

**Notes for presentation to the North Carolina Study Commission on Aging  
September 24, 2008**

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**By Candie Rudzinski, Executive Director**

RCSAA is a unique organization in North Carolina. Established as a non-profit organization in 1975, it has been serving the older residents of Randolph County for over 33 years. Appointed by the Randolph County Board of Commissioners to serve as the lead agency for aging and transportation services, RCSAA blends services to the elderly along with disabled populations and the general public.

As a result, RCSAA operates four Senior Centers that provide congregate meals, home-delivered meals, and an array of social activities for older residents; medical and general transportation for seniors, the disabled and the general public; a social model adult day care center; an outreach program; as well as other programs.

By far our greatest challenges fall into the following categories:

- 1) One of the greatest challenges we face is the continuing rise in the cost of gasoline. In FY 2008, Randolph County Senior Adults Association/Randolph Coordinated Agency Transportation System vehicles traveled approximately 550,000 miles, and consumed over 43,000 gallons of gasoline. Our total gasoline expense was approximately \$132,500, or an average of \$3.05 per gallon. For FY 2009, our total fuel cost projections are now at \$191,250, or \$4.25 per gallon. Continued and recent gasoline price hikes have led to a significant deficit in our fuel cost budget. A simple comparison of the past three years indicates the current trend:

	Fiscal Year <u>05-06</u>	Fiscal Year <u>06-07</u>	Fiscal Year <u>07-08</u>
Total miles:	490,279	499,068	546,888
Fuel Cost:	\$100,750	\$101,482	\$132,889

- 2) The cost of providing home-delivered meals, congregate meals, Ensure or Glucerna, and shelf staple emergency meals is continuing to rise. As the cost rises, the number of meals served continues to decrease. A simple comparison of the past three years indicates the current trend in the cost of purchasing a meal:

Fiscal Year	Fiscal Year	Fiscal Year
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	<u>05-06</u>	<u>06-07</u>	<u>07-08</u>
Meal Cost:	\$247,181	\$255,042	\$258,535

- 3) Increasing gasoline prices is also having an effect on our volunteers. The number of volunteers that dedicate their valuable time to deliver home-delivered meals to our elderly residents is beginning to decrease due to the increase in the cost of gasoline. The volunteers that have not stopped delivering meals, or have not slowed down in frequency, are voicing their concerns and reporting financial stress. Our home-delivered meals program consists of 20 routes and depends entirely on its volunteers.
- 4) The baby-boomer population (those born between 1946 and 1964) is beginning to have an impact on programs and services. RCSAA is considering the problems associated with multiple generations of older residents with potential intergenerational conflicts. The average age of our current clientele is currently 75. The influx of baby-boomers will considerably reduce the average age of our target population. The younger seniors that have already begun to call for programs and services are requesting programs and activities to be provided in the evening and on weekends to accommodate their work schedules. In addition, they will stretch to the limit our current technologies and place a greater emphasis on wellness and fitness than on home-delivered meals, bingo and transportation services. A shift in funding priorities balanced with the needs of our current population will need to be addressed through planning as well as additional funding for increased hours of service and new health conscious activities.
- 5) Compounding all of this is a decrease in donations and cost-share revenues. Donations include United Way funding, consumer contributions and other forms of voluntary contributions. The recent economy has most likely resulted in a decrease in giving to charitable organizations. In the past three years, RCSAA estimates that our donations and cost share revenues have decreased approximately 25%.
- 6) Increases in HCCBG have gone a long way to keep many small agencies afloat, but they have not kept pace with the overall increase in operating costs. As our older seniors begin to pass away and the baby-boomers continue to retire, they will become our new population. Studies will need to be completed to determine how to best utilize funds to meet the needs of this growing population.

**Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you about the needs  
of the aging service providers in North Carolina.**