



Catching the Green Wave - Going Green. How to Find it, Fund it, and Facilitate it

Every office, household, and local government is feeling the pressure to find ways to reduce use of energy from petroleum products. There is pressure from the top as state governments begin mandating alternatives to petroleum-based energy, and pressure from the bottom as the region faces the growing cost of fuel. The group of members planning the winter assembly of TMACOG members decided to use the meeting as a forum to share information.

“The general assembly planning committee is very excited about this upcoming meeting and workshops,” said committee chair Pam Dressel. “Our theme is especially timely. The program will include a great deal of information useful to governments, and to anyone making choices about energy.”

The TMACOG Winter General Assembly is Tuesday, January 29, 1:30 - 7:45 p.m. at the Holiday Inn French Quarter, Perrysburg. The assembly will include two workshops which will be held concurrently. Topics for the workshops are: “Going Green without Going Broke: Finding Funding for Alternative Energy Projects,” and “Getting Ahead of the Big Green Wave.” Both workshops will include speakers and a panel with experience building or retrofitting civic structures, and

making decisions based on energy costs. The presentation following dinner will include Dr. Robert Helmer, president, Lourdes College. Dr. Helmer will talk about new green construction at Lourdes College.

Election of Leadership

The winter assembly is also the occasion for the election of new leadership at TMACOG. Members will vote for chair, vice chair, and second vice chair, and will also select representatives to serve on the councils and committees of TMACOG. In caucus sessions, members will select trustees and alternates to the Board of Trustees.

Cost for the Winter General Assembly is \$50 for TMACOG members, non-members \$90. To register, go to www.tmacog.org. Click on the What’s Hot button. For more information, contact Greg Gettum, 419.241.9155 ext. 132 or gettum@tmacog.org.



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Focal Points ...

COMMUTER SERVICES

Northwest Ohio CommuterLINK Update

As of November 1, 2007

Riders Approved Fiscal Year 2007	97
Daily Adult Riders	17
Children Transported Daily	10
Number of Daycares Used	6
Employers	14
Employer Locations	14
TARTA routes affected	4

NOTE: CommuterLINK serves people who cannot use public transportation due to their work schedule, child care location(s), or need to access areas outside the public transit area.

Northwest Ohio CommuterLINK

----- Connecting people to jobs -----

A PROGRAM OF TMACOG

Share A Ride and Share the Expense

People who carpool even a few times a week will see significant savings in fuel expenses, and will find other benefits to sharing the ride. Teachers and administrators from Penta Career Center have been driving together for more than six years. Guidance Counselor Mary Schultz says, "I originally agreed to carpool to save money on gas and turnpike tolls, and to have less wear and tear on the car." She adds, "But it's also great to ride to work sometimes instead of driving. I would recommend it to anyone!"

Winter is a fine time to start carpooling. Rather than scrape and defrost your car before work, you could have a cup of coffee and wait for your carpool partner to pick you up. To find Share A Ride partners, call 419.241.1919 (outside of the Toledo area, call 800.241.1919). You'll answer a few quick questions. The Share A Ride staff will then search the database and let you know about people who match your commute schedule. Then it is up to you to decide how to split driving times and cost. You may also register and learn more online at www.sharearide.org.



Clockwise from left: Dawn Wilcoxon, Mary Schultz, Angela Dietrich and Suzanne SzumFelde.

NW Ohio CommuterLINK Car Buy Update

Car Buy Program

January 1, 2001 - December 1, 2007	
Cars Delivered	463
Cars Paid Off	356

Fiscal Year (6/30/07 - 10/1/07)

Cars Delivered	14
Cars Paid Off	20
Currently Making Payments	54

Fiscal Year 2007 goal:
four cars delivered each month

Winter Driving Tips

Unpredictable weather and longer hours of darkness make winter commuting a more hazardous chore. Be prepared for delays and accidents with a winter safety kit.

- A windup flashlight, or a regular flashlight with fresh batteries
- A first-aid kit
- Package of warm clothes with socks, gloves, a warm hat, and a blanket
- Extra anti-freeze and extra windshield solvent
- Sack of sand or kitty litter, and a small shovel
- A tool kit, with battery starter and flares
- Non-perishable food



TMACOG Executive Committee Passes Resolution on Open Lake Disposal

The single largest maintenance job that the Corps of Engineers on the Great Lakes has is to keep the Maumee River shipping channel open. It's a big job. The depth of the lake in Maumee Bay is only six or seven feet but a channel is dredged to 30 feet over a length of about 14 miles to provide shipping access to the Port of Toledo.

The dredged sediment has to go somewhere. For many years, sediment considered contaminated has been placed in Confined Disposal Facilities (CDF) and the balance of the sediment has been disposed of in the open lake. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) contends that open lake disposal negatively affects water quality and aquatic habitat and has negotiated with the Corps to reduce the amount of open lake disposal. The cities of Toledo and Oregon note that sediment increases water treatment costs. Although agreements were made to use the dredged material for beneficial use (possibly covering landfills, or re-creating habitat), the small projects undertaken are not enough to reduce the need for other disposal. The Corps has asked for a Section 401 certification that would permit the Corps to increase the amount of open lake disposal. The Corps is

requesting a four-year certification from 2008 to 2011. In December, TMACOG's Environmental Council recommended a resolution restating the positions that TMACOG and partners have long held: it is imperative that the shipping channel be dredged to provide access to the Port of Toledo, and TMACOG supports initiatives for the beneficial reuse of sediments and for ultimately eliminating open lake disposal of dredge sediment, consistent with previous agreements.

The fundamental problem with disposal of the sediment is financial. Currently, federal funds pay 100% of the cost. The Corps is required to dispose of dredge materials in the least expensive environmentally acceptable manner. The Corps contends that open lake disposal is environmentally acceptable while the Ohio EPA and local governments hold that is it not. If open lake disposal is not acceptable to local governments, who should pay for another option? This question has not been resolved beyond conceptual agreements to pursue beneficial uses. The TMACOG resolution was submitted to the Ohio EPA for consideration of the Corps' 401 certification.

Progress on Dam Removal Projects

Two low head dams in the region have been studied for removal and remediation. One dam on the Ottawa River in the Village of Ottawa Hills was removed in late November. TMACOG is part of the team now working on a restoration plan for the riparian area – the area near the stream. The area is currently a broad grassy floodplain that holds stormwater during wet weather. Current issues involve permitting and evaluating options for doing heavy land moving work.

The second dam is on Swan Creek at Highland Park. That dam is actually an encased sewer line which cannot be removed. A contractor has been chosen to design a plan that would mitigate the effect of the dam and allow better movement for fish and aquatic wildlife. The contractor's plan should be available for review in January.



Heavy equipment removed a dam on the Ottawa River in a few days. A restoration plan for the riparian area is underway.



Transit Forum 3 Sets Action Steps

Local jurisdictions will look at an alternative way to fund TARTA public transit, and TARTA will consider a multi-hub system. These are two of several commitments made at the third TMACOG transit forum on December 10.

The current funding method for TARTA member jurisdictions in Lucas and Wood counties is a property tax. Forum attendees agreed to investigate changing to a sales tax instead, at least in Lucas County. Presently, most TARTA routes go to downtown Toledo, but in response to suburban concerns, the possibility of multiple transfer centers or “hubs” will be analyzed using TMACOG’s traffic forecasting model.

Other action items TARTA committed to include a rider survey, reviewing possible use of smaller buses, and adding online transit trip planning. Local government and agency leaders in attendance committed to working with lawmakers to get more state support, and bringing the business community to the table. Several mayors plan to hold listening sessions to hear what citizens and businesses want from transit, and TARTA agreed to attend these sessions.

The next forum is slated for May 2008. The goal is to complete the action items and report back on progress. For more information, contact Diane Reamer-Evans at 419.241.9155, ext. 117 or evans@tmacog.org.



Area mayors initiated a series of meetings to address public transit. Clockwise from left, Nelson Evans, mayor of Perrysburg; Royce Maniko and LeMar Frederick of Monroe County; and Tim Wagener, mayor of Maumee, agreed on action steps at the third forum.

Transportation Legislative Agenda in Development

As state and federal lawmakers make decisions that affect northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan, they will have an agenda from TMACOG that advises them of what people in the region want their lawmakers to do. Every second year, the TMACOG Transportation Department writes and distributes a legislative agenda. This document expresses the consensus in the region on transportation priorities. The TMACOG staff is currently coordinating ideas from economic development agencies, transportation stakeholders, and local elected officials to develop the agenda. When complete, it will provide direction to lawmakers on our region’s priorities for streets and highways, rail, public transit, water and air transportation, and bike and pedestrian facilities. TMACOG partners contribute to the agenda, and TMACOG will ask for endorsement from regional transportation interests before it is finalized and sent to lawmakers. To see the prior 2006-2007 Transportation Legislative Agenda, see “transportation news” on www.tmacog.org.

Roll out of 2035 Plan to Area Leadership Groups

Now that the region’s new long term transportation plan has been completed and approved, TMACOG is meeting with community groups to share the details. For the plan to be meaningful and provide the greatest benefit, people in the region need to help implement the plan. As TMACOG staff members describe the projects and initiatives, they will be identifying those that need to be advanced by governments, and those that need public and private support. The policies adopted as part of the 2035 Plan are especially important to decision-making. These policies, if followed by the region at large, will keep regional efforts focused on identified priorities.

In December, TMACOG made a presentation to the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee and in early 2008 TMACOG will be speaking to other key leadership groups in the region. Two summaries of the plan are available: a technical summary which includes all policies, projects and initiatives; and a popular summary which gives a quick overview of projects and plan goals. For more information or to request a presentation of the 2035 Plan, contact Diane Reamer-Evans at 419.241.9155 ext. 117, or evans@tmacog.org.

Certifying TMACOG's Planning Process

TMACOG is our region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for transportation planning in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. In that role, TMACOG is required to follow certain federal regulations, including maintaining a public involvement program that is vital to a transparent planning process, and one which ensures that all interested people in the region can contribute to our region's plans. Periodically, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) performs an audit of TMACOG activities and procedures to ensure that TMACOG is fulfilling its responsibilities. The FHWA will be doing a planning certification review of TMACOG at the end of February. As part of that process, a public meeting will be held Thursday, February 28. This meeting is an opportunity for people to comment on their experience with TMACOG's public input process. The public is invited and welcome to attend this meeting. For more information or to comment directly, contact Diane Reamer-Evans at 419.241.9155 ext. 117 or evans@tmacog.org.



The public is invited to comment on TMACOG's public involvement process Thursday, February 28. Watch the website for time and location.

New Transportation Planner Begins at TMACOG



Lisa Householder is a new transportation planner at TMACOG. She began work December 3 with the official title of Transportation Planner/Database Analyst. Householder earned her bachelor's from Bowling Green State University in Geography in 2001. She has worked with the Wood County Auditor's office and with Ducks Unlimited. She had a busy 2007 as she completed her master's degree from Eastern Michigan University in Urban and Regional Planning in the summer and was married in September. TMACOG will benefit from her experience with various GIS packages, database analysis, and SQL software.

Lisa Householder, Transportation Planner/Database Analyst.

Metroparks of the Toledo Area

Metroparks of the Toledo Area is consistently cited as among the two or three top features of life in northwest Ohio. From a single parcel along the river in 1930 to 10 established parks and three others in development today, Metroparks has been vital to the preservation of natural areas for common use. Metroparks is a long-time member of TMACOG and its staff has contributed to several environmental committees.

“So much of what we do as a preservation agency deals with open space and the environment, which require regional approaches to planning,” said Jim Spengler, Metroparks director. “We’ve worked with TMACOG on watershed protection projects and the regional trail system, for example. We’re fortunate to have TMACOG’s expertise and leadership in these areas.” Metroparks has a unique political structure. The system is a political subdivision of the state of Ohio, serving Lucas County. Although funding comes from the county residents, Metroparks is not part of any city or county government. It is governed by a three-member Board of Park Commissioners whose members are appointed by the Lucas County Probate Court Judge.

Taxpayers have been supportive of the Metroparks. In 1974, voters agreed to purchase property which became Wildwood Preserve and is now the most visited park in the Metroparks system. In 2007, residents voted to renew a tax levy to support park system operations and development.



METROPARKS
TOLEDO AREA

News Files...

Sears and Reams Part of Leadership Academy Toledo

The Leadership Academy Toledo is a 10-week training program and guide to the requirements, expectations, and practices associated with public service positions. The course is designed to be a guide for current public officials, private citizens considering running for public office, and people serving on boards, committees, and commissions. Classes begin January 7 and are held Mondays from 6 to 8 p.m. through March 10. In February, President of Sylvania City Council and TMACOG Chair Barbara Sears will present a class on “Communicating and Working with Citizens.” The following week TMACOG President Tony Reams will talk about “Intergovernmental Relations and Economic Development.”

The academy was developed by the Ohio State University Extension Service and the Ohio Sea Grant Program in partnership with the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce Leadership Fund. For more information on the 2008 sessions, see the calendar of events at www.toledochamber.com.

TMACOG Marks 40 Years

To celebrate its 40th year of operation, TMACOG will be putting together some displays from its archives that demonstrate the growth and development of the agency. At the Winter General Assembly January 29, members will see a media presentation incorporating historical images of projects undertaken, previous TMACOG chairs, and historic images from member jurisdictions. A tabletop display will show how membership has grown and will include some of the many reports and maps that TMACOG and its members have created over the years. In April, the meeting of the Executive Committee will be in the City of Oregon’s council chambers where the very first TMACOG meeting was held in 1968. Also in April, the monthly edition of the *Big Picture* will be a commemorative issue, with highlights of 40 years of service to members. Visitors to the TMACOG offices in 2008 will also see displays around the office, including portraits of previous chairs.



First in 2008

Thank you to Richfield Township in Lucas County. The township is the first TMACOG member to renew membership for 2008. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Perspectives...

A letter from the Chair of the Environmental Council



Kenneth Fallows

Greenwash! Beware!

Consumers are currently beginning to sense the growing onslaught of "green" initiatives. "Green" may soon be the new "Red, White, and Blue!" But buyer beware! NPR's "Morning Edition" includes a daily report on the current concern with "Global Warming" or "Climate Change," depending on one's faith in science or politics. One report in this series reinvented the old political expression of "white-wash" (what is otherwise illegitimate or illicit made to look acceptable and attractive) to apply to the will of the consumer to buy environmental, energy-wise products or ideas as the new coinage: "greenwash!"

The rising environmentally revisionist fanaticism, indeed "trend," for whatever sounds like it's going to refreeze the oceans and provide infinite energy to fulfill our wasteful ways has reached celebrity "trend" fervor. Well, it's not a trend; it's the future writ now. So care must be taken not to be sold on purported "green" sales tactics. For example E-85 doesn't reduce carbon dioxide emissions overall. The coal-fired electric generation needed in the ethanol fermenting process will emit more CO₂. The use of switch grass promises to even that difference since it requires about half the water- and electricity-consuming steps than corn. So, the current answer is not necessarily the best by any means.

Countless similar myths, if not misconceptions, will be launched as the world moves further into the future of reducing our "carbon footprint." So, buyer, "Beware the greenwash!" Wisdom and knowledge will lend responsible insights as to what is best.

A few (just a few!) helpful hints toward buying wisely to avoid the "greenwash":

- Buy rechargeable batteries to accompany electronic gifts, and consider giving a battery charger as well.
<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/specials/funfacts/winter.htm>
- Look for the next generation of Energy Star computers for energy savings
http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq_2007-11-6_energy_star
- Ask yourself - what did you recycle today?
http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq_2007-11-14_recycle

To respond to this letter, email
perspectives@tmacog.org



(More from Environment)

Swan Creek Pilot Project Under Review by Watershed Jurisdictions

Jurisdictions in the Swan Creek watershed are now reviewing the draft maps of a pilot project in the region. In 2007, the Swan Creek Pilot Project committee members analyzed land use and designated property in one of three categories: priority agriculture, priority development, or priority conservation. Not all land fit easily into one category but draft maps have been completed and accepted by the committee members. To establish the draft as a plan, 75% of jurisdictions in the watershed have to approve of it. If approved, jurisdictions will then become eligible for incentives to implement the elements of the plan.

Recent meetings included one in Fulton County in which all jurisdictions were represented and on hand to review the maps and the supporting data. Further meetings in other parts of the watershed are planned for 2008 with a goal to have the plan accepted by January 2009.

New on tmacog.org

The TMACOG website changes almost daily. Recent additions to the site include Swan Creek Pilot Project maps and the Maumee Bay State Park Wetlands Restoration Plan report, both on the Environment Department pages, and the 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program on the main Transportation Department page. Also see TMACOG's presentation to the Toledo-Lucas County Meta-Plan meeting, held November 30. Click on the What's Hot button.

Mark Your Calendar

January 8-11
Michigan Township Association Annual Educational Conference
Detroit Marriott, Renaissance Center

January 30 - February 2
Ohio Township Association Winter Conference and Trade Show
Hyatt Regency, Columbus

Thursday, February 14, 4-6 p.m.
Leadership Orientation
TMACOG offices

September 15-17
2008 Transportation Summit (Sept. 15), and 2008 Ohio Conference on Freight (Sept. 16-17), SeaGate Centre, Toledo



Our Vision...

TMACOG will be the governmental partner of choice to coordinate regional assets, opportunities, and challenges.

The Big Picture is published by TMACOG

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City of Sylvania

Vice Chair

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Lucas County

2nd Vice Chair

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Eventline...

January 2008

Thursday, January 3
FEMA Floodplain Management Committee
Time: 10 a.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Kurt Erichsen, ext. 126

Stormwater Coalition
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Kurt Erichsen, ext. 126

Wednesday, January 9
Stormwater Action Group
Time: 10 a.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Kurt Erichsen, ext. 126

Transportation Council
Time: 3 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Warren Henry, ext. 129

Monday, January 14
Car Buy Review Committee
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Location: TMACOG Library
Contact: Tiffany Banks, ext. 157

Commuter Services Council
Time: noon
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: David Gedeon, ext. 125

Membership Committee
Time: 4 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Library
Contact: Greg Gettum, ext. 132

Tuesday, January 15
Pedestrian & Bikeways Committee
Time: 8 a.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Kent Gardam, ext. 116

Transportation Enhancement Committee
Time: 10 a.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Diane Reamer-Evans, ext. 117

Wednesday, January 16
Air Quality Committee
Time: 8 a.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: David Gedeon, ext. 125

Executive Committee
Time: noon
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Tony Reams, ext. 179

Thursday, January 17
Portage River Basin Council
Time: 2 p.m.
Location: TBD
Contact: Elaine Moebius, ext. 139

Tuesday, January 22
Freight Committee
Time: 11:30 a.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Patrick Dennis, ext. 115

Wednesday, January 23
System Performance and Monitoring Committee
Time: 2 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Kent Gardam, ext. 116

Thursday, January 24
Environmental Council
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Kurt Erichsen, ext. 126

Monday, January 28
Passenger Rail Committee
Time: 10 a.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Diane Reamer-Evans, ext. 117

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Committee
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Kent Gardam, ext. 116

Tuesday, January 29
Winter General Assembly
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Location: Holiday Inn French Quarter, Perrysburg
Contact: Greg Gettum, ext. 132

February 2008

Wednesday, February 6
Transportation Council
Time: 3 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Warren Henry, ext. 129

Leadership Development
Time: 4 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Library
Contact: Tony Reams, ext. 107

Thursday, February 7
Communications Committee
Time: noon
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Peggy Ricard, ext. 105

Monday, February 11
Car Buy Review Committee
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Location: TMACOG Library
Contact: Tiffany Banks, ext. 157

Membership Committee
Time: 4 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Library
Contact: Greg Gettum, ext. 132

Wednesday, February 13
Stormwater Action Group
Time: 10 a.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Kurt Erichsen, ext. 126

Finance, Audit & Administration
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Bill Best, ext. 108

Thursday, February 14
Leadership Orientation
Time: 4-6 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Cindy Bland, ext. 107

Tuesday, February 19
Pedestrian & Bike Steering Committee
Time: 8 a.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Kent Gardam, ext. 116

Transportation Planning Committee
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Diane Reamer-Evans, ext. 117

Wednesday, February 20
Air Quality Committee
Time: 8 a.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: David Gedeon, ext. 125

Executive Committee
Time: noon
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Tony Reams, ext. 107

Monday, February 25
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Committee
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Kent Gardam, ext. 116

Tuesday, February 26
Freight Steering Committee
Time: 10 a.m.
Location: Transportation Conference Room
Contact: Patrick Dennis, ext. 115

Thursday, February 28
Transportation Planning Certification Review – public meeting
Time: 4:30 p.m.
Location: TMACOG Boardroom
Contact: Donna Seeber, ext. 120