

**EAST ALABAMA RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MEETING MINUTES
DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE - CENTRAL DISTRICT**

March 7, 2007 - 1:00 p.m.

East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission - Anniston

Members in Attendance:

Honorable Clem Lewis, Town of Oak Grove
Mr. DeJarvis Leonard, ALDOT Division 4
Mr. Bill Curtis, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Other Attendees:

Ms. Dawn Landholm, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission
Ms. Janet McCoy, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Mr. Bill Curtis welcomed everyone to this inaugural meeting of the East Alabama Rural Planning Organization's District Policy Committee for the Central District. The Rural Planning Organization, also called an RPO, is a new endeavor that is funded by the Alabama Department of Transportation. The Federal government has mandated that States initiate some process that will engage rural officials in the transportation planning process, which is a privilege the urban areas have enjoyed for about three decades through the Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Other States have implemented an RPO process for their rural areas, and Alabama has followed suit, engaging the Regions in the process.

Mr. Curtis then asked attendees to introduce themselves.

After the introductions, Ms. Dawn Landholm presented a brief overview of the RPO's background, structure, and functions. A synopsis of her presentation is attached to these minutes.

Mr. Curtis added that, while the RPO will not be able to direct the State in allocating transportation funds in the rural areas, members may be able to alert ALDOT's Division Engineer to safety projects that require immediate attention. Identifying and prioritizing safety projects has been one of the key functions of the West Alabama RPO, which was the pilot for Alabama's RPO process. He asked Mr. DeJarvis Leonard to explain what types of projects qualify for safety funds and how the RPO can help communicate local needs to the ALDOT Division office.

Mr. Leonard explained that safety projects would include such things as striping lanes, adding turn bays, modifying a curb at an intersection to improve turning movements. Each ALDOT Division has a small budget for safety projects, and the RPO

can help the Division determine how best to utilize those funds by gathering information about necessary safety projects, prioritizing those projects, and transmitting that information to ALDOT in a formal document. He added that if a safety project is critical to a community's public welfare and must be addressed more quickly than it would be under the RPO process, community officials can still contact him directly.

Attendance was not sufficient to conduct the next three items of business: election of officers; selection of one mayor from each county to serve on the Regional Policy Committee; and establishing a quarterly meeting schedule. Attendees agreed that this organization meeting should be rescheduled, with the hope of drawing greater attendance.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.