MINUTES OF REGULAR RPC MEETING

DATE: Friday, December 13, 2019
TIME: 8:30 a.m.
PLACE: Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, John Dimit Conference Room, 1776 E. Washington Street, Urbana, IL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Smith, Diane Marlin, Giraldo Rosales, Patrick Brown, Richard Helton, Tami Fruhling-Voges, Jim Goss, Steven Summers, Deb Frank Feinen, Katina Wilcher, Will Kyles

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dennis Roberts, Ana Olguin

RPC STAFF PRESENT: Dalitso Sulamoyo, Elizabeth Murphy, Becky Krueger, Rita Morocoima-Black, Lisa Benson, Brandi Granse, Pamela Schroeder

OTHERS PRESENT: George Danos, Champaign County Auditor

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order, Roll Call
Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. Roll Call was taken and a quorum declared present.

2. Approval of Agenda/Addenda
Mr. Goss moved, seconded by Mr. Rosales, to approve the December 13, 2019 RPC Meeting Agenda. The motion unanimously carried.

3. Audience Participation
Mr. Danos, Champaign County Auditor, addressed the RPC Board concerning the FY18 Audit Status. Mr. Danos stated he was glad to report the cumulative year-end financial report has been uploaded to GATA on Thursday, December 12, 2019. Mr. Danos added that the focus of CCRPC’s reporting needs for the sake of compliance has been accomplished. Mr. Danos said he expects the single audit to be completed by year-end 2019. The Champaign County Auditor’s office has not received a letter from the DCEO accountability officer, most likely due to a change in leadership in that office. Ms. Murphy asked Mr. Danos when the Consolidated Financial Report would be uploaded to the Federal Clearinghouse. Mr. Danos stated it would be uploaded by year-end 2019.
Mayor Marlin entered the meeting at 8:40 am.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Danos exited at 8:45 am.

4. Minutes
   A. RPC Draft Meeting Minutes – November 22, 2019

Ms. Wilcher moved, seconded by Mr. Rosales, to approve the November 22, 2019 RPC Meeting Minutes. The motion unanimously carried.

5. Consolidated Financial Reports
   A. November 30, 2019

Ms. Murphy stated the Consolidated Financial Report for the period ending November 30, 2019 was not included in this packet because General Ledger data was not available. The report will be included in the next RPC Meeting.

6. List of Bills
   A. Fund 075 (Operating Fund): November 2019
   B. Fund 104 (Early Childhood Fund): November 2019
   C. Fund 110 (Workforce Development Fund): November 2019
   D. Fund 474 (USDA Revolving Loan Fund): November 2019
   E. Fund 475 (Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund): November 2019

Ms. Murphy directed the Commissioners to the List of Bills for the period ending November 30, 2019. The List of Bills was not unusual and reflects a significant number of LIHEAP payments due to the increased number of clients served this year. Workforce development participation has also increased and there is additional operational activity at the new Early Childhood Center. There was nothing unusual to report.

Mr. Rosales moved, seconded by Mr. Goss, to accept and place on file the November 2019 List of Bills. The motion unanimously carried.
7. Action Items
   A. FY20 Budget Additions

Ms. Murphy directed the Commissioners to the FY20 Budget Additions and summarized the information.

Discussion ensued.

**Mr. Summers moved, seconded by Mayor Fruhling-Voges, to approve FY20 Budget Additions. The motion unanimously carried.**

B. FY20 Final Budget – Compensation Adjustments

Dr. Sulamoyo introduced the FY20 Final Budget and Compensation Adjustments to the Commissioners. Dr. Sulamoyo stated that because RPC was involved in implementing a new performance evaluation system there was a slight delay in finalizing the final budget and compensation adjustments.

Ms. Murphy directed the Commissioners to the key items in the compensation plan and highlighted the information contained in the FY20 Final Budget and Compensation Adjustments Memorandum dated December 10, 2019.

**Mr. Rosales moved, seconded by Mr. Summers, to approve the Compensation Adjustments as presented. The motion unanimously carried.**

**Mr. Rosales moved, seconded by Mr. Summers, to approve the FY20 Final Budget, as presented. The motion unanimously carried.**

C. Resolution to Approve Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2045 for the Champaign-Urbana Urbanized Area Transportation Study (CUUATS)

Ms. Morocoima-Black directed the Commissioners to the Resolution to Approve Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2045 for the Champaign-Urbana Urbanized Area Transportation Study (CUUATS) and summarized the information contained in the document.
Discussion followed.

Mr. Rosales moved, seconded by Mayor Marlin, to approve the Resolution to Approve Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) 2045 for the Champaign-Urbana Urbanized Area Transportation Study (CUUATS). The motion unanimously carried.

D. Revised Champaign County Community Action Board Bylaws
Ms. Benson directed the Commissioners to the Revised Champaign County Community Action Board Bylaws memorandum dated December 13, 2019 and provided a summary of the information contained in the memorandum.

Mr. Roberts moved, seconded by Mr. Rosales, to approve the Revised Champaign County Community Action Board Bylaws as presented. The motion unanimously carried.

8. Head Start/Early Head Start (Brandi Granse)
   A. Head Start Management Report, including Financials and Service Area Reports:
      Dated: December 5, 2019

Ms. Wilcher moved, seconded by Mr. Rosales, to accept and place on file the Head Start/Early Head Start Management Report, including Financials and Service Area Reports, dated December 5, 2019. The motion unanimously carried.

Mr. Kyles entered the meeting at 8:53 a.m.

9. Program Division Updates:
   A. Elizabeth Murphy, Chief Operating Officer

Ms. Murphy reported RPC staff are working toward closing out FY19 and preparing for the FY20 budget year.
The West Champaign Early Childhood Center is now open and seven classrooms are operational. There will be ongoing customized improvements to the classrooms on the south side. The facility improvements will be completed by February 28, 2020, in order to meet federal timelines of our award. Once completed, the facility will have a total of fourteen functioning classrooms.

B. Becky Krueger, Human Resources Director
   i. Human Resources Report dated December 6, 2019 for personnel transactions between November 19, 2019 and December 5, 2019

Ms. Krueger directed the Commissioners to the Human Resources Report dated December 6, 2019 for personnel transactions between November 19, 2019 and December 6, 2019 and summarized the information contained on the report. RPC currently has 301 employees and 103 work-experienced employees, for a total of 404 employees on the payroll.

The RPC Management Team is working to fill 30 open positions. Currently, there are 16 candidates in the pre-employment process.

During first quarter 2020 the RPC Management Team will review policies that have been impacted by several state/federal statues, including Equal Pay, Illinois Wage Payment Collections Act, Nursing Mother Regulations, Illinois Service Member Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, Sexual Harassment Training. One Day Rest Act, Human. The new laws on medical marijuana, as well as legalizing marijuana in the state of Illinois have passed through policy and will be reviewed. The ongoing questions concerning CBD Oil will also be addressed.

C. Lisa Benson, Community Services Director

Community Services is currently preparing the United Way grant that will hopefully continue the services via the Emergency Family Shelter and also to provide utility assistance to those who are moving from unstable to stable subsidized housing. A small grant will also be submitted to support a new program for moral reclamation therapy to tie in to the work at the Youth Assessment Center.
Jonathan Westfield, RPC’s YAC coordinator, inspired the creative idea to provide staff at the mall in order to engage the community and promote the services along with a researcher from the University of Illinois is involved in working with the YAC families and other families in the community.

LIHEAP is scheduling two more outreach blitz events in the communities of Ludlow and Mahomet.

The Weatherization program is working with the State of Illinois in a project that will impact at least 27 multi-family households in a possible solar pilot in Urbana, Illinois.

D. Rita Morocooima-Black, Planning & Community Development Director

Census: Complete Counts Committee
A CCC was held last Tuesday. CUPHD has not received the Grant Agreement from DHS to act as the Regional Intermediary for the North East Central Illinois Region to Coordinate Census outreach to Hard to Count populations in the six counties (Champaign, Douglas, Ford, Iroquois, Piatt, and Vermilion) region. We are waiting for CUPHD to receive and execute the Grant Agreement in order for us to post and hire interns to work with the RPC staff reaching out to HTC population in Champaign County.

RPC applied as a sub-recipient under the CUPHD Census grant application to conduct outreach for the 0 to 5 population, homeless, senior and low-income population in Champaign County.

RPC Technical Committee
An RPC Technical Committee meeting will be held immediately after the RPC Board meeting to discuss the Scope of Service for RPC membership and membership fees. The proposed Scope and membership fees will be brought to the RPC board meeting in February 2020 for review.

USDOT State and Local Government Data Analysis Tools for Roadway Safety Grant Opportunity
The U.S. Department of Transportation released a Safety Data Initiative Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) titled, “State and Local Government Data Analysis Tools for Roadway Safety”. It seeks to build the capacity of State, local and tribal governments to use innovative data tools and information to improve roadway safety.

- Funding available: up to $3 million for up to 12 awards
Eligible applicants: State or local governments, metropolitan, planning organizations (MPO) and regional governments, other political subdivisions of a State or local government, and tribal governments

Application due date: January 17, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. ET

RPC is considering applying for this funding opportunity partnering with Champaign County Highway Department and IDOT. For the grant application, we would like to implement the Systemic Safety Project Selection Tool (SSPS), developed by FHWA in 2013, for rural Champaign County roadways. This application will also be an implementation of the IDOT Systemic Safety Improvements: Analysis Guidelines, and Procedure document (SSI Guidelines) published in 2014, which is similar to FHWA’s SSPS tool, but provides additional clarity on data requirements and it would include steps to use IDOT’s Benefit/Cost analysis tool. As part of the grant application, a web application will be produced that allows users to click on roadway segments/intersections and see historic crash statistics, future crash risk assessments based on the Highway Safety Manual procedures, proposed countermeasures and B/C estimation, among other functionalities.

It is hoped to create a tool that not only the Champaign County Highway Department will find useful to address the roadway safety problems in a practical way, but also that it can be expanded to the urbanized area and used by IDOT to encourage adoption in other counties to further FHWA and IDOT’s effort to encourage risk-based systemic safety improvements.

Bus and Bus Facilities Grant

As part of the IDOT grant application for Bus and Bus Facilities, RPC submitted a request for four buses to replace and expand the C-CARTS current fleet. RPC was unofficially notified that we received the funding for all four buses, however RPC must pay in advance for the buses ($208,000). IDOT will provide reimbursement.

Mr. Goss moved, seconded by Mr. Summers, to accept and place on file the Program Division Updates. The motion unanimously carried.

10. CEO Management Report: Presented Orally for Discussion

Dr. Sulamoyo stated after the November 22, 2019 RPC Meeting, a Study Session was held that included the Champaign Park District and the Commissioners concerning an initiative that RPC has been in discussions with the Champaign Park District for the development of the Martens Center. There was a presentation by the Champaign Park District’s Executive Director, Mr. Joe DeLuca. The vision of collaborating with the park district potentially resulting in six classrooms within the Martens
Center to serve our Head Start children was shared during the session. Since that session, there have been two additional meetings with the park district and their architects. There is the process of designing the building itself, based on not only the needs of Head Start, but also the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and the park district. Subsequent to the design phase accommodating all three participants, there will be some preliminary cost estimates developed, which are different from the estimates from which we were originally operating. We are expecting the preliminary cost estimates some time in January 2020. There will be a contingency amount, since those dollar amounts will not be based on actual bidding for building construction. It is our intent to wait for those figures to be submitted to us once the architects have finalized their work. RPC will then review and bring the cost estimates back to the Commissioners for approval on whether or not we wish to pursue based on cost.

RPC has been in discussions with the City of Champaign, as well as Unit 4 School District concerning a young adult program. The two entities have been working for the last year on developing a program that would serve young adults, as well as their families. These young adults have been identified through criteria developed by the Unit 4 School District. The current proposal on the table is for RPC to act as the lead agency and administer this program. A few more meetings will take place in the near future with the City of Champaign and Unit 4 to work out a few more details. Once all the specifics are finalized and approved by the respective bodies, RPC will bring the information back to the Commissioners for their review and approval.

Dr. Sulamoyo directed the Commissioners to the 2019 RPC Annual Report that highlights a year of effective strategies and exceptional outcomes.

Dr. Sulamoyo extended his appreciation to the Honorable Chuck Smith, Mayor of Rantoul for being the RPC Chair this year. There was applause.

11. Old Business
There was none.

12. New Business
There was none.
13. Closed Session Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) to consider the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline or performance of specific employees of the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission.

Ms. Wilcher moved, seconded by Mr. Rosales, to adjourn into Closed Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) to consider the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline or performance of specific employees of the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission.

ROLL CALL VOTE TAKEN:

|                         | Yes |  | Yes |
|-------------------------|-----|  |     |
| Charles Smith           |     | Jim Goss |     |
| Richard Helton          |     | Diane Marlin |     |
| Katina Wilcher          |     | Carol Mitten | Absent |
| Ana Olguin              | Absent | Dennis Roberts | Absent |
| Tami Fruhling-Voges     |     | Deborah Frank |     |
|                         |     | Feinen |     |
| Steven Summers          | Yes | Patrick Brown | Yes |
| Giraldo Rosales         | Yes | Will Kyles | Yes |

Motion carried unanimously.

At 9:25 a.m., the Commissioners adjourned into Closed Session.

At 9:31 a.m., the Commissioners returned into Open Session.

ROLL CALL VOTE TAKEN:

|                         | Yes |  | Yes |
|-------------------------|-----|  |     |
| Charles Smith           |     | Jim Goss |     |
| Richard Helton          |     | Diane Marlin |     |
| Katina Wilcher          |     | Carol Mitten | Absent |
| Ana Olguin              | Absent | Dennis Roberts | Absent |
| Tami Fruhling-Voges     |     | Deborah Frank |     |
|                         |     | Feinen |     |
| Steven Summers          | Yes | Patrick Brown | Yes |
| Giraldo Rosales         | Yes | Will Kyles | Yes |

Motion carried unanimously.
Mr. Helton moved, seconded by Mayor Marlin, to meet the requirement under the Employment Agreement Between the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission and Dalitso S. Sulamoyo, Section 4 – Part D, in the amount of $153,000.00 per year. In addition, a one-time merit increase of $5,000.00 is granted. Mayors Smith, Feinen, and Marlin will meet in early Spring 2020 to begin contract negotiations. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Sulamoyo said he appreciated the Commissioners’ confidence and looks forward to creating an even bigger positive impact for the community.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Schroeder

Pam Schroeder, Recording Secretary

Attachment:

i. 2019 Annual Report
A YEAR OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES.

EXCEPTIONAL OUTCOMES.
Early Childhood Education Program Honored for Innovation, Nominated for Statewide Award (February)

The Illinois Head Start Association’s (IHSA) Innovative Erieght Practices project named the RPC’s Early Childhood Education program as its monthly winner in February. The project highlights programs that are using innovative and creative strategies, in this case the RPC’s creation of the Social Skills and Prevention Coach role. Performing this role for the RPC are Andrew Hulten at the Urbana Early Childhood Education Center, Jennifer Spain at the Savoy Early Childhood Education Center, and Camille Bookter at the Rantoul Early Childhood Education Center. Prioritizing prevention, the coaches provide strength-based reflective support for staff, collect behavior-related data, build relationships with families, and help anticipate the need for preventative transition support for students.

New Program Introduced to Increase Safety in Garden Hills Community—While Making Homes More Energy Efficient (March)

A safety and energy efficiency program designed to benefit homeowners and single-family renters came to Champaign’s Garden Hills community during the Spring. The Safety, Lighting, Energy Efficiency Program—or SLEEP—is a partnership between the RPC, the City of Champaign, and Ameren Illinois. RPC representatives went door-to-door in Garden Hills to distribute energy efficiency kits and provide more information for residents about SLEEP. In addition, residents had an opportunity to attend workshops where they learned about simple tips to reduce their energy consumption. Other services available included home energy efficiency upgrades and the installation of safety measures such as window and door locks and video doorbells—all at no cost to Garden Hills residents.

RPC Hosts Noted Children’s Authors (March)

The RPC’s Early Childhood Education program hosted award-winning children’s authors M.J. Mouton and Julia Durango in March as part of the bi-annual Youth Literature Festival. Mouton presented to two different groups of children at the Urbana Early Childhood Education Center while Durango made her presentation at the Champaign Early Childhood Education Center. Started by the College of Education at the University of Illinois in 2008, the three-day festival celebrates the value of literature in the lives of youth by bringing together nationally known authors, illustrators, poets, and storytellers to share their stories, their craft, and their enthusiasm for books with children.
RPC’s Early Childhood Education Program Earns High Marks from National Scoring System for Preschool Classrooms (April)

A national monitoring review that assesses classroom quality delivered positive scores for the RPC’s Early Childhood Education program. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) scored the RPC’s program above the national average in a number of the domains and dimensions it measures in regards to teacher-child interactions. Trained and certified observers conducted these reviews at each of the RPC’s Early Childhood Education Centers. The RPC scored above the national average in the domains of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization and in the dimensions of Teacher Sensitivity, Regard for Student Perspectives, Productivity, Instructional Learning Formats, and Language Modeling.

Youth Assessment Center Partners with University of Illinois (April)

Identifying factors that contribute to healthy and unhealthy teen relationships can be a major factor in helping teens avoid regular interaction with the justice system. The Youth Assessment Center (YAC) has been doing its part to help identify these factors through a partnership with the University of Illinois Department of Psychology. Sponsored by the National Institute of Justice, a project called VIP Screen engages with youth between the ages of 12 and 17. Over the course of one year, each youth participates in three surveys that ask them about situations of adversity they have faced in their lives, as well as individual differences that are related to emotional and behavioral well-being. Individuals chosen for VIP Screen do not have to be YAC clients but do have to be referred to the project by the YAC.

RPC Co-Sponsors “Second Chance Saturday” in Watseka (April)

Iroquois County adults with criminal records had the opportunity for a fresh start and new opportunities in the new year through Second Chance Saturday, an expungement/sealing summit free to qualifying applicants. Held at the Kankakee Community College’s South Extension Center, the goal of the summit was to help local residents take advantage of an opportunity to remove barriers that keep them out of the workforce. Potential employers were also available at Second Chance Saturday to accept job applications from summit participants.

RPC’s No Limits Program Highlighted in Video (April)

The RPC’s No Limits program was featured in a video from Heartland Bank focused on financial literacy. In April, two No Limits participants, along with case Manager Krist Sallee, were interviewed about the program and its benefits. Heartland Bank has been using the completed video in its ongoing marketing efforts.
Expansion of Early Head Start Program to Bring Valuable Services to Dozens of Children and Pregnant Women in Champaign County (May)

The RPC’s Early Childhood Education Program was awarded additional federal and non-federal funding, helping it expand Early Head Start services to 90 more children and families in the Champaign County area. This expansion enables the RPC to serve 80 more children from birth to three-years-old in center-based services, as well as 10 pregnant women and teens as part of home visiting services. “Our teaching approach focuses on each child’s potential and possibilities,” said Brandi Granse, Director of the RPC’s Early Childhood Education Division. “We stress the importance of parents as their child’s first teacher, and this expansion will help our program continue realizing its daily mission and impacting the future of Champaign County in a positive way.”

Urbana Woman Honored for Pursuit of Self-Sufficiency as RPC’s 2019 Families of Distinction Awardee (May)

Urbana’s Mary Blue was one of 19 Illinois individuals or families honored at the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies (IACAA) Annual Learning Conference in Springfield. The RPC’s No Limits program named Mary as its 2019 Families of Distinction awardee, an honor recognizing a family or individual who has overcome great personal and social obstacles in their pursuit of self-sufficiency with the assistance of a Community Action Agency. During a banquet at the IACAA conference, the IACAA’s 40 member agencies, which include the RPC, celebrated select individuals or families from around the state for embodying many of the characteristics of stability.

RPC Earns National Award for Human Services Program Focused on Residents with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (June)

The RPC was recognized with a 2019 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) for a program focused on helping area residents with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD). In the category of Human Services, the award honored the RPC’s Decision Support/Person-Centered Planning (for I/DD) program, which extends and enhances services available through the Independent Service Coordination Unit (ISC). “The funding we have received through the Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board has allowed us to develop unique programming and services and better support persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities,” commented RPC Community Services program manager Katie Harmon.

RPC’s Workforce Development Program Helps Longtime Champaign County Business Continue to Thrive (June)

With facilities in Champaign and Fisher, HL Precision Manufacturing has been a leader in the advanced manufacturing industry for nearly 40 years. This past June the company announced a partnership with Hi-Grade Welding from Schaumburg, Illinois, to work together and provide broader manufacturing solutions for each company’s customer base. HL says without continuous support from the RPC’s Workforce Development program to improve the manufacturing and skilled trades industry, this partnership would not have been possible. HL
specifically credits the RPC’s Incumbent Worker Training program. Along with providing their employees with opportunities for learning and professional growth that they would not have had available to them otherwise, the funding has given HL the chance to advance and grow their labor force’s skills.

also received an expansion in funding through the Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board to do Person-Centered Planning, with three new staff members being added.

ISC Expansion Brings 22 New Staff Members to the RPC, While Program Coverage Now Includes 13 Counties in Illinois (July)

On July 1, the Independent Service Coordination Program (ISC) in the RPC’s Community Services Division was pleased to welcome 19 new staff to its team. Funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities, the ISC program expanded to cover a total of 13 counties across Illinois, with clients receiving individual service and support advocacy (ISSA) services growing from approximately 400 to over 1,500. The new staff on the ISC team has brought a wealth of expertise and knowledge in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities to the RPC. The RPC

RPCOpens New Workforce Development Office in Douglas County (August)

The RPC opened a new office for its Workforce Development program in Douglas County in August. Located in Tuscola, it joins the family of other Workforce Development offices the RPC operates in Champaign, Ford, Iroquois, and Piatt Counties. Some of the services made available to Douglas County residents through this new office were orientations, a job search resource room, job fairs, individualized assistance/career assessment, grants/scholarships, and job club. There are also now a variety of programs available to youth between the ages of 14-24, such as career planning, skill training, on-the-job training, and résumé and interview training.
A mother of two who worked a full-time job while earning her college degree was one of 2019’s winners of the Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP) Individual Achievement Award. The RPC’s Workforce Innovation Board recognized Kristy Conner of Chebanse for the award that celebrates the accomplishments of a job seeker customer who sought assistance to achieve his or her goals. “Kristy took pride in her education and was not afraid to ask questions or advocate for herself,” said career planner Teri Tinch, who worked with Conner at the RPC Workforce Development program’s Iroquois County office in Watseka. “Our assistance was necessary and reassuring to her. She now has stability and the confidence to choose a position where she enjoys her work. It was a joy to help her reach her goal.”

The RPC’s Early Childhood Education Program hosted a Family and Community Engagement Resource Fair in September at Champaign’s Hessel Park. Free and open to the public, the fair was designed to educate the community and increase awareness of the many services and programs offered by the RPC and our Community Partners. In addition to the RPC, there were over 20 organizations from around the community making information available about what they provide. There was also food and kids’ activities for families and individuals who attended the Saturday event.
Illinois Lottery Instant Ticket Helps Fund RPC's Homeless Prevention Rent Assistance Program (September)

The Illinois Lottery launched a new specialty instant ticket to help fund homelessness prevention assistance programs across Illinois, including the RPC's Homeless Prevention Rent Assistance program. One-hundred percent of the profits from the "Easy as 1-2-3" game, which went on sale September 3, is deposited into the Homelessness Prevention Revenue Fund to be used by the Illinois Department of Human Services for homelessness prevention and assistance program grants.

RPC Makes Online Scheduling Available for LIHEAP Appointments for the First Time Ever (October)

For the first time since the RPC has been managing the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in Champaign County, customers were able to make their appointments online instead of waiting in line at the RPC's office to do so. Starting in October, people could make their appointments through a special page set up on the RPC's website, allowing appointments to be confirmed at any time from a mobile phone, a tablet, or a computer. "With children, work commitments, and other obstacles, we realize that having to make an appointment in person can present its own challenges," said Dawn Rear, the RPC's program manager for LIHEAP. "We hope this new online scheduling option adds a level of convenience, ease, and peace of mind to the LIHEAP process for our customers."

Valuable Data about Champaign County Now Accessible to Anyone Thanks to New Data Portal Maintained by the RPC (October)

Researchers, journalists, agencies, and even members of the public discovered an easy way to find important data about Champaign County and the surrounding area. Launched in 2019, the Champaign County Regional Data Portal is a collection of public data from agencies and organizations across Champaign County and East Central Illinois, including the City of Champaign and the City of Urbana. Hosted and maintained by the RPC, the portal is designed to be a comprehensive and searchable listing of open datasets published by the RPC, its member agencies, and its partners. "Good datasets support wise decision-making, and we feel that the Regional Data Portal can serve as a valuable resource in that process," said Matt Yoder, the RPC's Data and Technology Manager.
RPC Hosts First-Ever Head Start Awareness Walk (October)

The RPC hosted its first Head Start Awareness Walk on Saturday, October 19, at Urbana’s Meadowbrook Park. The event took place during Head Start Awareness Month, created in 1982 by President Ronald Reagan to build knowledge of and support for Head Start’s whole-child and whole-community approach to supporting families on their path to success. We had dozens of participants, including several staff, their families, and the Executive Director of the Illinois Head Start Association. We plan on hosting the walk again next year and hope to turn it into an annual event.

Local Officials Visit Early Childhood Education Centers as Part of Head Start Awareness Month

The RPC’s Early Childhood Education Program was pleased to welcome local officials during Head Start Awareness Month (October) and into November. Guests included Urbana Mayor Diane Marlin at the Urbana center, Rantoul Village Administrator Scott Eisenhauer in Rantoul, and Champaign Mayor Deb Feinen at the Champaign site on Nell Street.

RPC Brings LIHEAP to Rantoul for Special Event (November)

For the first time ever, the RPC took the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to Rantoul for a special event on Saturday, November 16. Held at the Community Service Center of Northern Champaign County, the event was especially beneficial for working Rantoul residents who don’t usually have the chance to come to the Brookens Administrative Center and apply during regular business hours. Dawn Rear, the RPC’s LIHEAP program manager, reported that it was “wildly successful” and that customers were happy and grateful.

RPC Helps Champaign County Secure Grant to Improve Safety and Reduce Crashes on Sidney Road (November)

Sidney/Homer Road (County Highway 15) in the southeastern part of Champaign County will soon be a safer place to drive thanks to collaboration between the RPC and Champaign County. The RPC prepared a grant request for the County as part of the Illinois Department of Transportation’s (IDOT) Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). IDOT awarded the grant to Champaign County for the project in the Fall. The Champaign County Highway Department saw the need to update safety and conditions along the 4.25-mile road and worked with the Champaign Urbana Urbanized Area Transportation Study (CUUATS) to develop the grant request. CUUATS is the RPC’s transportation entity responsible for administering the transportation planning process for the Champaign-Urbana urbanized area.
RPC Opens New Early Childhood Center in West Champaign (November)

Early November marked the opening of the RPC's newest Early Childhood Education Center in west Champaign at 103 S. Country Fair Drive. It became the RPC's fifth center in Champaign County. While a great deal of work remains before the facility is fully functional, seven classrooms and the kitchen were up and ready to go in November, with Tammy Helm serving as site manager.
The RPC Teams with RE/MAX to Give Families in Champaign County More to Be Thankful for at Thanksgiving

For the second year in a row, a donation of more than two dozen gift baskets helped the RPC ease the holiday burden on several families involved with its Early Childhood Education Program. Assembled and delivered to the RPC by representatives of RE/MAX Realty Associates in Champaign, the baskets were filled with Thanksgiving staples like stuffing, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, piecrusts, marshmallows, brown sugar, and corn muffin mix. RE/MAX also provided dozens of mittens, gloves, and hats to the children in the Early Childhood Education Program so that they could have appropriate winter wear for outside activities.

RPC Wins Award from Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) once again recognized the great work being done at the RPC. At their annual conference in late October, AMPO gave the RPC an Honorable Mention Award in the category of Outstanding Achievement for a non-TMA MPO for work that CUUATS staff did on the Champaign-Urbana Region Freight Plan. This comprehensive freight mobility plan was funded by the Illinois Department of Transportation. It effectively identifies the linkages between key freight infrastructure and the region’s economy, projects future freight commodity flows, and includes data-driven performance measures. The RPC received letters of support for the plan from the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce, the City of Champaign, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.