

COUNTY PLANNING



American Planning Association
County Planning Division
Making Great Communities Happen

A Publication of the County Planning Division
of the American Planning Association

Volume 3, Issue 1

March 2010

New Orleans is just around the corner.

The County Planning Division has the following events scheduled in New Orleans.

ANNUAL MEETING: April 11, 2010, Sunday 11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. (X008)

SPONSORED SESSION: April 11, 2010, Sunday 4:00 – 5:15 p.m. Siting a Wind Farm (S476)

Other sessions: April 13, 2010, Tuesday 7:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. Building the Digital Coast (S560)

April 11, 2010, Sunday, 7:30 – 8:30 a.m. Successful County Projects (S417)

OUR MISSION: The County Planning Division of the APA seeks to strengthen relationships among county planners, county elected officials, and other county personnel by facilitating the sharing of technical information, encouraging continuing professional development of its members, researching county planning organizations and disciplines with related interests.

From the Chair: I would like to start off by congratulating our Immediate Past Chair Charlie Compton for the honor of being inducted as a Fellow of AICP next month in New Orleans.

The County Planning Division is hard at work preparing for the Annual Conference. In this newsletter you will find information on various conference sessions of particular relevance to County Planners. You will also find information about our first ever, County Planning Awards. All award recipients have been invited to make a presentation at the Divisions annual business meeting, which is scheduled for 11:45 in the Newberry Room of the Hilton New Orleans Riverside. All Division members and potential new members are invited to join us for the meeting and lunch. I hope to see you there.

Dennis Sandquist, Chairman

HEAD SOUTH TO THE DELTA

American Planning Association's
2010 National Planning Conference
Saturday, April 10–Tuesday, April 13
New Orleans



American Planning Association
Making Great Communities Happen

www.planning.org/conference

NEWSLETTER Schedule

SPRING

Submittal deadline: March 15

SUMMER

Submittal deadline: June 15

FALL

Submittal deadline: September 15

WINTER

Submittal deadline: December 15

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION: This newsletter is published by the County Planning Division of the American Planning Association. Circulation is to the APA members of the County Planning Division (CPD). The CPD Executive Committee welcomes submission of original articles, editorial letters, and any other information of interest to County planners. Submissions should be made to the newsletter editor:

CPD Newsletter Editor

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County Planner Profile **Short profiles of our members**

County/Employer: Lexington County,
South Carolina

Name: Charlie Compton, AICP

Job Title: Director of Planning and GIS

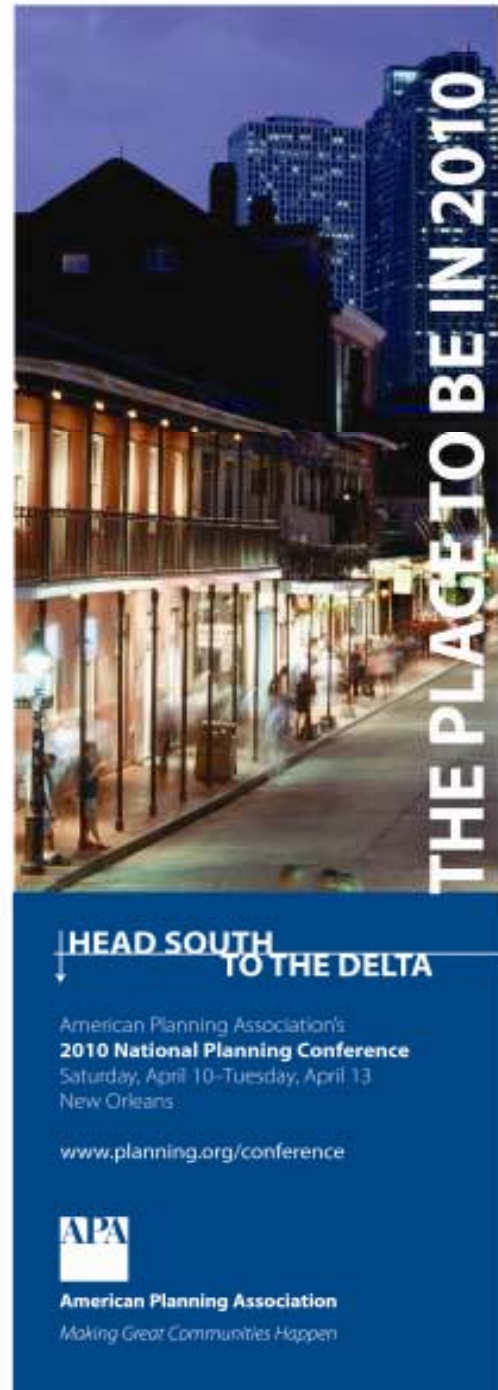
Years in position: 36 years

Education: Bachelor of Science in
Architecture and a Master of City and
Regional Planning from Clemson University.

**What did you do before going into
planning?** U.S. Army, 1968-1970, during
which time Clemson University created a
graduate planning program in the College of
Architecture.

**Is your county considered urban or
rural?** 270,000 people covering 755 square
miles; adjacent to the state capital; a
wonderful mix of urban, suburban, and rural
landscapes.

**Accomplishments during your current
position:** Even with a reputation as a
conservative county, the Lexington County
Council has taken a very progressive
approach to planning issues such as
performance standards/zoning, citizen input,
sediment and erosion control, mixed use
development, flood and storm water
management, water quality, air quality,
landscaping, signage, scenic corridors,
open space, and the use of technology.



COUNTIES IN THE NEWS

Webinar explores wildfire protection, insurance availability

By **Cindy Wasser**
COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

Wildfire risk, insurance availability and approaches to property protection were the focus of a recent NACo webinar for county officials and fire professionals from across the nation.

Wildfires annually clear 4 million to 5 million acres of land in the U.S., according to the Wildland Fire Leadership Council. One-hundred million people in the continental United States now live in areas known as the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) — places where residential development is mixed with forests and wildlands, according to researchers at Oregon State University.

Recent trends show wildfires are increasing in intensity, duration, and property and financial loss. The webinar, intended primarily for fire directors, county planners and emergency managers, looked at the risks wildfires pose for residents and business owners, the role of insurance in wildfire mitigation and the role that county officials play in certifying that appropriate property protection practices are being implemented.

Brenda O'Connor, senior vice president of public affairs, Institute for Business and Home Safety, kicked off the webinar — “Wildfire 360: Planning, Inspecting and Insurance Costs” — by providing an overview of wildfire risk nationwide and the importance of wildfire mitigation measures.

O'Connor presented a series of property protection efforts that can reduce the potential for and severity of future property and financial losses caused by wildfire. County or city building codes can be adopted to encourage the replacement of roofing materials with fire-resistant alternatives and the use of dual-pane window glass. “Homeowners,” O'Connor noted, “should keep flammable objects and yard structures away from their home, including play structures, firewood piles and woody plants. These items act as virtual wicks when wildfire approaches a home and brings the fire right to the house.”

The next presenter, Carole Walker, executive director of the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association, discussed the role that insurance companies have in reducing current wildfire property risk.

Financial losses from wildfire are currently not as substantial as some other insured disasters, such as hurricanes or tornadoes, but since there is huge potential for devastating wildfire losses across the U.S., insurance companies are putting more emphasis on mitigation requirements. Residents living in high-risk wildfire areas who don't implement any mitigation approaches are increasingly having a more difficult time finding and keeping affordable homeowners' insurance. She noted that insurance providers look forward to strengthening their relationships with local government and stakeholder partnerships to educate residents about the value of insurance and the need for wildfire mitigation.

Walker also reminded webinar participants that insurance premiums are based on weather patterns and claim trends over long periods of time. A single wildfire or natural disaster will not directly affect one's premium.

Closing out the formal presentations were Kurt Latipow and Adrian Freund from Washoe County, Nev., who discussed how their county's elected officials, planners and fire officials worked together to certify that appropriate property protection practices were being implemented.

Freund, community development director, and Latipow, fire services coordinator, talked about the 2009 International WUI Code, which local governments can include in their codes to help reduce wildfire risk in key high-risk areas. Freund noted that community-wide discussions about wildfire protection allow all residents and stakeholder groups to become informed and provide input.

Webinar participants were engaged and asked many thought-provoking and challenging questions of the speaker panel, including questions about the market for insurance companies to use incentives and fee reductions to encourage fire mitigation, what happens when a neighbor neglects to clear their property and damages another's home, and what would happen to insurance rates if emergency personnel refused to fight wildland fires due to the increased threat to their lives.

The “Wildfire 360” webinar was sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management and organized by NACo's Wildfire Advisory Group.

To access a recording of this Web event, visit www.naco.org/webinars.
For more information about wildfire mitigation, visit www.naco.org/wildfire.
Article also published in the January 18, 2010 issue of NACo's *County News*.

COUNTIES IN THE NEWS

NEWS RELEASE

Dick Goldsmith, Pipeline Safety Trust
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dick@pstrust.org

Planning Near Pipelines –Valuable Land-Use Planning Tools Are Now On-line

With the launch of a web page called ***Planning Near Pipelines***, there is now available in one place a wide range of resources so that development proposed for lands near large gas and oil pipelines can be carried out with the least risk to both the public and the pipelines.

On-line at <http://mrsc.org/subjects/pubsafe/transpipes.aspx>, ***Planning Near Pipelines*** is an important source of information for local government officials, land use planners, developers, pipeline operators, attorneys, emergency responders, and other stakeholders. Here is where to learn about good land use practices that can be put in place before residential, commercial, or public development is considered for an area where a large pipeline already exists.

This web page is just one component of a federally-funded project awarded to the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) and its partners to improve land use planning practices near pipelines. Over the next year, local governments in Washington State will be able to obtain free technical assistance to help them understand and implement these practices. The project will also include publication of electronic newsletters, the hosting of an on-line discussion group, and presentations to Washington State stakeholder organizations.

Among the on-line resources are a series of practical and optional steps—Recommended Practices—that local governments, developers, pipeline operators and others should consider before proposals to develop land near pipelines are drawn up. These Recommended Practices, which were developed by the Pipelines and Informed Planning Alliance (PIPA), are in the final stages of adoption. PIPA is a task force of stakeholders brought together by the federal government from across the nation to help rapidly-growing communities resolve land use issues as they expand into areas that were sparsely populated when large gas and oil pipelines were built.

Other resources available on the ***Planning Near Pipelines*** web page include sample ordinances for implementing some of the Recommended Practices, as well as on-line links to laws, regulations, organizations, and governmental agencies involved with pipeline safety and land use planning.

Although free technical assistance is available only to Washington State local governments, everyone is encouraged to subscribe to the electronic newsletter or join the on-line discussion group. For further information about the grant activities, contact these grant partners: Municipal Research and Services Center (jdoherty@mrsc.org) or the Pipeline Safety Trust (info@pstrust.org).

In addition to MRSC and PST, other AWC project partners are the Northwest Gas Association, the Washington State Association of Counties, the Washington State Citizens' Committee on Pipeline Safety, and the Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission.

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**This space is available for your County Planning related news.
Please send us your articles and Press Releases.**

COUNTIES IN THE NEWS



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-1300 • Voice: (202) 720-4623 • Email: oc.news@usda.gov • Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

Release No. 0620.09

Contact:
Forest Service Press Office (202) 205-1134

USDA FOREST SERVICE LAUNCHES COLLABORATIVE PROCESS FOR NEW PLANNING RULE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17, 2009-Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that the USDA Forest Service is beginning an open, collaborative process to create and implement a modern planning rule to address current and future needs of the National Forest System, including restoring forests, protecting watersheds, addressing climate change, sustaining local economies, improving collaboration, and working across landscapes. The Forest Service will publish a notice of intent (NOI) in the Federal Register tomorrow, December 18, to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to develop a new planning rule that will provide a framework for management of national forests and grasslands.

"Our National Forests and Grasslands are great natural treasures that we must conserve and restore for the benefit of future generations," said Secretary Vilsack. "Developing a new planning rule provides the opportunity to manage national forests and grasslands for the benefit of water resources, the climate and local communities."

The Forest Service is seeking public involvement in developing a new direction for local land managers. A 60-day comment period on the NOI will begin upon publication in the Federal Register on Friday, December 18, 2009. Comments will be used to shape the focus of the collaborative dialogue and creation of a proposed rule.

To begin the conversation, the Forest Service has included in the NOI a set of potential principles that could guide development of a new planning rule. The potential principles include an emphasis on restoration, conservation, and the improved resilience of ecosystems; watershed health; climate change response; species diversity and wildlife habitat; sustainable National Forest System lands; proactive collaboration; and working across landscapes.

The Forest Service will use state-of-the-art new media tools in conjunction with face-to-face interaction to facilitate wide public participation throughout the nation. Please visit www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule to participate in our web-based planning rule blog, and to learn more.

The 2000 planning rule, which allows the Forest Service to use provisions of the 1982 planning rule, is currently the rule that is legally in effect. As an interim measure, the Department will republish in the Federal Register the 2000 planning rule as amended in order to make it available to the public in the Code of Federal Regulations. This action will facilitate its use by forests and grasslands in the National Forest System to revise and amend plans while a new rule is being developed.

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages the 193 million acres of National Forest System land, provides stewardship assistance to non-federal forest landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world.

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

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COUNTIES IN THE NEWS

FROM: Judy Francis, AICP

Chairperson, County Planning Division and National Association of County Planners Awards Committee

DATE: March 18, 2010

County Planning Awards

The County Planning Division is recognizing the following planning initiatives with achievement awards in New Orleans at the County Planning Division's ANNUAL MEETING on April 11, 2010.

Mountain Landscapes Initiative: The Mountain Landscapes Initiative is a consortium of seven counties in rural western North Carolina, most of which have never undertaken land use planning before. The project produced a "tool box" of planning techniques to address issues of concern that were identified through an extensive and creative public input process that utilized charrettes, videos, drop-in sessions, satellite work sessions, and an elaborate website. The project has particularly high levels of transferability and has attracted implementation funding from a variety of sources.

Gwinnett County, GA: Gwinnett County, located in the greater Atlanta area, has a very ambitious and detailed unified plan that incorporated excellent data and implementation steps to address a variety of issues that this high-growth area currently faces. The committee was particularly impressed with the scope of the project, as well as the outreach efforts including the website. The project also has high levels of transferability – there is something for everyone in this "epic" plan!

Gaston County, NC: The committee had a number of applications from counties attempting to consolidate various ordinances in a "UDO." Though all the applications we reviewed had admirable qualities, the one we received from Gaston County really outlined a process that we thought would be useful for other counties to consider. Located in the high-growth area just outside of Charlotte, this county recognizes its need to move ahead, while retaining the history and character through creative implementation of planning principles and public participation.

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**This space is available for your County Planning related news.
Please send us your articles and Press Releases.**

Important Contact Information

Feel free to contact any of the following individuals with your ideals and suggestions, as well as your willingness to volunteer to assist the Division in any capacity:

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