Linking to Resources and Rides: 
It’s All About Access!

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Our Region

- Two-thirds of our population lives in unincorporated, rural areas.
- 13% of our population is elderly and 24% have a disability.
- Unemployment in three counties is above 12%, and in our poorest county it tops 24%.
- 5 of 6 counties are “health professional shortage areas.”
Human Services Department

• Includes Regional....
  – Area Agency on Aging
  – Aging and Disability Resource Center
  – Transportation Coordination, Development and Enhancement programs
  – New Travel Management Coordination Center

We are passionate about working to find new ways to help people live better lives!
What Are We Doing?

• For the past eight years, our Human Services Department has worked to help make it easier for people to access information, resources, opportunities AND a way to get to them!

• Focus is on
  – older adults, adults with disabilities, family members caring for loved ones and people who need transportation
  – building a transit network to serve the region
What Do We Offer Now?

• A one-call information, referral, assistance and short-term case management center (Aging and Disability Resource Center – ADRC)

• Information specialists to give unbiased information and help with benefits and problem solving to older adults, adults with disabilities and their family members – in person or by ‘phone

• Mobility managers (like a travel agent/case manager!) to help people find and schedule transportation

• Linkage to Transit Services (now in all six counties!)
What We’re Adding

- A Travel Management Coordination Center (TMCC), as one of three national grantees under the United We Ride/Mobility Services for All Americans initiative of USDOT.
- It will integrate with our ADRC one-call center for human services information and assistance.
- This center will offer more mobility management services to help people link to rides and provide coordination among a network of autonomous human service and public transit providers.
Where We Started…

• In 2001...
  – Only 2 counties had public transportation
  – No regional transit service delivery or coordination structure
  – Lots of need, no coordination
  – No “leader” for change
How Did We Get Here?

• Nine years ago SCDOT designated us as the state’s first regional coordination lead agency and gave us on-going funding to carry out coordination and transportation development work.

• Formed a Regional Transportation Management Association (RTMA) in 2000, involving local elected officials and coordinating human service and public transit providing agencies.

• Brought key providers of human service and public transportation together to plan, work together, build trust and begin thinking as a TEAM!
The Power of Having a Vision...

• 2003 - partners group developed a **vision** for a one-call or one-click center to assist consumers in finding and arranging transportation AND a regionally, coordinated network of transportation providers, enabled by
  • appropriate technology
  • teamwork
THE VISION!!

• “In Lower Savannah RTMA, our transit system allows riders to travel seamlessly throughout our region, across our state and to neighboring states. Our infrastructure of compatible equipment, short client wait times, AVL systems, employer participation and regional computerized scheduling provides for designated transfer stations throughout the region and ties into rail and air travel. Information is accessible at a touch in transportation centers as well as related web sites. RMTA provides oversight and assists in securing sufficient funding for our operations. Our legislators understand and support our goal. We are the model for South Carolina.”

• Lower Savannah RTMA Partners, 2003
Our transit providers identified barriers and action steps to get from the status quo to the vision

Used this as a road map over the years that followed

Developed win-win solutions and outcomes

Built teamwork and trust

Worked hard to seek and acquire the resources to achieve the vision

Kept the “balls in the air” at BOTH the local and bigger picture levels
• Becoming SC’s 1\textsuperscript{st} Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), helped us to
  – Obtain part of the infrastructure necessary for the one-call center
  – Gain a reputation as “the place” to call for reliable information and assistance
  – Establish credibility to attract additional resources
• While pursuing the *regional* vision, LSCOG staff also focused on *local* transit development issues. One story...
• 4 of our 6 counties had no public transportation
• One of those, Allendale County is the smallest and poorest county in the region and in the state.
• Only 18 jobs each year turn over in the county.
• The population is about 73% minority, and nearly 35% live below the poverty level.
• The only employment transportation in the county was to a beach resort - 2.5 hours commute each way.
Allendale “Scooter”

- After nine months of facilitating local planning and strategizing, LSCOG helped local leaders to develop a new public transit system in Allendale County with **NO new vehicles**.

- The system used *existing* human service agency vehicles and travel patterns, filling available seats with passengers from the general public.

- It worked!
The Allendale “Scooter” & How It Works...

• Agencies found they could transport other passengers on their demand-response “routes” and agreed on a uniform reimbursement price per passenger mile.

• Local mobility manager answers calls from the public and matches them with participating agencies in the “Scooter” network – passenger buys tickets $2.00/10 miles and agency is reimbursed per passenger mile for non-client passengers.

• LSCOG helped to secure additional funding for operation costs.

• Mobility manager also handles billing and reimbursements.

• 109 new, regular riders can go anywhere the providers go – in or out of county to medical, work, shopping, etc. 95% trip request compliance – a big success!
Success Spreads

- The Scooter’s success led to more local requests for help!
- LSCOG helped to develop a similar system in Bamberg County, which shares a mobility manager with the Scooter.
- Worked for the past two years in our last two counties who lacked public transit
  - launched a similar model there in March
  - started with coordinated, demand response service
  - next month will initiate downtown area fixed route system, will incorporate service for four institutions of higher learning
  - Will link to a new commuter bus service into and out of our capital city.
- We are **building a regional network** of coordinating transportation providers to create capacity to meet current and future needs!
Back to the Big Picture...
Integrating ADRC and Mobility Management

• The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) gave SC 1 of 10 national Systems Transformation Grants in 2005.

• Enabled LSCOG to begin development of the Travel Management Coordination Center (TMCC).

• TMCC will be integrated with our ADRC to offer a LOT of help at one center!
Mobility Services for All Americans

• MSAA/ United We Ride Phase I Planning assistance (USDOT) came at the perfect time to meet our needs in technology planning

• We completed a technology design for the TMCC

• Phase II Implementation dollars will combine with other funds to make our vision a reality with the opening of the TMCC next year!
New Integrated Services

• These funds will provide the **technology equipment and mobility management staff** necessary to **implement** both the Travel Management Coordination Center (TMCC) and the coordinated transportation network of our 2003 **vision**!

• The integrated ADRC/TMCC will provide **human services and transit and mobility information and assistance and transit coordination**
• Regional Reservations, Scheduling & Dispatch System
• AVL / MDC - Real time vehicle location, service monitoring and data collection.
• Regional telephone network allows “virtual” center staffing
• Interactive Voice Response – Day Before Reminder, Pre Arrival Notification, Automated Reservations in user friendly format
• On Line Web Information and Reservations for Transportation Services
• Regional procedures shared among autonomous transit agencies
• Enhanced mobility management services integrated with Human Service IR&A
How will it help?

- One number to call for transportation
- Pick-up reminders and ride confirmation calls
- Where’s my ride information in real time
- Automated, timely weather and cancellation or change outbound communications
- Reduction in costly “no-shows”
- Ability to track vehicle/driver performance (on-time, speed, adherence to schedule, location by time, etc.)
- Mobility managers help consumers and service providers find and access transit resources
- Driver schedules flexible all day, communicated by on-board mobile computer
- Less advance time for reservations and ability to meet last-minute requests
- Less time on radio communications
- Accurate and streamlined service tracking and reporting
- Ability to coordinate trips among providers
- Less duplication and waste = more capacity for meeting unmet needs
- Filling more seats on vehicles means that transit providers can better contain costs
- Mobility managers help consumers and service providers find and access transit resources
Next Steps!

• Complete procurements, installations and training
• Expand our office space
• Kick-off March, 2010
• Quality monitoring and evaluation
• Additional efforts to build service to meet needs
• BETTER ACCESS FOR PEOPLE!
We LOVE what we do! If we can help your community...

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