

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

*January 10, 2008 - 1:00 p.m.  
Gadsden Senior Center – Gadsden*

Members in Attendance:

Mr. Ed Mackey, Town of Leesberg  
Autry Works, Town of Walnut Grove

Other Attendees:

Mr. Johnny L. Harris, ALDOT (1<sup>st</sup> Division)  
Mr. Curtis Vincent, ALDOT (1<sup>st</sup> Division)  
Mr. Clint Andrews, Federal Highway Authority  
Mr. Shaun Capps, Federal Highway Authority  
Mr. Bill Curtis, Director of the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission  
Mr. Patrick Hall, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission  
Ms. Dawn Landholm, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Patrick Hall, acting as Chairman, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m.

The minutes were approved unanimously, with Mr. Works making the motion and Mr. Mackey providing the second.

There was no other old business.

Ms. Dawn Landholm, in staff reports, reminded everyone to please fill out and turn in their Technical Advisory Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee appointment forms. Ms. Landholm explained how those two committees also would serve as the Infrastructure Committee of the East Alabama Rural Action Commission. Ms. Landholm also notified members that she and M. Hall would be attending ALDOT's meeting concerning the Statewide Transportation Plan on January 28<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Harris of ALDOT's 1<sup>st</sup> Division then went over and explained the status of projects in the Five Year Plan in the East Alabama Rural Planning Organization—Northern District's four county area. These projects included:

- Interstate 59 reconstruction from Attalla to the DeKalb County line;
- Reconstruction of the bridge on Highway 411 between Gadsden and Turkeytown;
- Road striping and guardrails on select County Roads in Cherokee County;
- Extend Black Creek Parkway in Etowah County south to Steele Station Road;

- Resurfacing of Duck Springs Road from Highway 431 to DeKalb County;
- Resurfacing of Alabama Highway 68 from Highway 411 to Alabama Highway 9 in Cherokee County;
- Resurfacing of Alabama Highway 283 from Alabama Highway 9 to US Highway 411 in Cherokee County;
- Bridge construction over Little River Canyon in Cherokee County;
- Resurfacing and widening of US Highway 411 from Saint Clair County to Alabama Highway 77;
- Guardrails on various County Roads in Etowah County;
- Sidewalks in Cedar Bluff on Old Highway 9;
- Sidewalks in Centre along Highway 411 in the Downtown area;
- Riverfront enhancements in Gadsden;
- Bicycle path in Leesburgh;
- “Streetscaping” in Downtown Attalla;
- Industrial Access on Highway 273 for Pemco in Leesburg.

There were no motions or resolutions or other new business.

Under “Special Programs”, Ms. Landholm gave a presentation on one of the sessions she had attended at the National Rural Transportation Peer Learning Conference in September of 2007. A copy of the handout is attached. In summary:

- Iowa – Established RPOs in the early 1990s; because over 90% of all roads are local and county roads, RPOs function like a Metropolitan Planning Organization, preparing a long range transportation plan and annual work program and receiving State funding.
- Pennsylvania – Also established RPOs in the early 1990s; RPOs function like a Metropolitan Planning Organization, preparing a long range transportation plan and transportation improvement program.
- Kentucky – Established RPOs in the early 1990s; RPOs operate as a consultation process, but State DOT gradually has given them more influence; our RPO may want to emulate them in creating a vision statement, goals, and objectives, a Project Identification File, and an Unscheduled Projects List.
- Tennessee – Established fairly recently; started as a consultation process, but RPOs’ responsibilities have been expanding; RPOs have the authority to prioritize projects within their areas; the State DOT uses the RPO needs study when preparing plans for future projects.

Under “Open Discussion and Announcements”, there was discussion of how the various gasoline taxes, administered by the Federal government, State government, and local governments, are determined and distributed. Also, Mr. Works thanked Mr. Harris for the prompt response in putting signs at a dangerous horizontal curve along US Highway 278 in Walnut Grove.

Further, Mr. Bill Curtis mentioned that East Alabama would be drafting an Access Management Model Ordinance for the entire region, and would be using the problems being identified as a result of strong retail growth along US Highway 280 in the Southern District of the RPO as the “starting point”. This Model Ordinance, however, will be made applicable region-wide, and not focused particularly on the Highway 280 corridor. Mr. Harris agreed, and suggested this could lead to a statewide Access Management Plan, which is needed.

Ms. Landholm announced that the next meeting of the East Alabama Rural Planning Organization’s District Policy Committee for the Central District is scheduled for Thursday, May 8, 2008 at 1:30 p.m. in Cherokee County Administrative Center.

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