

***Executive Director's Dialogue***

This year has seen many significant changes here at the Five County Association of Governments. Many of these involved reorganization of staff responsibilities due to programmatic demands while some resulted from retirements. This acknowledges that one of the only constants in life is change. Some things, however, remain as they always have.

Chief among the things which have remained the same here is the sincere dedication of Association staff in accomplishing a wide range of critical responsibilities required in serving the needs of residents of this wonderful region we call home. Of course we do not work in a vacuum, thus I join with Association staff in expressing our sincere appreciation to the elected officials and citizen volunteers throughout the Five County region for your continued support and willingness to assist the Association in various capacities that contribute toward the success of our organization.



**The Canyon View High School Madrigals provided festive entertainment at the Five County AOG staff Christmas luncheon in Cedar City on December 5<sup>th</sup>.**

I also thank those on our Steering Committee who were able to join us to participate in our staff Christmas luncheon held at the brand new Stonehaven Special Events Center in Cedar City earlier this month.

We all look forward to the new year and wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. *(Bryan Thiriot)*

***The Volunteer Center and United Way Team up for Macaroni and Cheese Event***



**Macaroni and cheese packaging at the Dixie Center**

The Dixie State Gardner Center was packed with over 500 volunteers of all ages who rolled up their sleeves and in three short hours packed 50,000 meals that will be distributed to food insecure individuals and families in Southern Utah.

The Volunteer Center of Washington County & United Way Dixie organized the project. Money to purchase the macaroni noodles, cheese powder and soy protein came from sponsors, including Wal-Mart, Target, Zion's Bank, The Spectrum newspaper, Chase Bank and Cache Valley Bank.

Families, church groups, civic organizations, city officials, schools and business teams, packaged and boxed the macaroni.

Volunteers walked away feeling great about giving back, and organizations helped create lasting memories. It is so great to live in such a caring community, and we appreciate those who helped to make this event a success!



## Association Staff Member Named as Utah Housing Matters 2013 Person of the Year



The Utah Housing Coalition's 17<sup>th</sup> Annual "Utah Housing Matters Conference" was held October 15-16th in Salt Lake City. Each year, UHC honors outstanding businesses, organizations, and individuals engaged in making a significant contribution or benefit to communities in the field of affordable housing and community development.

At its awards banquet, UHC presented their 2013 "Person of the Year" award to **Diane Lamoreaux**, Community Development Program Specialist at the Five County Association of Governments. This recognition is reserved for an individual who has shown leadership and innovation in their field or who has gone beyond their call of service to advocate for, preserve, and grow the affordable housing inventory in our state.



Diane was a special invited guest at the dinner and was lauded for her countless hours working to ensure small communities throughout Southern Utah have the opportunity to apply for Community Development Block Grant funding, as well as helping to change the political stigma associated with low income housing. Diane was instrumental in driving the adoption of CDBG rating and ranking criteria that encourages affordable housing projects. It was stated during the presentation *"If we put Diane's name on each of the projects which she has helped to make a reality, her name would be in every community of every county in the Five County area."*

Diane has worked for the Association since 1982, the past 13 years as a Program Specialist. Her dedication to the CDBG program and housing projects specifically, has enabled millions of dollars in match funding and low interest loans to come to our region, which have resulted in hundreds of new affordable housing units throughout the rural communities of Southern Utah. Kudos to you Diane on this well deserved recognition. *(Gary Zabriskie, Director of Community and Economic Development)*

### ***Make the Homeless Smile!***

The world of the homeless seems very far from yours -- but in some ways it is quite near. For any of us, the loss of a job, the death of a spouse or a child, or a severe physical disability could be the route to total despair. These are the very tragedies that have happened to many homeless people. Struck by personal tragedies, many individuals living in Southern Utah have lost their homes and been deserted by the families and friends they once had.

The Volunteer Center of Washington County, United Way Dixie, and Planet 94.1 joined forces to help make the homeless smile.

With the support of the local community and businesses we raised over \$1,900.00, gathered endless amounts of clothing, shoes, blankets, and sleeping bags. In addition to this, we packaged 300 hygiene kits using the items which were collected.

We would like to extend a big thank you to Planet 94.1 for broadcasting the event and to Red Robin for donating 100 meals. And last, but not least, we thank all of the caring and compassionate individuals, families and businesses who donated items to those who need them most.



**Carol Hollowell and Jane Lewis pictured with smile donations**

### **Surfing Into Retirement - Jane Lewis**



There are not enough words to tell about the many things that Jane Lewis has accomplished in her career. She has been an amazing part of the Community Action program and valuable asset on many State of Utah committees. Jane is a caring and dedicated advocate who helps people to find supports during trying times in their lives. We are sad to announce that Jane Lewis retired November 15, 2013 from full time employment at Five County Association of Governments. She has been a valued employee who has made a tremendous difference in many lives. Jane will continue her efforts to improve the community by volunteering at the Community Resource Center (CRC).

Five County CAP and the Washington County Volunteer Center hosted a Retirement food drive on November 13. It was an amazing event accumulating about 200 lbs. of food for the CRC pantry. Many people attended to show their support as Jane begins a new journey. We wish her joy in all of her endeavors and we will miss her being at the office.

"There is a whole new kind of life ahead, full of experiences just waiting to happen. Some call it 'retirement.' I call it bliss."  
-Betty Sullivan

## Staff Spotlight



David Jones joins the Five County AOG as the Community Action Planner. David has spent the bulk of his career working in Military Family programs, where his most recent position was as the Officer in Charge for the Utah National Guard Community Covenant Program, with the mission to cultivate relationships with

Utah's local governments and other organizations to increase Veteran, Service-member and Family support. David also serves part time as an Army National Guard Chaplain with the 2/222 Field Artillery (Triple Deuce!) in Cedar City.

David holds a Bachelors Degree from BYU and a Masters Degree from USU both in Marriage, Family, and Human Development, and is also a Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE). One of his favorite things to do is to teach courses on Marriage and Family, and he frequently does so in retreats for National Guard couples, in Community Education courses, and as an Adjunct Professor at Dixie State University.

David was raised in Utah and Juab Counties, graduating from Tintic High in Eureka, but has called Washington County "home" since June 2011—and he never intends to leave! He is the happy husband of Melodie, who is a Second Grade Teacher, and the proud father of their combined eight children.

He looks forward to serving the Five County citizens and agencies in his new role.

### How Effective is the Weatherization Program?



So is weatherization really effective, you decide. The Five County Association of Governments started to administer the Weatherization program in 1981. During the past 32 years, workers have weatherized 4,972 homes in the Five County area, with an average savings of \$400.00 a home. Nationally, according to the DOE, that equates in dollars and cents to \$198,880,000.00 in today's

dollars. Not to mention the jobs created, along with supporting local businesses. So once again I ask, does it work?

"The investment we've made over the last three years is paying huge dividends across the country," said Secretary Chu. Not only has it put Americans to work, it has helped families save money by saving energy. It is a win-win for the whole country."

In addition to helping families save energy and money, the program has also helped train thousands of workers

across the country and has spurred the demand for energy-efficient technologies and products.

On average, the program reduces energy consumption for low-income families by up to 35 percent, saving them more than \$400 on their heating and cooling bills in the first year alone.

While the Weatherization Assistance Program is limited to lower-income families, most families can save on their utility bills by taking some simple, affordable steps, like using more efficient light bulbs, sealing drafty cracks around doors and windows, or using a programmable thermostat. Larger upgrades can save families even more and will more than pay for themselves over time. You can learn more at [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov)

The Weatherization program is administered by the Five County Association of Governments and serves Washington, Iron, Kane, Garfield and Beaver counties. To find out more visit our web site at [www.wxworks.net](http://www.wxworks.net)

### Transportation Planning Staff Coordinates Vanpool for Garfield County Workers

Through a partnership with UTA Rideshare, AOG Transportation Planning staff coordinated a vanpool program for Ruby's Inn employees commuting from surrounding communities. The project was initiated as part of the mobility management program, which aims to improve access to jobs and services for residents in the region, while improving the efficiency of transportation systems. AOG staff worked with Ruby's Inn Staff to produce a Bryce Canyon City Commuter Study, which suggests that vanpools are a viable option from Bryce Canyon City to Panguitch and the Bryce Valley, to serve Tropic, Henrieville, and Cannonville residents.

A copy of the study can be found at <http://fcaogtpo.files.wordpress.com/2013/10/bryce-canyon-city-commuter-study-with-appendices.pdf>



Under the program, Ruby's Inn has contracted with UTA, who will provide a van to be driven by employees. One of the great benefits

to the vanpool program is that they require no subsidy and save employees hundreds of dollars in commute costs, while helping employers manage parking demand. The first vanpool started transporting 12 employees to Ruby's Inn from Panguitch on November 1, running 7 days/week. Susan Thompson, HR representative from Ruby's Inn and administrator of the vanpool program, notes that everything is running smoothly and they hope more will take advantage of the service. Five County Staff is communicating with other employers in the region, including Circle Four Farms in Beaver County, who may benefit from a similar program. *(Levi Roberts, Associate Planner)*

## **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA)**



VITA is looking for volunteers to prepare income taxes for low-income families around the Five County area. The program offers the necessary training for IRS certification to prepare taxes.

There is also a need for volunteers at our tax sites to greet each client having their taxes prepared by the certified tax preparers. Spanish speaking volunteers are also needed to assist as interpreters for our growing Hispanic community.

Tax preparation sites will be opening in late January, or the first part of February. If your income is \$51,000 or less, and you want your taxes prepared at no cost, please contact Utah 211 for an appointment in January.

Training to become IRS certified will begin in December. For more information, please contact Tom Everett, Regional Coordinator, at Five County Association of Governments 435-673-3548, Ext. 104 or via e-mail at: [teverett@fivecounty.utah.gov](mailto:teverett@fivecounty.utah.gov)

Please submit articles to Diane Lamoreaux via e-mail to ([dlamoreaux@fivecounty.utah.gov](mailto:dlamoreaux@fivecounty.utah.gov)) or in writing to: P.O. Box 1550; St. George, Utah 84771-1550.

For other information or services, please call (435) 673-3548 or visit our website at: <http://www.fivecounty.utah.gov>

Five County Association of Governments is now on



Follow us: @FiveCountyAOG

You can also find the Five County Association of Governments on



**Five County Association of Governments  
1070 West 1600 South, Building B  
P.O. Box 1550  
St. George, Utah 84771-1550**



**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**