

**EAST ALABAMA RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
MEETING MINUTES  
DISTRICT POLICY COMMITTEE - SOUTHERN DISTRICT  
*October 25, 2007 - 10:00 a.m.  
ALDOT Division 4 Office - Alexander City***

*Members in Attendance:*

Honorable Lonnie Caldwell, City of Goodwater (represented by Ms. Ida James)  
Mr. DeJarvis Leonard, ALDOT Division 4  
Mr. Bill Curtis, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

*Other Attendees:*

Ms. Ida James, City of Goodwater  
Mr. Jerry Thrower, City of Lanett  
Mr. Tim Jacobs, City of Roanoke  
Mr. Patrick Hall, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission  
Ms. Dawn Landholm, East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Ms. Ida James, representing Mayor Lonnie Caldwell, Vice-Chairman, requested that Ms. Dawn Landholm, RPO Program Coordinator, conduct the meeting. Ms. Landholm called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m.. She then welcomed everyone to this meeting of the East Alabama Rural Planning Organization's District Policy Committee for the Southern District. Ms. Landholm also introduced Mr. Patrick Hall, who will be assuming the role of program coordinator. Mr. Hall began working at the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission in mid-August.

Under "Old Business", Ms. Landholm asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the June 28, 2007 meeting. Mr. Bill Curtis noted that the minutes are dated March 9, 2007 and that the time in the first paragraph on page 1 needs to be changed from 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. Mr. Tim Jacobs made a motion that the minutes be adopted as amended. Mr. Jerry Thrower seconded the motion, which was approved by a unanimous vote of the Committee.

In "Other Old Business," Ms. Landholm directed Committee members' attention to the Committee membership lists, copies of which are attached to these minutes. Several jurisdictions have yet to appoint Technical Advisory Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee members. Ms. Landholm stressed the importance of making these appointments as soon as possible, so both Committees can hold kickoff meetings. She also explained a new opportunity for the Rural Planning Organization. Heflin Mayor Anna Berry is the regional co-chair of the East Alabama Action Commission (EAAC), Governor Riley's new initiative. Some Southern District RPO members had attended the Governor's EAAC kickoff meeting at the end of August. The EAAC has four

committees: Workforce Development, Education, Health, and Economic Development. Mayor Berry has requested the State's permission to add two new committees—Culture and Tourism, and Infrastructure. Ms. Landholm has suggested to Mayor Berry that, in order to reduce duplication, the RPO's Technical and Citizens Advisory Committees be integrated into the Infrastructure Committee as a Transportation Subcommittee. The Chairs of the Technical and Citizens Advisory Committees are non-voting members of the District Policy Committee (DPC) and can report EAAC activities to the Policy Committee and bring back to their committees information from the Policy Committee. Keeping the DPC separate from the EAAC will enable local elected officials in our region—all of whom are automatically members of the RPO—to participate in other EAAC committees if they wish.

Under “New Business,” Ms. Landholm asked for reports of officers, staff, and/or committees. No officers were present to report. Ms. Landholm directed DPC members' attention to the 2008 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), a copy of which is attached to these minutes. The STIP had been presented for public review during the summer, and ALDOT recently issued this finalized STIP. The STIP contains a schedule of highway and transit projects for October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2011. Ms. Landholm reminded the Committee that ALDOT is still accepting public input on the Statewide Transportation Plan, which Committee members may view on ALDOT's website.

Mr. Thrower and Mr. Jacobs noted that, while Chambers and Randolph Counties have bridge replacement projects in the STIP, there are no road projects. In order to capitalize on spinoff development from the Kia automotive plant that is being constructed just across the state line, both counties will need new transportation routes that will connect their residents to Kia. U.S. Highway 431 will need to be improved, and AL Highway 22 will need to be realigned. Mr. DeJarvis Leonard stated that he is trying to secure funds to study transportation needs of the counties in his division that will be directly impacted by Kia.

Mr. Leonard added that, although Coosa County has a Section 5311 rural transportation system, it does not appear in the STIP as a Coosa County transit project because the funds are awarded to the East Alabama Regional Commission, which then distributes the funds to local governments. However, if the County or any agencies in the county purchase a vehicle through the Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled program, that vehicle will appear in the STIP during the year it will be purchased. Mr. Thrower noted that the City of Lanett's Section 5310 vehicles do not appear in the STIP. However, those vehicles were purchased using dedicated funds awarded by Senator Shelby. The City purchased the vehicles it needed and is using the remaining funds to purchase vehicles to transfer to Northwest Mental Health.

Ms. Landholm asked if other persons have business with and/or reports for the Committee. Mr. Leonard stated that he had nothing new to report at this time.

Under motions or resolutions, Ms. Landholm asked if anyone present had safety projects they would like to have included in the RPO's safety report to ALDOT. Since the final meeting of the 2007 fiscal year was postponed until October, she will include any new safety projects presented at this meeting in her FY2007 report. No one had offered any safety projects at the June meeting, and no safety projects were presented at this meeting.

Under "Other New Business," Ms. Landholm directed DPC members' attention to a calendar that she had distributed. The calendar showed the meeting dates that have been scheduled for the Northern and Central District Policy Committees during the 2008 fiscal year. The DPCs must meet once a quarter. Ms. Landholm asked that DPC members select one meeting date per quarter for the balance of the fiscal year. DPC members selected January 24<sup>th</sup> as the first quarter meeting date, April 24<sup>th</sup> as the second quarter meeting date, and July 24<sup>th</sup> as the fourth quarter meeting date. Unless otherwise suggested, the DPC will continue to meet at the ALDOT Division 4 office in Alexander City.

Under "Special Programs," Ms. Landholm informed the DPC members that she and Mr. Hall had attended a National Rural Transportation Peer Learning Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee at the end of September. The conference was very informative. Mr. Hall will present information from the sessions he attended at this meeting, and Ms. Landholm will share her "lessons learned" at next quarter's meeting.

Mr. Hall directed DPC members' attention to the handout entitled "Intermodal Transportation: Planning for the Future," a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Some of the key points to Mr. Hall's presentation include:

- Shipping goods via multiple transportation modes (i.e., intermodal shipping) is expected to increase dramatically over the next 30 years.
- Increased congestion at major airports and on the nation's highways, plus improvements at the Port of Mobile, will spur increased intermodal shipping within and through Alabama.
- Warehousing and intermodal transfer stations will become stronger economic engines, as will satellite airports to accommodate overflow from Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport.
- Truck traffic across the nation and in Alabama is expected to grow tremendously by the year 2020.

The presentation spurred discussion about the potential impacts of the Kia plant on the counties in the RPO's Southern District. The Kia plant near West Point, GA, and the Hyundai plant in Montgomery, AL, will be sharing suppliers. Because of the trend of on-time delivery, Tier 1 suppliers will be likely to locate in the counties along Interstate 85. With on-time delivery, the auto maker orders parts from suppliers as-needed, to avoid having to warehouse excess parts. The suppliers are expected to deliver the parts on a

very short time line, so good transportation access is essential. The plants that supply the Tier 1 suppliers can locate somewhat farther away.

Mr. Thrower stated that a Tier 1 supplier is considering locating in LaFayette and creating 750 jobs. If LaFayette is selected, truck and commuter traffic on Highway 50 would increase greatly. Also, a lumber company plans to locate in the Cusseta Industrial Park. The plant will create finished lumber from raw wood. The Huguley Water System is supplying water service to the industrial park, and the City of Opelika is providing sewer service. The City of Opelika and the Chambers County Commission are collaborating on a grant for an industrial access road. The lumber plant will further increase traffic on Interstate 85 and on state and local roads. Mr. Leonard believes Interstate 85 will need to be widened between West Point and Montgomery. He also noted that many of the employees for these plants could come from the local area, which has been severely impacted by textile plant closings. Honda and Hyundai have found that textile workers transitioned well to automobile assembly. Mr. Hall asked if the area's major employers would consider operating private or sponsoring public van pools or park-and-ride bus services. Questions arose about the ability to conduct such operations across state lines.

Mr. Leonard added that the completion of Interstate 22 between Memphis and Birmingham probably will result in changes along Highway 280. Discussion then ensued about likely freight movements between Mobile, Memphis, and Atlanta. Improvements to the Port of Mobile, including construction of a container transfer facility, have greatly increased its importance in freight shipping. The Atlanta airport is incredibly busy with both passenger travel and air freight shipments. Mr. Thrower noted that Thomaston's airport is receiving some of Atlanta's overflow. Lanett is positioning itself to be the next recipient of Atlanta's overflow air traffic by seeking funds to extend its runway to 6,000 feet.

Ms. Landholm asked if anyone wished to be heard on matters not included in the agenda. No meeting attendees offered additional comments.

Under "Open Discussion and Announcements," Ms. Landholm announced that the next meeting of the East Alabama Rural Planning Organization's District Policy Committee meeting for the Southern District is scheduled to be held on Thursday, January 24, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at the ALDOT Division 4 office in Alexander City.

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