Accomplishments

Community Resource Finder for Social Services

SOWEGA Children’s Alliance Inc., a regional family and children’s advocacy organization based in Sumter County requested an online, searchable database to assist local residents in researching and accessing community resources. The CASA website – http://www.sowegachildren.org/community-resource-finder/– is the access portal for this project. A team of five UGA MIS students from the Gwinnett campus completed this interactive web-based project. The homepage of the community resource finder is shown below.
**New Funding Partners Recruited**

Operations Coordinator Sharon Liggett presented the Archway Partnership process to five potential new funding partners in Sumter County.

**Ongoing Efforts**

**Public Health Leadership Academy**

Sumter County’s three person team collectively representing the public school system, new charter school, Georgia Southwestern State University, Southwest and Georgia Children’s Alliance were selected as one of six communities to participate in the first Public Health Leadership Academy, a partnership between the UGA Fanning Institute and the College of Public Health. The program aims to create a collaborative approach to public health issues in a community that expands beyond those organizations and individuals typically tasked with tackling these issues. The year-long program started in March with a three-day on campus class and will conclude after five on campus sessions in November.

**School System Social Media & Marketing Update**

This request from Sumter County Schools was to survey other school systems on their social media avenues, system social media policies, links to social media pages, best practices and contact directory of system contacts. UGA students surveyed 30 school systems and presented school representative with the results.

**RSVP**

The Downtown Renaissance Strategic Vision Plan is a civic engagement process for the revitalization of Americus facilitated by Danny Bivins of CVIOG. Three areas were identified for a feasibility study for future development (Jackson Street, Cotton Ave and the upper parking area behind Rylander Park). Participants are using the Main Street model and creating action items to launch this initiative early summer 2015.

**Interior Re-Design of Florrie Chappell Gymnasium on the GSW campus**

A graduate student in the College of Interior Design has been creating a design plan for the possible adaptive reuse of this historic former gymnasium.

**Looking forward**

**Airport Passenger Transportation Services Survey**

This survey will be used to develop transportation services to connect Sumter County with the Columbus Airport, Albany Regional Airport and Atlanta Hartsfield Airport as the need develops. Community input will be needed to determine if there is enough demand from citizens for leisure and professional travel.
Local CEO’s and managers can provide information on their business travel requirements. Another option would be contacting private businesses to determine if Sumter could be added to an established route. This survey will also be used to explore how other communities have responded to determine how Sumter can feasibly meet this need. Transportation is costly, so the capacity of need is going to have to be substantial. The Carl Vinson Institute of Government has been contacted for a proposal.

**K-12 Model Workforce Training Program**

The community has expressed a desire to establish a model workforce training program in collaboration with Archway’s educational and technical college partners. There are many models, including 12 for Life and the Great Promise Partners (GPP). The Archway Partnership is gathering details on these various models that are used in similar communities in order to consider what options are for implementation. Potential resources for this project from Archway include a student from UGA’s College of Education creating a white page with the options. Sharon Liggett has visited the Carrollton GPP location and gathered extensive information on the program that can be shared with the student. Additional information to be gathered includes the charter school model, how it develops workforce and that many become academies over time.

**Transportation Survey**

A request has been made to develop and implement an annual transportation survey of 100 business and industry leaders to identify transportation needs in Sumter County. The development of the survey would include two perspectives: the shipment of goods in and out of the area and workforce travel. For the goods perspective, considerations are adequate roads and rail. For workforce considerations, areas to consider include public transportation and determining the need for carpooling locations. This could be one survey or two, focused at the two perspectives; employers might choose to respond to both. Researching how other communities have gathered and used this information will also help develop the survey and its uses. The Carl Vinson Institute of Government has provided a proposal and other options/revisions are still being considered.

**Wayfinding Education**

A new way-finding signage plan for adoption and implementation community wide has been requested by an advocate with the City of Americus, Sumter County, Sumter County Archway Partnership and the Georgia DOT. The idea was formed to ensure that visitors can find prominent sites in the county such as Andersonville and Plains. There are many ideas to accomplish such, ranging from roadside signage all the way down to sidewalk signage for pedestrian areas. The signage needs to be cohesive and use consistent coloring and format so there is always subtle recognition. Once a plan has been established, both the city and county will help with implementation by requiring others to follow – as much as law allows. This project will be on hold until completion of the RSVP plan.
**Wayfinding Plan**

A new way-finding plan is being sought to promote the establishment of historic markers and a beautification plan for the nine major ingress/egress points in Sumter County and the City of Americus. Primarily, the desire is for a cohesive plan that includes major signage, accounts for historic topics as appropriate and directs visitors to stop in Sumter County. The idea came from that fact that travelers could drive down Highway 19 and never realize to stop and visit the community. Since the project’s inception, one sign has been installed at the viaduct, but there are still more needed. The new signage should use concepts similar to those developed for the viaduct. This is on hold until completion of the RSVP plan.

**Facilitated Archway Review by Executive Committee**

The Sumter Archway Partnership Executive Committee has requested a facilitated conversation on goals, achievements and opportunities for going forward with Archway. Sumter has been an Archway community since 2008. They specifically want Dr. Matt Bishop to facilitate. Dr. Bishop conducted the first of two review sessions on May 19 and will return for the second session on June 10.