Aging Director Linda Miller was in attendance and remarked, "I am grateful to have been part of this historic moment. The Executive Order issued by Governor Cooper will continue to put aging issues and our North Carolina older adult population in the spotlight. The Area Agencies on Aging in the state are thrilled that we will have renewed focus on such important topics as caregiving, transportation, digital access and nutrition services. An age-friendly designation makes our communities assess not only where we are as far as livable for an older adult today, but also helps us to plan our direction for the future as more and more North Carolinians turn 60 each day."



Rufty-Holmes: 35 Years of Excellence



Senior Centers provide older adults a space to make friends, remain active and improve their wellbeing through a variety of programs and services. They also offer a critically important service to older adults who may struggle to stay socially engaged and remain connected to their community. Rufty-Holmes Senior Center in Salisbury recently invited staff from Centralina Area Agency on Aging to celebrate 35 years of excellent service and showcase their recent national reaccreditation.

[Read the Full Recap](#)

Centralina Helps Career Seekers Secure Employment and Transportation

Access to transportation options is critical to enhancing the quality of life of residents throughout our region. Without it, individuals may struggle to attain essential goods and services they need to thrive. A group that is particularly affected by the lack of options is workers and job seekers. Learn how Centralina Workforce Development Board's NCWorks Center and other partners helped one job seeker find reliable transportation to help them grow and advance their career path.

[Read Maurice's Story](#)

Service Spotlight: Land Use Planning & 160D Compliance



Land use planning provides communities with an opportunity to integrate land use practice with other local priorities such as transportation connectivity, parks and recreation, infrastructure investment and economic development. Land use planning efforts can also illuminate areas where more focused efforts may be necessary. Click

[HERE](#) to watch a video about the customized land use plans and code updates that Centralina Regional Planning provides to local communities across our region.

Helping Gastonia Hire Its New Police Chief

Selecting the ideal candidate for a new or open position is crucial for local governments, particularly when those in the role have extensive responsibility that can shape the direction of a department or the organization as a whole. One of the services Centralina Regional Council offers to its members is hiring and promotional assessment centers, which measure a variety of job-related competencies to help narrow down candidates and select the best fit for the job. When the City of Gastonia reached out for assistance in hiring a new Chief of Police, our Human Resources and Government Affairs & Member Engagement team were ready to assist.



[Read the Full Success Story](#)

Region of Excellence Award Winner Spotlight: City of Albemarle Firefighter Academy



The Region of Excellence Award for Cross-Community Collaboration honors government, nonprofit and or private entities that work together to leverage their resources and skills to combat a widespread problem in their community. This past year, the City of Albemarle was honored for their efforts to establish the City of Albemarle Firefighter Cadet Academy. This endeavor, created in partnership with Stanly Community College and Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, effectively demonstrates the value of aligning forces to achieve better outcomes for those in the community.

[Learn More About the Firefighter Academy](#)

New Member Spotlight: Town of Love Valley

Have you ever wanted to wander the streets of the western towns you see in movies? It may seem like a Hollywood dream, but you may not know that a cowboy capital exists right here in our region. Check out our new member spotlight on the Town of Love Valley to learn more about the history of this cowboy paradise and what you need to know ahead of time before planning a visit.



[Learn Why You Should Visit Love Valley](#)

IN THE NEWS

Grants Opportunity: NC Homeowner Assistance Fund

The North Carolina Homeowner Assistance Fund (NCHAF) provides assistance to homeowners experiencing delinquency due to a financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. The fund helps address mortgage and/or other qualified home ownership-related delinquencies to avoid default, foreclosure or displacement. North Carolina homeowners may apply [online](#). Contact the NCHAF call center at 855-696-2423 or outreach@nchaf.org with questions.

Grants Opportunity: Preserving African-American History

This [list](#) includes grants specifically related to the preservation of African American history, including documentation, preservation and restoration of

sites and events, education, historical records collection, research and more. Opportunities included pertain to museum and museum collection grants, as well as capital investments for the preservation of physical sites.



Celebrate National Bike Month & National Mobility Month: Save the Date for the NC BikeWalk Transportation Summit (Sept. 14-16)

Hosted by BikeWalk NC, the annual NC BikeWalk Transportation Summit is a multi-day conference focusing on the safety, health, community design and equity dimensions of active mobility. Featuring nationally and regionally recognized presenters and interactive, "hands on" tools and experiences, this year's Summit is sure to be full of impactful lessons and strategies attendees can bring back to their own communities. The Summit will be held in person and virtually on **September 14-16**, and in-person activities will be hosted at Catawba College in our member jurisdiction of Salisbury. Be sure to save the date and monitor the [Summit homepage](#) for more information about registration and the agenda!



Trails as Mobility: Celebrate Our Region's Trails

In honor of National Mobility Month, we continue the year-long celebration of [North Carolina's Year of the Trail!](#) Trails and greenways provide the foundation for our state's vast recreation system and they're vital for communities as well. In fact, trails and greenways provide critical transportation connections in communities across our region, [all while bolstering health, economic vitality and sense of place](#). The Year of the Trail effort encourages communities statewide to plan events throughout this year celebrating the importance of trails to residents and visitors alike.

Want to support trails and all they do for mobility and recreation across our region? As National Trail Day approaches on **Saturday, June 3**, consider planning an event for your jurisdiction using [the Year of the Trail toolkit](#) or support planned events across the region, like [Mount Holly's National Trails Day Celebration](#) and the [Rocky River Trail Hike in Concord](#).

RFP: Brownfields Program

Centralina is now accepting Requests for Proposals for Brownfields Project Assistance. This partnership will help to prepare our organization and our local government members for a 2023 Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment application. Proposals must be submitted by May 15, 2023 no later than 3:00 p.m. EST. Learn more and view the RFP [here](#).

[View Centralina Job Opportunities](#)

[Access the Member Portal](#)



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