

**EAST ALABAMA RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MEETING MINUTES  
DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE & TECHNICAL ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE for the NORTHERN DISTRICT  
May 14, 2009 - 1:30 p.m.  
Cherokee County Administrative Building – Centre**

Members in Attendance:

Judge Melvyn W. Salter, Cherokee County Commission  
Mr. Corey Chambers, Cherokee County Highway Department  
Mr. Johnny L. Harris, ALDOT 1<sup>st</sup> Division  
Mr. Bill Curtis, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Other Attendees:

Mr. Ben Thackerson, ALDOT 1<sup>st</sup> Division, District 5

Judge Melvyn Salter, Chairman, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Under “Old Business”, Judge Salter asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Johnny Harris moved that the minutes be adopted as presented. Mr. Bill Curtis seconded the motion, which was passed by a unanimous vote of the committee.

There was no other old business.

Under “New Business”, Judge Salter stated that he had no report.

Mr. Bill Curtis gave the staff report. He explained that Ms. Dawn Landholm, RPO Program Facilitator, was attending an Alabama State Data Center meeting in Decatur. Ms. Landholm is the Regional Commission’s primary contact for Census data. Mr. Curtis reported that Ms. Landholm is still in the process of recruiting a new staff member to replace former RPO Program Facilitator Patrick Hall. Mr. Hall had left East Alabama to work for Chattanooga’s Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Mr. Johnny Harris, of ALDOT’s 1<sup>st</sup> Division, gave an update on ALDOT’s projects in Etowah and Cherokee Counties. ALDOT is working on AL Highway 9 from Ellis Bridge to Piedmont. Also in May, ALDOT expects to let US Highway 411 from Leesburg to the Centre bypass. Mr. Ben Thackerson added that the State finally acquired the last of the right of way needed for the Highway 411 improvements last week. The right of way was on PEMCO property, and that company is headquartered in the Netherlands. ALDOT could not complete the engineering and the utility relocation until it had obtained all of the right of way.

Mr. Thackerson asked Mr. Harris about progress on the bridge on AL Highway 35. Mr. Harris reported that work has begun. The erosion control is in place, and the construction crew is clearing a space on Cherokee County's end of the bridge so they can construct a work platform. They are trying to cause as little land disturbance as possible in order to protect water quality in Little River.

Mr. Curtis asked for an update on the federal stimulus funds. Mr. Harris explained that the State of Alabama received just over \$500 million to use throughout the state. The Metropolitan Planning Organizations and each county received a portion of those funds, leaving about \$340 million for ALDOT to expend. ALDOT has allocated roughly \$200 million to resurfacing projects. ALDOT 1<sup>st</sup> Division received about \$17 million for resurfacing. The stimulus funding almost doubles the Division's FY 2009 resurfacing budget and will result in the addition of 8 or 9 projects to this year's roster. In Cherokee County, either US Highway 411 or AL Highway 273 will be resurfaced using stimulus funds. Two construction projects in the 1<sup>st</sup> Division were funded with stimulus money. One of the stimulus projects is a concrete overlay on Interstate 59 north of Gadsden. The ten mile section contains 40 lane-miles and will cost between \$37 and \$38 million. That contract has been awarded, and ALDOT is waiting on the Notice to Proceed. Mr. Harris expect to conduct a preconstruction conference with the contractor in the next two to three weeks. The other project is an overpass in Huntsville with a cost of approximately \$25 million.

Mr. Thacker asked how much stimulus funding the Cherokee County Highway Department received. Mr. Corey Chambers stated that the County received \$265,000, which it will use on County Road 71.

There were no motions or resolutions.

There was no "other new business."

There were no "Special Programs."

Under "Persons wishing to be heard on matters not included in the agenda", Judge Salter invited the RPO members to visit Gadsden State Community College's new Cherokee County campus. The facility opened in December and has hosted numerous events attracting thousands of visitors.

Under "Open Discussion and Announcements", Mr. Curtis announced that the next meeting of the East Alabama Rural Planning Organization's District Policy Committee for the Northern District is scheduled for Thursday, July 9, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. in Gadsden.

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