

CONNECTIONS

A newsletter from the
Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

April 2012

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

[RPCGB Program Budget](#)

April 11, 2012
RPCGB Offices
9AM, 1st Floor Conf Rm

[Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting](#)

April 11, 2012
RPCGB Offices
1:30PM, 1st Floor Conf Rm

[APCA Steering Committee](#)

April 12, 2012
RPCGB Offices
1:30PM, 1st Floor Conf Rm

[RPCGB Board of Directors Meeting](#)

April 18, 2012
RPCGB Offices
10:30AM, 1st Floor Conf Rm

[Transportation Citizens Committee Meeting](#)

CANCELED

[Transportation Technical Committee Meeting](#)

CANCELED

[MPO Subcommittee Meeting](#)

CANCELED

For meeting information,
including postings of any
meeting notices and
cancellations please visit the
[RPCGB website](#).

2012 Clean Energy Conference



April 26

Harbert Building
Birmingham-Southern College

The Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham will host the **2012 Clean Energy Conference on April 26 at the Harbert Building on the campus of Birmingham-Southern College**. The one-day conference, sponsored by RPCGB, will focus on multiple clean fuel and energy alternatives. Speakers will discuss infrastructure and technological advancements, sustainability and the future of alternative sources on a regional and national scale. Attendees will have an opportunity to talk to vendors and see the latest clean fuel vehicles on display.

The conference will feature a keynote speech from Sid McAnnally, vice president of external affairs for Energen and all subsidiaries. McAnnally will discuss the national and local future of natural gas. McAnnally joined Energen in 2009 and is responsible for Corporate Development and Strategic Planning, Economic Development, Governmental Affairs and Communications for the company and all subsidiaries, as well as the Energen Foundation. Prior to joining Energen, Sid was the leader of the governmental and regulatory affairs practice group at Maynard, Cooper & Gale, P.C. where he represented financial and utility interests across the southeast.



Sid McAnnally

Registration for the conference is \$15 prior to April 6 and \$25 from April 6-23. Attendance is limited to the first 100 registrants, but there will be day-of registration if there is availability after the 23rd. To learn more about the event, view the agenda and register to attend, please visit the [conference page](#) on the RPCGB website.

SPONSORS





Air Quality Expo

Air Quality Expo

Alabama Partners for Clean Air (APCA), an initiative of the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, will host the Second Annual Air Quality Expo on Saturday, May 5 at Pepper Place in downtown Birmingham.

This FREE event will give attendees the chance to learn more about air quality and the steps needed for improvement. Highlights of the expo will include: Pepper Place farmers, free emissions testing for vehicles, viewing of several alternative fuel vehicles, CommuteSmart will be present to offer alternative commuting options, free asthma and health screenings vouchers, opportunities to learn about recycling and plenty of GIVEAWAYS!!!!

Check back on the [APCA website](#) for more information in the coming weeks.

National Air Quality Awareness Week is May 6 - May 12 and promotes a better understanding of ways the community can help to improve air quality in the region. To kick off the week in Birmingham,

Bike From Work Day



May is National Bike Month and the 9th Annual Bike to Work Day will have a new spin this year! **Bike from Work** will be held in the evening of Thursday, May 10 and include an organized bike ride to promote using alternative transportation for commuting to and from work. Hosted by CommuteSmart, an initiative of the RPCGB, participants will begin and end their ride at Avondale Brewery. The evening will also include a family-friendly celebration after the ride that will promote safe cycling in

Birmingham.

Check back on the [CommuteSmart website](#) for more information in the coming weeks.

Revolving Loan Fund Highlight -- ThinkData Solutions, Inc.

This month's Revolving Loan Fund Highlight is ThinkData Solutions, Inc.



ThinkData Solutions, Inc. is a one-year-old technology firm specializing in technical training and custom application development.

Located in the Innovation Depot, ThinkData Solutions offers classes in its technology lab, as well as at client locations. They provide specialized training that meets the needs of customers on multiple levels and platforms. The lab at Innovation Depot was created out of a need to have a dedicated space for providing high-end data and training for companies and their employees. ThinkData Solutions participated in the RPCGB's Revolving Loan Fund and used the loan to create their technology lab.

ThinkData Solutions can provide specialized training in multiple applications including, Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft Visual Studio, Microsoft Office Excel, Microsoft Office Access, Microsoft Certified Learning Solutions Partner, and Microsoft Certified Solutions Developer.

ThinkData Solutions president, Robin Hunt, has a dozen years in coordinating technology platforms for multiple companies around the country. ThinkData Solutions was created as a result of being in and out of labs across the country, and a desire to centralize the process into one location.

"One of our key features is productivity," Hunt said, "We are constantly adding new programs based on our client needs."

To learn more about ThinkData Solutions, Inc. and the work they are doing to improve the productivity of companies, visit [their website](#) or follow them on [Facebook](#). For more information on the RPCGB's Revolving Loan Fund, please visit the [RPCGB website](#).



Robin Hunt of ThinkData Solutions

Free Assistance with Grant Applications and Transportation Operations

For governments and nonprofit agencies within the six-county region, the RPCGB can assist you in applying for ADSS and ALDOT grants (namely Jobs Access Reverse Commute, New Freedom, 5310, and 5311). The RPCGB can also review completed grants prior to final submission and/or advise regarding compliance with the locally-adopted [Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan](#). Another way the RPCGB can help is by providing information on general transportation issues, including standard operating procedures, new ideas, national research, capital equipment purchases, performance measures, etc. *For information, contact Laurel Land at 205-264-8473 or [lland@rpcgb.org](mailto:liland@rpcgb.org).*

Mayor Profile



Each month we will profile a mayor within the six-county region. This month's profile is Mayor Petey Ellis of Sumiton.

Petey Ellis, Mayor of Sumiton

- Elected as mayor in 1992 and has won each election over the past 20 years
- Owns Petey Ellis Automotive
- Attends Sumiton Church of God and is a member of the Lions Club
- Has lived in Sumiton his entire life

Mayor Ellis on making changes to the city: *When I came into office we had nowhere to go but up. We had lots of infrastructure problems. We had to completely rehab our water lines. Sixty days ago we got our own sewer. We are addressing water meters and improving them. We just finished a sidewalk project and we're about to start another.*

On the future of the city: *The citizens of the city will vote on April 10 whether to be wet or dry (allow for alcohol sales). We are also looking to build a new fire station. We have a really good volunteer fire department and police department. Having Beville State Community College bring in 700-800 people a day helps us continue to grow.*

On being a public servant: *You're a public servant first and foremost. If you can keep the streets clean and the people safe then that's what is really important.*

Employee Profile



Each month we will profile an employee of the RPCGB. This month's profile is Michelle Wilder, CommuteSmart Marketing Outreach Coordinator.

Michelle Wilder CommuteSmart Marketing Outreach Coordinator

- **Hometown:** Cullman, AL
- **Education:** Bachelor's Degree in Public Relations from

Auburn University

- **How long have you been with the RPCGB?:** 5 weeks
- **Give a short overview of your job:** As marketing outreach coordinator for CommuteSmart, I set up events and presentations at 40 of our partner companies to educate employees about our program. My ultimate goal is to motivate them to register and start alternatively commuting to work, which leads to fewer cars on the roads and improved air quality in Jefferson and Shelby counties.
- **What is your favorite aspect of your job?:** I meet tons of different people every day! I love talking and getting to know others, and I am so passionate about CommuteSmart that it's rewarding when I help other people get involved and save money.
- **Tell us one thing we don't know about you:** I can't look at something without editing it. When I was a copy editor at The Auburn Plainsman, I was nicknamed the "Word Cop" because nothing ever got past my red pen.
- **Finish this sentence: "Ten years from now, I hope to...":** be doing something I love. My dream is to open my own bakery or bed and breakfast.

CONNECTIONS is brought to you by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham
Find out more at www.rpcgb.org



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