Executive Director's Report

I am pleased to present my Executive Director's report for August 2025. This new method of delivering the Executive Director's report will regularly provide the Board with information on CPRC activities and offer insights into how other regional councils in similar-sized regions across the United States operate.

I would ask that you share this report with your colleagues on your respective Boards for your jurisdiction. I will also send this to the region's local government managers and assistants.

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Major Metro Regional Council Highlight

Each month, this segment of the Executive Director's Report will include some interesting items from other regional councils that I think are worth the Board's attention and review because they are applicable, innovative, or inspiring.

Mid America Regional Council

The Mid America Regional Council (MARC) is a significant convener and service provider for the region in emergency management and homeland security.

The Mid American Regional Council is the counterpart to Central Pines in the Kansas City region. The Council serves as both the regional council and the MPO for the bi-state Kansas City region. Serving nine counties and 119 cities, with a staff of about 163, and an overall budget of about $119 million. MARC's major areas of focus include Area Agency on Aging, Data & Digital Services, Early Learning, Emergency Services & Homeland Security, 911 Public Safety Communications, Local Government Shared Services, MPO, Traffic Operations, Environmental Programs, and Economic Research.

In the area of Emergency Management & Homeland Security, MARC has a staff of 27 and manages ten work groups and committees to better coordinate homeland security and emergency management activities across the region.

Here is a list of the committee staffed and managed by MARC in the Homeland Security area:

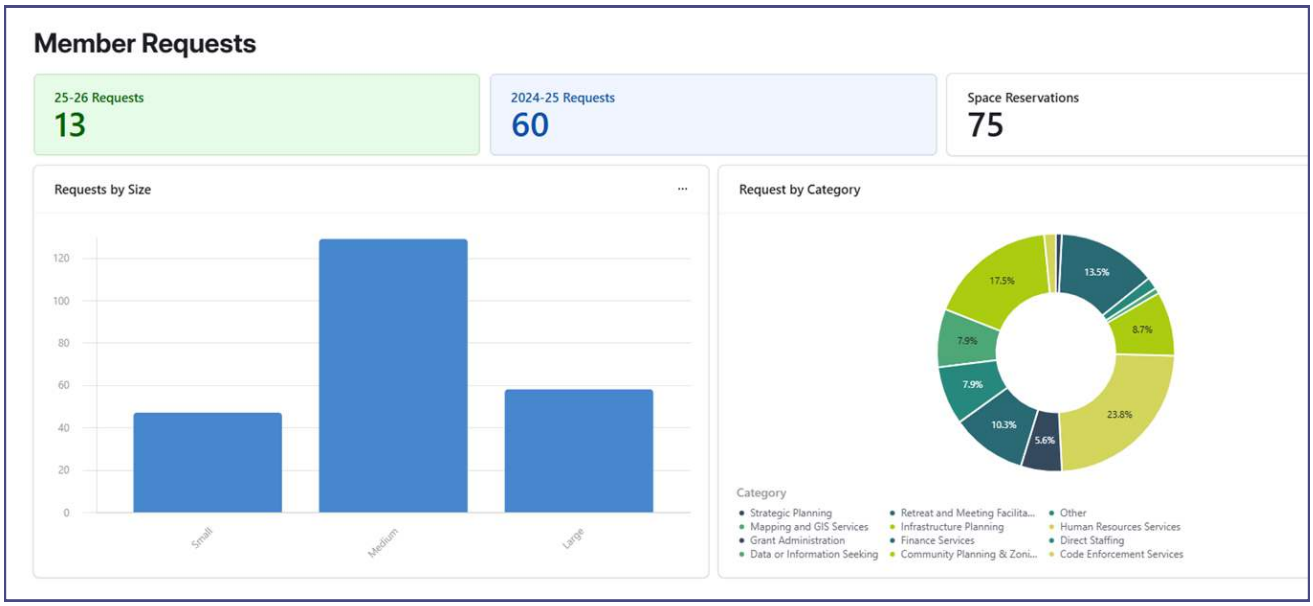
- 911 Peer Support Advisory Committee
- Public Safety Communication Board
- Regional Interoperability Communications Committee
- Metropolitan Area Regional Radio System Management Council
- Public Safety Communications Users Committee
- Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee
- Complex Coordinating Terrorist Attack Task Force
- Local Emergency Planning Committee
- MARCER - Mid America Regional Council Emergency Rescue
- Metropolitan Emergency Managers Committee

You can learn more about the work of MARC around Homeland Security here:

MARC Homeland Security Work

Local Government Member Request Dashboard

Our Member Services team has developed a Member Request dashboard to receive and track incoming requests from our local governments, areas of need trends, and disengaged communities.



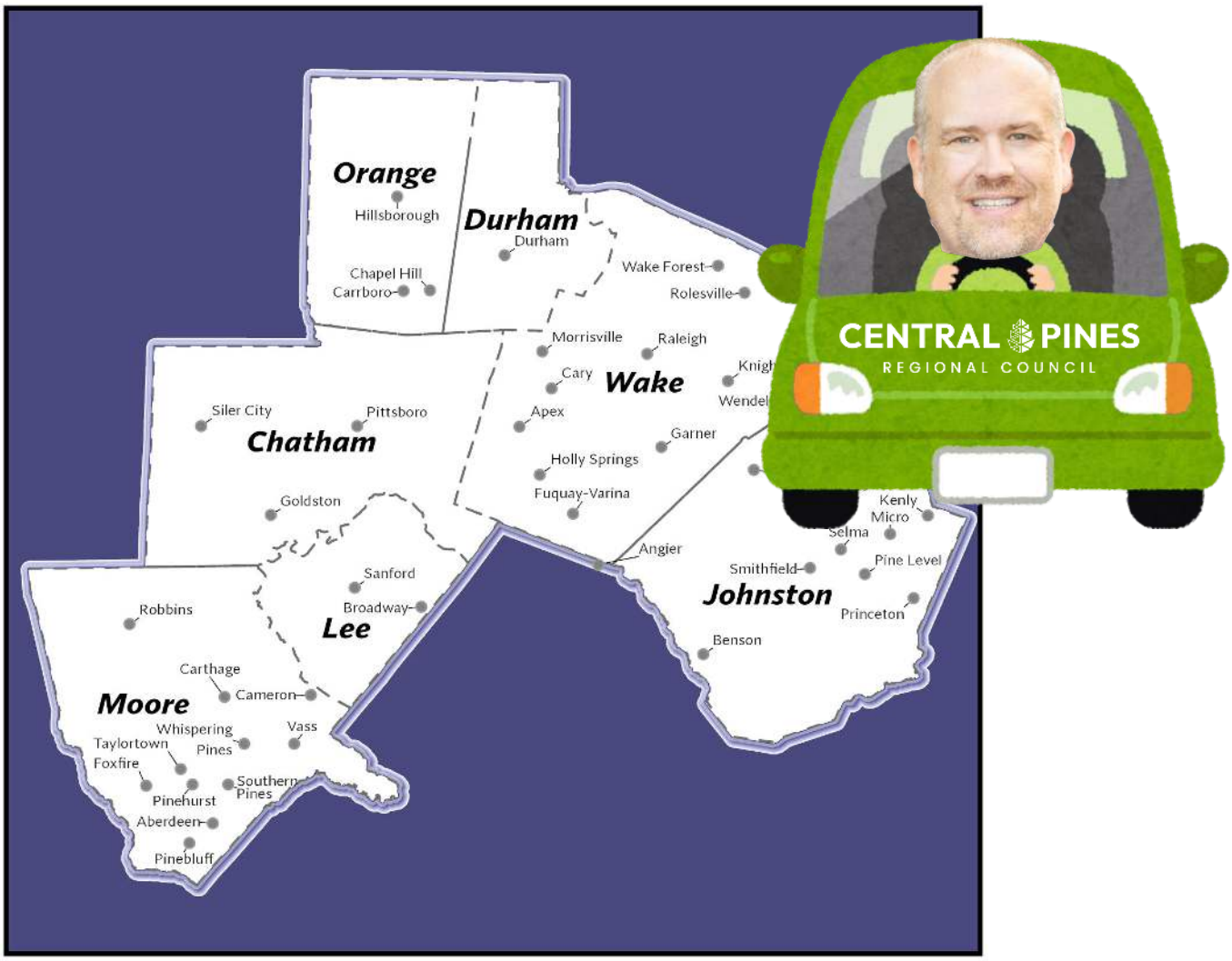
Request Assistance

centralpinesnc.gov

CPRC with Lee Tour

As many of you know, I have a goal to visit all fifty local governments this year. I am beginning my tour by scheduling visits with local governments with a manager or administrator, and then will be turning to our Mayor-Council local governments next. You can follow along with the hashtag #CPRCwithLee.

As of August 25, I have visited Selma, Pinehurst, Holly Springs, Sanford, Siler City, and the City of Durham. I also have upcoming visits scheduled with Morrisville, Carthage, Kenly, Chapel Hill, Apex, Wake Forest, Hillsborough, Wake County, Broadway, Clayton, Angier, and Garner.



NARC Updates

The National Association of Regional Councils publishes a Transportation Thursdays and an eRegions Update each week. Here is a selection of items from those newsletters that may be of interest.

New Research: US Not Ready for Aging Population

Researchers at Northeastern University found disparities in access to essential services like grocery stores, healthcare, and housing for America's aging population. Using visitation patterns, census data, and EPA data, researchers assessed how easily older adults could reach key services and categorized communities as either high-aging (over 50% aged 65+) or low-aging (under 20% aged 65+). While national disparities between access were not extreme, certain states and counties showed significant gaps. Experts stress the need for better infrastructure and urban planning - such as the 15-minute city concept - to ensure older adults can access vital services and maintain mobility as the population continues to age.

READ MORE

Scaling Clean Energy with Regional Financing Ecosystems

As electricity demand increases and federal incentives reshape the clean energy landscape, communities face a critical moment to expand reliable, cost-effective energy solutions. RMI highlights how regional financing ecosystems, which are collaborations among banks, governments, green banks, and economic development organizations, can unlock capital and align investments with local priorities. Case studies from Minnesota and New Orleans show that tailored strategies, rather than one-size-fits-all approaches, are key to inclusive economic growth. By structuring local clean energy pipelines into investment portfolios, these ecosystems reduce risk, attract diverse capital, and accelerate the transition to resilient, equitable energy systems.

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NARC Updates

Trump EO Tightens Oversight of Federal Grants

President Trump signed an executive order (EO), Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking, that strengthens the administration's control over the grantmaking process. The EO contains measures that give political appointees greater authority to deny and rescind grants that are at odds with the interest of the administration. The EO also states that grant awards shall not be used to "fund, promote, encourage, subsidize, or facilitate" illegal immigration, racial preferences, compromise public safety, or "promote anti-American values." The EO further streamlines administrative procedures and prioritizes funding for new recipients with low indirect costs.

MARC Concludes Signal Improvement Pilot Program

The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) completed a year-long traffic signal improvement pilot, Operation Green Light. The pilot, funded by a USDOT Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grant, leveraged crowdsourced data to evaluate traffic signal performance on key corridors in the Kansas City region. Over the past year, MARC collaborated with four vendors, Inrix, Clear Guide, Streetlight, and Flow Labs, to identify and analyze intersections with inefficient signal timing. This method allowed planners to pinpoint locations where adjustments could reduce delays without relying on resource-intensive field studies. As the region expands, this approach could provide a blueprint for planners to enhance commutes while conserving resources.

NARC Updates

New Report: Small Towns, Massive Opportunity: Unlocking Rural America's Potential

The McKinsey Institute of Economic Mobility's recent report, "Small Towns, Massive Opportunity: Unlocking Rural America's Potential," offers a new framework for understanding rural America by grouping regions into six archetypes – Agricultural Powerhouses, Manufacturing Workshops, Middle America, Migration Magnets, Remote Regions, and Resource-Rich Regions – based on economic patterns and quality-of-life outcomes.

The report analyzes the share of GDP by industry for each archetype, analyzes the share of GDP by industry for each archetype in 2022, and ranks archetypes based on resident outcomes across categories like standard of living, financial stability, job opportunities, health, education, housing, connectivity, and community strength. Notably, Agricultural Powerhouses consistently ranked at the top across all categories.

To drive improvement in well-being and mobility, the report proposes six actionable strategies, from supporting rural entrepreneurs to expanding healthcare access and workforce training, offering a roadmap for rural revitalization.

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Local Governments Modernize Waste Management with AI

Local governments in California and Ohio are using artificial intelligence (AI) to improve their recycling initiatives. The City of Centerville, OH launched an AI program that uses camera-based technology to identify and flag items that do not meet recycling guidelines in bins, allowing the City to identify and aid residents who need guidance. In San Francisco, the City's Ferry Building installed three Oscar Sort systems, a zero-waste AI system that recognizes items and places them in correct waste bins. The efforts have helped the City improve the efficiency of recycling systems and modernize waste management. As AI technology continues to grow and improve, local governments can find creative and helpful ways to utilize the technology.

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NARC Updates

North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning & Development Commission Unveils Data-Driven Housing Resource Platform

The North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning & Development Commission has launched the Regional Housing Hub, a centralized platform designed to support communities in addressing housing challenges. The Hub offers an interactive Housing Solutions Explorer, a curated set of resources focused on rehabilitation, blight remediation, new construction, and seasonal housing regulation, and a comprehensive Resource Hub featuring national best practices. It also includes findings from the 2022 Regional Housing Needs Assessment, which outlines current housing conditions and future opportunities. The initiative is supported by organizations such as HUD, USDA Rural Development, and the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, and aims to foster regional collaboration and data-driven planning.

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NVCOG Launches Regional Open Space Inventory

With funding from a U.S. Forest Service grant, the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) in Connecticut developed a regional Open Space Inventory to help local officials engage in targeted open space acquisition and support more informed grant-writing and planning. This project consists of an interactive GIS viewer that displays all 3,500+ open space parcels across 19 municipalities, and a Report & Guide with regulatory considerations, regional statistics, and photos. A major objective of the Inventory was to research municipal land records to determine whether each property had legal protection from future development, which is noted on the Viewer.

READ MORE

Core Value Highlights

Each month during our All Staff meeting, we recognize employees who have exhibited one of our Core Values. These nominations come from members of our leadership during our Leadership Team meeting a few weeks before the All Staff Meeting. Staff members recognized in August included:

SOLUTIONS & RESULTS

Andres Otero

Andres has done a great job with transitioning his focus to the Commute Friendly NC program.
-Matt Day

SOLUTIONS & RESULTS

Thomas McCallister

Thomas has done outstanding work with FTZ. He is getting a lot of questions on the program right now and is thinking very effectively on how to improve our administrative role.
-Lindsay Whitson

EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

LOGO Staff Volunteers

Thank you to Sean Uyehara, Shuchi Gupta, Erin Young, Jenny Halsey, Thomas McCallister, Lindsay Whitson, Beth Seidel, Carolyn Pennington, Alana Keegan, Jack Watson, and Matt Day (not pictured, at Rocky Mount location) for their hard work at the Local Government Career Expo.