

MID-OHIO VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL



MOVRC Monthly Newsletter
<http://www.movrc.org/>
304-422-4993

October 2020

MOVRC Issues its first loan under the US-EDA CARES ACT Revolving Loan Fund



September 30, 2020

U.S. Tours Inc, of Vienna, West Virginia was the first recipient of Mid Ohio Valley Regional Council's EDA-CARES ACT revolving loan fund.

MOVRC received \$3,120,000 from the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Agency through the CARES ACT. The funding is to be loaned to eligible small business to help recover from the COVID-19 business shutdown. The funding can also be used for other eligible purposes such as business acquisition, expansion, equipment purchase, inventory and working capital. These funds are loan funds and as such need to be repaid and cannot be forgiven.

U.S. Tours Inc. began in 1996 when Bob Cline, President saw a need in the local tourism market that he could fill. The company grew rapidly and acquired other business operations along the way, such as Uniglobe- Parkersburg in 2001. Then came 9/11/01 and the event that changed all our lives. Bob led his company through this drastic downturn in the travel industry and the company continued to survive and grow. US Tours partnered with Smoky Mountain Resorts in 2018 and has expanded into the rest of Tennessee. Then the COVID-19 business shutdown of 2020 happened, and Bob and his 20 employees had to learn a new way of doing business and assisting the clients with cancelled travel plans. Travel is starting to pick up and groups are planning trips for next spring. Bob is confident that US Tours will spring back into the flourishing business once again.

MOVRC loan funds assisted US Tours with working capital needs as they continue to bring the company back to operation.





The Wood-Washington-Wirt Interstate Planning Commission

The Wood-Washington-Wirt Interstate Planning Commission (WWW) has completed the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Fiscal Year 2021-2024. The TIP is a document identifying transportation projects that have been programmed utilizing federal funding during the four year period of the TIP. The document covers Wood County, WV and seven Townships in Washington County, OH. In general, projects range from transit projects, maintenance, resurfacing, and pedestrian and bicycle enhancements to bridge improvements and added capacity projects. In some instances, non-federal aid projects considered to be regionally significant are included on the TIP. An example includes the WV 2 expansion project from two to five lanes from County Route 3/8 to just north of WV 31 in Wood County, WV. The construction phase for that project is approximately \$32,000,000 utilizing state General Obligation Bonds. In total, the Wood County, WV portion of TIP represents an expenditure of approximately \$55,000,000 from all highway funding sources. The transit component identifies a combined expenditure of approximately \$8,500,000 for both capital and operating expenses. The Washington County, OH portion of the TIP represents a total expenditure of approximately \$25,000,000 during the TIP period.

Over the past several months WWW has been working toward hiring a consultant to develop the next Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the WWW planning area. The effort concluded with WWW entering into a professional services agreement with Burgess and Niple, Inc. in August 2020. The LRTP is required to address specific planning factors identified in federal transportation legislation. Among the various components the Plan is required to be multimodal in nature, have a twenty year planning horizon, be fiscally constrained, include an air quality conformity determination, be updated every five years and include performance measures reporting requirements. The Plan expected to be completed by December 2021.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD



The MOV Workforce Development Board is proud to announce our partnership with Premier Virtual to bring virtual career fairs and hiring events to the MOV. The WDB and West Virginia Reentry Councils will sponsor the first event in November. This will be an employer event on Wage Reimbursement: Second Chance Employment Initiatives, where we will discuss the advantages of hiring individuals with backgrounds to employment.

Melissa Morrison with Jobs & Hope West Virginia was featured in our September podcast. Melissa is a transition agent and she discussed how her organization helps individuals in recovery from substance abuse, as well as job seekers with other barriers to employment, find meaningful work. She also reveals the importance of partnering with the workforce system. Join us on Facebook to listen to this podcast, <https://www.facebook.com/WDBMOV>.

In August, WIOA Employer Services adult and dislocated worker programs served 36 individuals with on-the-job training, registered apprenticeships, transitional jobs and incumbent worker training.



FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM

As of October 1st, 30% of the FGP volunteers have returned to service. Most of districts in our service area have prohibited visitors/volunteers into the schools, which has made it difficult for the program to restart. Senior Corps provided an alternative tool kit to help get the volunteers back into service. FGP staff has been busy collaborating with community partners to put in place a plan and structure that supports FGP in an alternative manner via social distancing.



the school district making it difficult to assist in getting

SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

Approximately 70% of Senior Companion Volunteers have returned to service. Volunteers and clients are very excited for their visits to be taking place once again. SCP clients depend on their volunteer to assist them with transportation, grocery shopping, light housekeeping chores, meal preparation and most importantly companionship. While volunteers and clients have kept in contact by phone, these in-person visits are much needed. Volunteers will be following CDC guidelines and practicing social distancing as appropriate.

RSVP

We are happy to report that the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) has seen a steady increase in the number of volunteers returning to volunteering in a safe and sometimes modified way. In the month of September, roughly 125 volunteers were serving in some capacity. The bulk of our volunteers are serving in local food pantries and distribution centers as well as assisting in daily meals to seniors via their local senior centers. The volunteers are seeing a greater number of West Virginians of all ages frequenting their local food pantries and farmers markets.

FGP/SCP

Senior Corps extended the temporary allowance to pay eligible FGP/SCP stipended volunteers who, through no fault of their own, remain unable to serve. As such, FGP and SCP grantees have been provided guidance to continue to pay FGP and SCP volunteers a temporary allowance through **December 31, 2020**. FGP, SCP and RSVP volunteers have been given bottles of hand sanitizer and facial masks to help them as they continue to help their local communities during these uncertain times.

FGP/RSVP/SCP= Ameri Corps Seniors

On September 29th, the Corporation for National and Community Service released a new brand strategy for the future, announcing it will now operate as “AmeriCorps,” as part of a larger effort to grow awareness of service opportunities for all Americans. Along with the new name, the federal agency also revealed a new visual identity for the agency and all its programs, the first major update for the agency since it was created 25 years ago. While the agency’s operating name is “AmeriCorps,” its legal name will remain the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The changes will unite all national service programs under the name AmeriCorps. Organizations and members funded through the AmeriCorps VISTA, NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), and State & National programs, as well as the Volunteer Generation Fund, will operate and be promoted as AmeriCorps. The agency’s three programs that cater exclusively to volunteers 55 years and older under the Senior Corps name – Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP – will now operate and be promoted under the banner of AmeriCorps Seniors.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

On June 18th, a \$1,464,800 CDBG was awarded to the Jackson County Commission for the Southern Jackson Public Service District Water Extension Project. This project will provide access to water to approximately 82 additional customers in areas of Windell Ridge Rd., Station Camp Rd., Jim Ridge Rd., and White Pine Rd. in Jackson County.

The Ellenboro Water Improvements Project bid opening was held on August 20th, resulting in a bid underrun of \$360,000 with Stonegate Construction and Mid Atlantic Storage Systems being the low bidders. The Town has received authorization to use the excess funds to make additional improvements to the water system. The project closing date is October 29th.

The WV CARES Act Small Business Grant deadline was September 30th. With the help of the development authorities, we were able to assist in the submission of applications for approximately 25 small businesses/sole-proprietors in the region.

The Community Development Program helped Mt. Zion PSD apply for a grant to the Parkersburg Area Community Foundation (PACF) for a bulk water dispenser station to be installed in the Upper West Fork Community Park.

The Sistersville Water Improvements Project opened for bid on September 3rd and will be closing on October 29th. There will be a pre-construction conference held on the 29th as well. The lowest bidders are Littman Construction and Chojnacki Construction.

The Community Development Program consulted the City of Sistersville in applying to the Barth Family Foundation for a \$40,000 grant toward a new roof at the Sistersville City Building.

We are also assisting in the submission of a FEMA landslide application for hazard mitigation in Wood County.

