



CENTRALINA

REGIONAL COUNCIL

THE CENTRAL LINES

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UPCOMING EVENTS

May 30 Partner Event: [Community Economic Development - A Refresher on Economic Development Incentives](#)

June 4 Centralina Learns: [Connecting Clean Transportation & Affordable Housing](#)

CENTRALINA Region of Excellence Awards



Our region is bustling with innovative local governments, collaboration between communities and initiatives that create stronger, prosperous places for people. Centralina's annual Region of Excellence Award seeks to recognize and celebrate these outstanding community successes that support Centralina's mission of expanding opportunities and improving quality of life. Local governments are asked to nominate an innovative project, program, plan or individual that has contributed to positive advancements in the regional community for 2023 and/or 2024. An independent panel of judges then reviews and selects winners across several categories. Award winners are recognized in front of their peers, creating an

opportunity for best practice sharing, relationship building and celebration of our region's successes.

The nomination period opens **June 10th**.

[View the Flyer to Learn More](#)

FEATURED ARTICLES

Bessemer City's Stinger Park is in Full Swing



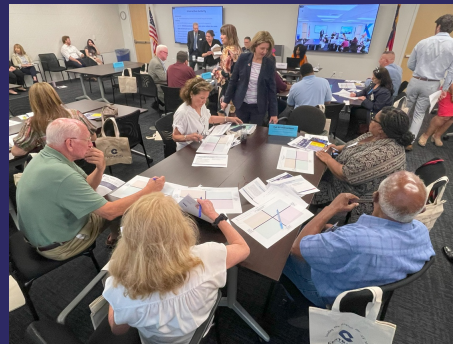
On August 11, 2023, Stinger Park was buzzing with more than just late-summer heat. It was the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new park, and it was buzzing with people, too. With excitement, people of all ages explored the new facility, which has baseball and softball fields, multipurpose fields, tennis courts, pickle ball courts, a cornhole area, shaded picnic spaces, scenic nature trails, jungle gyms, a splashpad, and so much more. After years of planning, McGill Associates, PA helped bring the City of Bessemer City's vision to life by providing electrical, planning, design, funding assistance and construction support for the project.

[Learn How McGill Helped Bessemer City](#)

McGill is a sponsor of our Centralina Learns professional development series

Reinventing Regional Convenings in the Post-Pandemic Era

The COVID-19 pandemic presented organizations with a challenge when it came to holding meetings. As a convener, much of Centralina Regional Council's work involves bringing people together. During the nearly two years that we were unable to hold in-person meetings and events, Zoom and other virtual platforms provided a suitable alternative for engaging with our members, partners and other stakeholders. Keep reading to learn what's changed since the pandemic, how to choose the best meeting format for your event and the impact of different approaches.



[Read About Convening Best Practices](#)

Coordinate Our Future

Coordinate our Future is a coordinated, region-wide, replicable and documented process to produce the best available geo-located future population and employment growth forecasts. The data collected through Coordinate Our Future determines the outputs of the Metrolina Regional Model that are being used for the development of the 2055 Metropolitan Transportation Plans being developed by Transportation Planning Organizations in the region.

Through the Coordinate Our Future process, Centralina Regional Council has worked with local governments to collect and verify data on adopted growth policies, land carrying capacity and suitability, development attractors, planned infrastructure and more. By using local government policies including adopted comprehensive land use plans, Coordinate Our Future provides detailed, accurate information on the current and planned patterns of development in the project study area. Stakeholders in the process have included Transportation Planning Organization staff, local government planners and GIS officials, the development community and regional modeling and planning staff.

Bridging the Digital Divide

In today's world, 92% of jobs require digital literacy skills. Unfortunately, in North Carolina, many lack internet access or cannot afford the required subscription or equipment. Many also lack digital literacy skills and are unable to benefit from services like telehealth, online educational courses or online job boards. Creating digital access is an essential first step in tackling digital barriers to support economic mobility and prosperity for all. Digital skills result in greater access to employment and higher wages, which leads to greater economic vitality for our region. Recognizing that a regional approach is critical to closing the digital divide, Centralina partnered with NC Department of Information and Technology and the Institute for Emerging Issues at NC State University to improve broadband access and equity in our region through a program called the Building a New Digital Economy in North Carolina or BAND-NC. Continue reading to learn how Centralina plans to help.

[Learn About Digital Inclusion Planning](#)

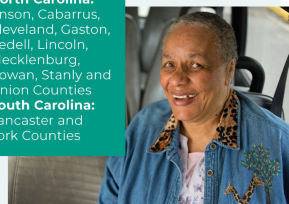
Addressing Barriers to Ridesharing Among Older Adults

In 2015, the CONNECT Our Future regional growth plan identified transportation choice as a key priority for the region. By highlighting the need for increased transportation options, CONNECT our Future served as the catalyst to a more focused regional transit plan. CONNECT Beyond, our region's first mobility plan, was adopted in 2021 and contains five objectives "mobility moves." Some of these mobility moves include creating mobility-friendly places, expanding mobility choices and strengthening rural to urban connections. In 2024, transportation remains a top need for older adults and people with disabilities across the region. In response, the Centralina planning and aging departments partnered together on mobility management efforts (funded through a 5310 grant from the Charlotte Area Transit System) to address

Transportation Guide

FOR OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

North Carolina:
Anson, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union Counties
South Carolina:
Lancaster and York Counties



CENTRALINA
Area Agency on Aging

www.CentralinaAging.org

transportation needs for older adults and people with disabilities. This effort included the development of a rideshare study and rideshare resources for older adults and people with disabilities.

[Read the Full Article](#)

NCWorks Career Center-Cabarrus Helps Customer Achieve His Career Goal



Jose' Villa Gomez came into the NCWorks Career Center-Cabarrus in Concord looking for employment and needed assistance with his resume. At the time he was employed with a temporary agency working 3rd shift as a welder making \$16.50 per hour, which was not enough to be self-sufficient. He had the desire to find permanent employment and an ultimate career goal of becoming a general contractor. Keep reading to learn

how NCWorks helped.

[Read the Full Success Story](#)

New Member Spotlight: China Grove

Charm, hospitality and vibrancy. These are the words that spring to mind when anyone takes the time to venture through the heart of China Grove, North Carolina. Located in Rowan County, between the Town of Landis and the City of Salisbury, the Town of China Grove had its first settlement as early as 1710 and was referred to as Savits Mill and Lutherville before becoming China Grove, named after the grove of chinaberry trees located next to the community's train depot. Keep reading to learn more about our new member community.



Photo curtesy of Visit Rowan

[Plan Your Visit to China Grove](#)

IN THE NEWS

Congratulations!

Michelle Nance Receives the Planning Profession's Highest Honor

[Michelle Nance](#), Deputy Executive Director at Centralina, was selected to receive the prestigious title of American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Fellow for her outstanding achievements in urban and regional planning.



Fellowship is granted to planners who have achieved certification through the American Planning Association's professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, and have achieved excellence in professional practice, teaching and mentoring, research, public and community service and leadership.

Fellows are selected after a thorough nomination and review process, ensuring the nominee has had a positive, long-lasting impact on the planning profession. "Members who have earned the FAICP designation are the true leaders of the planning profession," said Karen Wolf, AICP President.

Michelle is a transformative leader, skilled in building strong collaborative, cross-sector partnerships in the Charlotte region. Michelle's work to develop and implement the Charlotte metro's first growth framework, CONNECT Our Future, and regional mobility plan, CONNECT Beyond, led to coordinated investments and mobility projects, critical in a fast-growing region. Her leadership in healthy communities planning and body of work connecting transportation and land use in practice have cemented her legacy in the profession. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!



Congratulations!

Mayor Pro Tem Martha Sue Hall Named North Carolina League of Municipalities Vice President

Martha Sue Hall was elected the first female vice president of the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM). She was first elected to the Albemarle City Council in November 2003 and now is in her 20th year as a municipal elected official. Mayor Pro Tem Hall also served on the Stanly

County Board of Commissioners from 1994-2000, having been elected as the first female to that board. She has served on the Centralina Board of Delegates for over 20 years, having held numerous leadership positions. She is currently serving as Mayor Pro Tem, having been elected by her peers on the council to serve in this role since 2015. Learn more about her decades of local government experience by reading this [NCLM interview](#).

Centralina Awarded Largest Brownfields Grant in the State

The U.S. EPA announced over \$300 million in grant awards to help local governments and others clean up polluted brownfield sites across the country. These investments will help transform once-polluted, vacant and abandoned properties into community assets, while helping to create good jobs and spur economic revitalization in overburdened communities. Centralina will lead implementation of the Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant for our region. Grant funds will be used to conduct 46 environmental site assessments, develop 12 cleanup plans and support community engagement activities. The focus areas will be on textile mill villages in the Town of Spencer and the Cities

of Mount Holly and Albemarle.

Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program

The Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program, offered through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is a competitive grant program that focuses on building networks of connected bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, including providing better trail networks between communities. As part of the program, FHWA will award grant funding to help communities plan, design or construct safe and connected active transportation networks, such as sidewalks, bikeways and trails. Visit this [webpage](#) to learn more about the program and see how your community may be able to apply for funding. Final Application Deadline: June 17, 2024

[View Centralina Job Opportunities](#)

[Access the Member Portal](#)



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