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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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 the time I would lose on the commute. 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.shareasride.org.

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

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.

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

Perspectives

A letter from the Chair of the Environmental Council

Kenneth Fallows

Greenwash! Beware!

Consumers are currently being promised to sense the growing onslaught of “green” initia- tives. “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 “Clim ate 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 ill-conceived 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 is 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 needs more 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 respon sible 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/opawa/news/specials/funfacts/winter.htm
- Look for the next generation of Energy Star comput ers!  The use
- Ask yourself - what did you recycle today?

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**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 25, 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**

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**ENVIRONMENT**

**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.

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**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 it is 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.
Transportation Legislative Agenda in Development

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.

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.

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.
Transportation Legislative Agenda in Development

Transportation Department writes and distributes a legislative agenda. This document expresses the consensus in the region on what people in the region want their lawmakers to do. Every second year, the TMACOG partners contribute to the agenda, and TMACOG will ask for endorsement from regional transportation interests before stakeholders, and local elected officials to develop the agenda. When complete, it will provide direction to lawmakers on our priorities. As state and federal lawmakers make decisions that affect northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan, they will have an agenda that advises them of what people in the region want their lawmakers to do. For more information, contact Diane Reamer-Evans at 419.241.9155, ext. 117 or evans@tmacog.org.

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.

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Roll out of 2035 Plan to Area Leadership Groups

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.

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

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.

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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.
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**Environmental**

**Resolution on Open Lake Disposal**

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Northwest Ohio CommuterLINK

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.

Fiscal Year (6/30/07 - 6/30/08)
Cars Delivered 463
Cars Paid Off 356

Fiscal Year 2007 goal: four cars delivered each month

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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.
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.
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 Committee  
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 Committee  
Time: 2:30 p.m.  
Location: TMACOG Boardroom  
Contact: Bill Best, ext. 108

Thursday, February 14  
Leadership Orientation Committee  
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. 179

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

TMACOG Phone: 419.241.9155