

THE COORDINATOR

June 2004 * 1150 Osos Street, Suite 202, SLO, CA 93401 * Phone 805-781-4219 * Fax 805-781-570

Mark Shaffer Honored by SLOCOG Board

In recognition of almost sixteen years of dedicated service on the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC), a term longer than any other member, Mark Shaffer (Director of Ride-On Transportation) was presented a Resolution of Appreciation by the SLOCOG Board. Mark served on the Committee from October 1988 to April 2004, as the representative of County Supervisor Shirley Bianchi and District 2. During that period he also served as



Chairman for two consecutive terms between March 2000 and July 2002. He resigned from CTAC since moving out of District 2.

In January 1993, working in cooperation with SLOCOG staff and local special services transportation providers, Mark Shaffer established Ride-On as the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) for San Luis Obispo County. Later he led the effort to create the Ride-On Transportation Management Association (TMA). The TMA provides transportation services to a wide range of individuals, focusing on the physically and mentally challenged and the elderly, but also including services for the general population including an airport shuttle, visitor shuttle, lunchtime express, guaranteed ride home, and vanpools.

Mark will continue to help guide the development of transportation services to the people of the San Luis Obispo region as the Director of Ride-On and as a member of the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC).

SLO North Coast Byway - Celebrating Successes The Hearst Ranch Scenic Acquisition

If you haven't heard by now from the news outlets then it's safe to assume you've been asleep at the 'ole proverbial wheel. Steer yourself on to Route 1, designated an "All American Road" last year, by Secretary of Transportation Norman Minetta (of 96 National Scenic Byways in the country, 24 are designated All American Roads with 3 of the 24 in California), and you'll discover the greatest conservation easement deal ever in the State of California and one of the biggest in the Country.

The American Land Conservancy, working diligently with the Hearst Corporation, has struck a tentative accord with state agencies to conserve the 82,000-acre Hearst Ranch. The Ranch, to be covered by a form of restrictive easement, would allow public access to the 18-mile coastline and the development of the California Coast Trail. Approximately 719 acres would continue to be held by the Hearst Family along four sections of the coast. East of Highway 1, the California Rangeland Trust will closely monitor the management practices of the ranch to ensure that the highest conservation standards are achieved.

Not much has changed since 1937 when early motorists traveled this stretch of the "San Simeon to Carmel Highway." By preserving the rich historic, natural, and scenic values of this corridor in perpetuity, national and international travelers to this county and local residents alike will fully experience this national jewel.

Although all the "I's" aren't dotted and "T's" not crossed, the negotiating parties appear very optimistic of the outcome. In an effort to obtain feedback on the conservation proposal, a likely funding partner in this \$80 million endeavor, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), has announced that a public workshop will be held in mid-July, thirty days prior to the first public hearing before the WCB on August 12th. The SLOCOG Board on May 5th, after hearing over an hour's testimony, unanimously endorsed a Caltrans grant for \$23 million for the purchase of scenic easement west of Highway 1. They also conditionally included the grant in the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), subject to approval by the California Transportation Commission (CTC). In May, the CTC unanimously approved the \$23 million grant.

Celebrating Creativity - Recognizing Excellence...

SLOCOG, Caltrans, and the Avila Community Foundation

Recipients of this coveted award were recognized at a *Tranny Awards Luncheon* on May 12, 2004 in Sacramento. The *Tranny Award* is sponsored annually by the California Transportation Foundation (CTF), a non-profit organization dedicated to the recognition of outstanding performance and achievement in transportation. This year SLOCOG and Caltrans were recognized for their collaborative efforts on the Cuesta Grade Project with a *Tranny Award*. This project has also been recognized by the *Excellence in Transportation Award Program*.

The Avila Beach Trolley was also recognized in the category of *Transportation Management Programs*. This weekend service, sponsored by the Avila Beach Community Foundation, was found to be an unmet need last year and is now funded by the County of San Luis Obispo. It was initiated with settlement funds from the UNOCAL clean-up operation and continues to show strong local support from businesses, residents, and visitors.

Transit Performance Audits

SLOCOG contracted with the Transit Resource Center (TRC) and Lawler Consulting to conduct an independent performance review of three transit providers (audit period from FY 2000/2001 to 2002/2003) per the Transportation Development Act (TDA) mandate. Findings were as follows:

- **Morro Bay Dial-A-Ride (DAR)** experienced an 18% ridership loss; yet the service remains productive and very cost-effective relative to other general public DAR systems of comparable size. The auditor recommends surveying residents about service awareness and updating the transit plan in FY 04/05 (both are included in the COG overall work program [OWP]).
- **Atascadero Transit** ridership grew by 21% in the past 3 years due to rapid growth on the fixed-route (68%) service. Atascadero kept transit operating costs only slightly above inflation. Yet the farebox ratio at 12.6% is well below the urbanized area target of 20%. The auditor recommends developing strategies to achieve the new farebox ratio as part of the North County Transit Study (i.e. Atascadero Short-Range Transit Plan update due by Fall 2004).
- **Cambria Trolley** is funded by San Luis Obispo County. The auditor found non-compliance in 5 of the 8 applicable regulatory areas. The farebox ratio was less than 2% or significantly below the minimum 10% mandate; the most immediate recommendation for the Regional Transit Authority (transit administrator) is to develop an interim plan to achieve the farebox ratio in FY 2004/2005 in coordination with the County and the Cambria Community Services District. The auditors' recommendations include conducting a transit planning study for the Cambria area (included in the COG OWP).

The SLOCOG Board approved the auditors' findings and recommendations on the above transit systems. SLOCOG staff will report to the Board on the status of the Cambria Trolley near term audit recommendation (immediate action plan) in the next 6 months (by the December 2004 meeting).

Regional Transportation Plan Update Wheels in Motion

SLOCOG is in the process of updating the region's 2001 Regional Transportation Plan. In an effort to enhance our transportation network, the 2001 plan defines the mobility objectives for the county through 2020. In that plan, major improvements have been identified along the north-south corridor of Highway 101 and the east-west corridors of Highway 46

and 166. The 01 plan also identifies the investment of resources for alternatives to the automobile - bicycle, walking, public transit, and rail expansion - to help improve our air quality and the livability to our region. The 04 update will readdress the funding projections identified in 2001 and in turn will portray a more realistic financial scenario that reduces our resource investment and extends our improvement plan from 2020 to 2025. A review of our existing plan can be found at www.slocog.org. A discussion board is provided at our website to solicit your comments on the regional transportation system. For more information, contact Richard Murphy at 781-5754.

SHOW ME THE MONEY! FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (FTIP)

Do you ever wonder where that federal gas tax money that you pay at the pump is invested in your local highways, streets and roads? Well, look for the release of the 2004 FTIP in late June on SLOCOG's web site (www.slocog.org), which shows all the federal funds

programmed in transportation projects. SLOCOG is required to compile and maintain an accurate listing that shows all federal transportation dollars programmed in the region over the next 3-year period. The FTIP is regularly amended to stay current with existing projects that are changing and new projects. The SLOCOG Board will consider adopting the program at its August 4th meeting.

Counting Vehicle Occupancy Rates

The Highway 101 Average Vehicle Occupancy (AVO) count program was initiated in 2000 to evaluate the efficiency of the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program established to monitor travel during the Cuesta Grade Construction Project. In 2001 it was extended to include AVO counts on the Route 101 corridor in the South County.

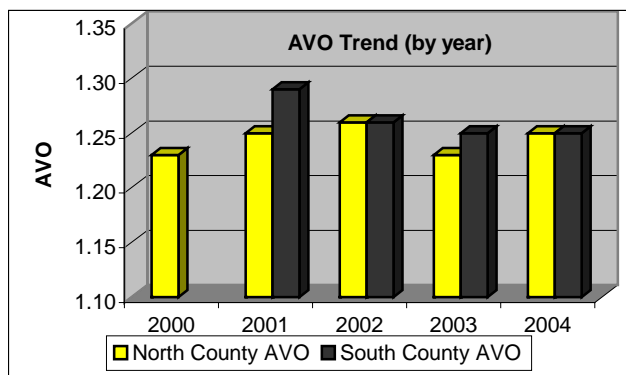
AVO is an important indicator of the effectiveness of congestion management when evaluating congestion reduction programs (such as the ridesharing program). AVO is defined as total occupants divided by total vehicles. (An AVO of 1.25 means that every 100 cars carry about 125 people, including the drivers.) All vehicles are counted including trucks, vans, and buses.

SLOCOG staff performs AVO counts every six months (April and October) at two locations, and counts are performed on Tuesday's of regular workweeks:

Route 101 @ Cuesta Grade SB (7:00 to 9:00 AM) and NB (4:00 to 6:00 PM.);
Route 101 @ San Luis Bay Drive NB and SB (same hours as above).

Findings include:

- Countywide AVO is 1.25, above the National 1.14 and California 1.15 average.
- Countywide AVO remained unchanged at 1.24 persons per vehicle throughout the 4-year sample period, while North County traffic volume increased by 10%.
- Countywide park and ride lot usage increased by 30% since 2000 (North County increased by 50%).
- RTA North County bus route (Route 9) ridership increased by 13% since 2000, while South County (Route 10) ridership remained constant.



REGIONAL PROFILE

SLOCOG staff is finalizing the 2004 Regional Profile, a demographic and socio-economic summary of local conditions. At more than 150 pages of text, tables, graphics and statistics, the lengthy nature of the profile necessitated that staff break the document into chapters in order to be posted on the SLOCOG website. Hard copies of the document will also be made available this summer.

The Regional Profile is a resource document intended to aid in the planning and decision making process for use by interested parties, consultants, local planning staff county-wide, and, of course, the public.

The Chapters are available at <http://www.slocog.org/census/regionalprofile.htm>.

Community Profiles were initially developed using 1990 census data and disseminated by SLOCOG in 1993. SLOCOG compiled similar profile reports for each of the member agencies and general public using the most recent census data. The last edition of the Regional Profile provided transportation information for each jurisdiction. The community profiles contained here have been expanded to provide information on: 1) population and age characteristics, 2) income and poverty status, 3) employment, 4) housing, and 5) transportation characteristics. The community profiles are integrated into the document as Chapter 8 and have been available at the SLOCOG web site since last October at <http://www.slocog.org/maps/census.htm>.

SLOCOG Greets New Employee

At the June meeting, the Board welcomed Ms. Brenda Dennahower, the new half-time Accountant. Ms. Dennahower came to SLOCOG from the city of Mission Viejo, where she worked as an accountant for 11 years. SLOCOG Board members and staff are pleased to welcome Ms. Dennahower.

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS MEMBERSHIP

Down the Road...The next scheduled meeting of the SLOCOG Board will be held in the San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors' Chambers Wednesday, August 4, 2004, at 8:30 a.m. The Board will conduct a public hearing to adopt the 2004 Federal Transportation Improvement Program; hear a presentation on the Ride-On Strategic Plan; receive, comment, and approve the draft SLOCOG Annual Report; endorse the policies, schedules and approach for the draft 2004 Regional Transportation Plan and the Long Range Transit Plan (LRTP); review progress on Performance Audit recommendations for SLOCOG; receive a status report on the Regional Traffic Model; and review the 2004 Transportation Performance Indicators Report. If you would like to see the Board meetings, they are broadcast live and replayed on Channel 21 (Charter Communications Cable TV).

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) is an area wide planning and programming agency for issues of area wide concern. SLOCOG is also the state-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), the Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways (SAFE), and the Census Data Affiliate (CDA) for the San Luis Obispo region. Member Agencies are listed below with designated representatives.

New President – Frank Mecham, Mayor, Paso Robles

New Vice President – Shirley Bianchi, District 2 Supervisor

Arroyo Grande – Tony Ferrara, Mayor

Atascadero – Wendy Scalise, Council member

Grover Beach – John Shoals, Mayor Pro Tem

Morro Bay – Dave Elliott, Council member

Pismo Beach – Rudy Natoli, Council member

San Luis Obispo – Ken Schwartz, Council member

District 1 Supervisor – Harry Ovitt

District 3 Supervisor – Peg Pinard

District 4 Supervisor – Katcho Achadjian

District 5 Supervisor – Mike Ryan.

Ex-Officio, Gregg Albright –Director, Caltrans District 5

Ronald De Carli, Executive Director

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<http://www.slocog.org/>