

2017 Annual Report



MASCO Municipal Association
of South CarolinaSM
1411 Gervais Street
Columbia SC, 29201

From the Executive Director

In 1924, a small group of mayors met informally to discuss challenges each of their cities faced. They shared possible solutions and explored the idea of creating an association of cities and towns. Why? Because they understood that cities and towns – large and small and in every part of the state – face similar challenges. And by working together, cities and towns can best meet these challenges.

While the tools have changed over the years, the mission of the Municipal Association has not. Today, city officials continue to work together through the Association to identify challenges and share knowledge and solutions to meet these challenges. With a shared voice, city officials convey these challenges to members of the S.C. General Assembly and Congress, so that new laws may reflect cities' needs.

This annual report highlights the Association's work during the past 12 months, as officials worked together to share their voices, knowledge and solutions to improve the quality of life in cities, towns and the state.



Miriam Hair

Miriam Hair
Executive Director
Municipal Association of
South Carolina



Highlights: Shared Voices

Legislative Activity

Business licensing legislation took center stage in the 2017 session of the General Assembly. This legislation was shaped by two years of conversations with business leaders and municipal officials interested in standardizing business license practices across cities and towns. The dynamics of the debate changed when House members introduced two bills that shifted the focus away from standardization. These bills moved the authority for administering the tax from city officials to state agencies, significantly reduced tax revenues to cities and towns, and increased taxes for small businesses while decreasing taxes for large businesses headquartered out of state. City officials were key in preventing the passage of these bills and moved the conversation back to standardization.

The Association also worked with a variety of other coalitions and partners on legislation impacting cities. Working with the S.C. Press Association, the Association supported legislation that makes substantial changes to the Freedom of Information Act. The new law benefits both the public and local governments.

Additionally, working with a coalition of business interests, city officials voiced their concerns over crumbling roads, and the General Assembly passed a bill to raise the state's gas tax to provide revenue to address the problem.

The General Assembly also raised the amount employers and employees are required to contribute to the S.C. Retirement System and the Police Officers Retirement System. The Legislature agreed to annually fund 1 percent of the 2-percent increase in the employers' contribution.

Complete details about the 2017 legislative session are included in the year-end legislative report.

Public Engagement

A new partnership with an upstate business magazine, *Business Black Box*, promoted the ways city amenities, initiatives and services improve quality of life and makes cities, towns and the state more attractive to investment. By adding this new partnership, a wider audience of decision makers heard the message that the state's future is dependent on the success of cities and towns.

The S.C. Press Association and the S.C. Broadcasters Association joined the Municipal Association to host a workshop for more than 30 reporters from TV stations and weekly and daily newspapers. They spent the day learning about municipal government and connecting with the Association's resources.

2017 Advocacy Initiatives

Encourage business growth and development

Action Item:

Standardize business license tax collection across the state.

Provide quality services

Action Items: Increase funding for the Local Government Fund to the level required in state law. Increase options for municipalities to roll back property taxes and to raise revenue to support specific capital projects. Allow cities to annex certain enclaves by ordinance.

Increase law enforcement training

Action Items: Support reliable funding for the Criminal Justice Academy to allow for more training opportunities for law enforcement officers. Increase funding for body worn cameras.

Repair roads

Action Item: Support reliable funding sources for roads and increase municipal representation on County Transportation Committees.

Reduce blight

Action Item: Establish options for cities and towns to recover public funds spent to demolish or clean blighted property.

From the very start of the Association in the early 1930s, South Carolina municipal officials understood that only by working together could they communicate the needs and views of municipal government to state and federal lawmakers.

Lobbying the State Legislature and Congress

The Association advocated for changes in state law to address city challenges and testified against legislation that would harm cities. Partnerships and coalitions played an important part in the Association's advocacy efforts. The Association also monitored federal legislation through the National League of Cities. *Staff Contact: Reba Campbell*

Regional Advocacy Meetings

The Association hosted a series of Regional Advocacy Meetings during the fall of 2016. More than 300 municipal officials met at 10 locations to talk about the challenges facing cities and towns and how changes to state law could help meet these challenges. More than 20 state legislators also attended these meetings to hear the concerns of municipal officials and share their views on the issues they believed would be the priorities of the General Assembly in the 2017 legislative session. Based on these conversations, the legislative committee and board of directors set the Association's 2017 legislative initiatives. *Staff Contact: Casey Fields*

Legislative Tracking and Reports

During the 2017 South Carolina legislative session, the Association actively monitored 310 bills impacting cities and towns. Updated daily during the session, the online tracking system helped municipal leaders follow subcommittee, committee and floor action.

Each Friday during the legislative session, more than 4,000 municipal officials received *From the Dome to Your Home*, which recapped the week's major legislative events and previewed the upcoming week's activities. It was also posted on the Association's website and shared with more than 5,000 social media followers.

At the end of the legislative session, the Association produced its annual legislative report recapping work on the advocacy initiatives and legislative action on major bills of municipal interest. *Staff Contact: Casey Fields*

Hometown Legislative Action Day

Hometown Legislative Action Day brought more than 520 local officials from 150 cities to Columbia in February to get updates on current legislative issues and visit their legislators at the State House. They heard from Senators Shane Massey and Luke Rankin and House members serving on the Tax Policy Review Committee. Secretary of Transportation Christy Hall discussed her long-term vision for the department, while law enforcement leaders discussed hiring and training trends. Officials also got briefings about new ethics reporting requirements, changes to the state retirement system and code enforcement issues. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

Public Engagement

Legislators, business leaders, the news media and key influencers learned about successes in cities and towns through online and print resources.

Social Media Channels

The Association's Twitter (@MuniAssnSC) and Facebook (CitiesMeanBusiness) pages provided up-to-the-minute information on State House activity and shared good news stories about cities and towns. A regular schedule of social media posts highlighting *Uptown* stories increased traffic to the online version of the monthly newsletter and to the Association's website. The Association's Twitter followers increased 15 percent this year. *Staff Contact: Reba Campbell*

Publication Partnerships

Several successful publication partnerships spotlight ways strong cities underpin the state's economic development success. A new quarterly column in the upstate *Business Black Box* magazine showcased various cities' vision for economic growth.

The Association continued its partnership with *Columbia Business Monthly* by providing a quarterly column highlighting business friendly practices in the Midlands. The ongoing partnership with *SC Biz* magazine to publish the Association's biannual *Cities Mean Business* magazine highlights how city amenities, initiatives and services improve residents' quality of life, which helps attract investment.

Through these partnerships, the message of the value of cities to the state's economic health reaches a wider audience of decision makers. *Staff Contact: Reba Campbell*

City Connect Blog and City Quick Connect Podcast

The *City Connect* blog offered short, weekly updates on a variety of issues. The *City Quick Connect* podcast featured short interviews with Association staff, leaders of partner organizations and experts on topics ranging from public speaking to placemaking. The blog and podcast packaged information in a format that was useful not only to local officials but also to the news media, legislators and the public. Topics were often related to court cases and issues being considered at the State House or on Capitol Hill. Subscriptions to the blog increased 40 percent over last year. *Staff Contact: Reba Campbell*

The number of Twitter followers increased by 15 percent to 5,000.

Subscriptions to the Association's blog, *City Connect*, increased by 40 percent.

Highlights: Shared Knowledge

Building Officials Association of South Carolina

After discussing mutual interests with the Building Officials Association of South Carolina, the Municipal Association brought the 66-year-old organization on board as its 12th affiliate. As a result of this new affiliation, the BOASC membership doubled to 224, and the 2017 annual meeting drew an all-time high attendance of 160 building officials. In addition to providing quality training programs, BOASC worked closely with the Municipal Association's advocacy staff on legislation affecting construction.

Business Licensing Officials Association of South Carolina

In 2016, the Business Licensing Officials Association of SC celebrated its 30th anniversary of service to cities. Through the Business License Task Force, BLOA members worked closely with the Municipal Association to improve business licensing bills that were introduced in the General Assembly. For the first time, BLOA awarded scholarships to three members to attend the three-year BLOA Training Institute.

Association of South Carolina Mayors

The Association of South Carolina Mayors held its first weekend conference, where mayors from cities of all sizes networked, traded ideas and solutions, discussed pending legislation and learned about crisis communication.

Main Street South Carolina

The cities of Clinton and Camden were selected to join the three-year Main Street Boot Camp, a technical assistance and training program designed to revitalize downtowns. Hartsville, Gaffney and Williamston completed the boot camp requirements.

Clerks On-demand Training Program

The Municipal Association rolled out the first two on-demand training courses for municipal clerks. While the training is targeted to all clerks, it is particularly useful for small town clerks who often find it difficult to be away from town hall to attend training.

Field Services

The Association's field services managers received an increase in the number of calls from municipal officials requesting guidance on municipal procedures and issues. The two Association staff members facilitated 47 strategic planning meetings, budget workshops and specialized training sessions.

The Association plays an important role in developing the knowledge of municipal elected officials and employees through a wide range of training programs, publications, and meetings that encourage the most efficient and effective municipal government operations.

Affiliate Associations

The Municipal Association supported 12 affiliate organizations by providing training and networking for a variety of local government positions with specialized training needs. These 12 affiliates had a combined membership exceeding 2,200 and offered 36 meetings/events, providing approximately 385 hours of training to more than 2,100 participants.

In addition to traditional face-to-face training and networking opportunities, the affiliate associations offered listserves for members to share best practices and to pose specific questions related to their local government responsibilities. *Staff Contact: Eric Budds*

Association of South Carolina Mayors

The Association of South Carolina Mayors provided opportunities for its 108 members to more fully engage in advocating for issues that affect cities and towns, to network, to take part in educational activities, and to share ideas and best practices. Its winter membership meeting, held at the Criminal Justice Academy, allowed mayors to see where their law enforcement officers train.

ASCM hosted its inaugural mayors' weekend conference in Columbia. Mayors had a chance to network, offer a three-minute snapshot about a successful project in their city and experience a law enforcement training simulator. *Staff Contact: Casey Fields*

Building Officials Association of SC

The Building Officials Association of SC is a professional development organization of building and code enforcement officials. Members are dedicated to safeguarding life, health and property through the uniform application, interpretation, and enforcement of building codes and related ordinances adopted by local governments. BOASC offered education and training opportunities to its members, promoted the importance of building codes and their enforcement, monitored issues before the S.C. Building Codes Council and the General Assembly, and provided technical assistance to local government officials. Membership more than doubled to 224. *Staff Contact: Scott Slatton*

Municipal Court Administration Association of SC

The Municipal Court Administration Association of South Carolina had 291 members. MCAA offered training at two workshops to court administrators, clerks of court, municipal judges and other municipal employees involved in court administration. The Supreme Court of South Carolina Commission on CLE and Specialization and the Office of Victims Services recognized these workshops for continuing education credits. The Association also provided opportunities for members to share ideas to make court administration more efficient. *Staff Contact: Bill Taylor*

Affiliate memberships exceeded 2,200.

36 affiliate meetings/events offered 385 hours of training.

SCAMPS organized 140 people from five states to help member-utilities after Hurricane Matthew.

BLOA membership increased to 337 members, a 14 percent increase over 2016.

Municipal Technology Association of SC

With 98 members, the Municipal Technology Association of SC promoted municipalities' effective use of technology through two training sessions. MTASC exposed its members to a broad range of technology systems, platforms and solutions, from GIS to police in-car technology to cloud storage to cybersecurity. The training served IT staff and those with GIS responsibilities, in addition to employees who work in other departments but have technology-related duties. *Staff Contact: Sara Johnson*

SC Association of Municipal Power Systems

All of the 21 municipal electric utilities are members of the SC Association of Municipal Power Systems. There are 54 associate members that support the organization. Originally, SCAMPS existed solely to help one another during times of disaster. The importance of this role was re-enforced in October 2016 when SCAMPS organized a mutual aid response to assist three member-utilities hit hard by Hurricane Matthew. This effort involved approximately 140 people representing member-utilities, private utilities, tree companies and public power utilities from Alabama, Florida, North Carolina and Nebraska.

Although mutual aid is still the backbone of SCAMPS, its scope also included legislative initiatives and training for electrical personnel.

The annual lineman training event drew 148 participants and 10 exhibitors. Training sessions emphasized the effective, efficient, reliable and safe operation of municipal electric systems. The group's annual meeting drew 152 meeting registrants and exhibitors, representing 19 municipal utilities and 41 associate members.

A SCAMPS representative participated on the committee that developed the proposed State Energy Plan. The group changed its legislative event from an evening reception to a legislative breakfast co-hosted with the Piedmont Municipal Power Agency. *Staff Contact: Eric Budds*

SC Association of Stormwater Managers

The SC Association of Stormwater Managers offered its 180 members quarterly training on stormwater management policies and best practices. Each meeting included updates and information from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control. This year, one meeting included an exhibitor showcase that hosted vendors from around the country with goods or services of value to the membership. The S.C. Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors recognized the quarterly training sessions for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Sara Johnson*

SC Business Licensing Officials Association

The South Carolina Business Licensing Officials Association promoted best practices for administering and enforcing the local business and professional license tax to its 337 members. Through rigorous training sessions, members learned skills and practices that make licensing in their cities and towns more efficient and business friendly.

The professional designation programs of Accreditation in Business Licensing and Masters in Business Licensing reflected members' dedication to continuing education. Nine members earned an Accreditation in Business Licensing and three completed the Masters in Business Licensing program. *Staff Contact: Scott Slatton*

SC Community Development Association

The South Carolina Community Development Association provided educational forums for its 153 members to address economic and community development needs. Members included municipal, county, regional and state community development professionals; employees of private companies with an interest in community development; elected officials and volunteers. SCCDA hosted a mobile tour where attendees visited Greenwood and Anderson to learn about successful community development projects, including neighborhood revitalizations and downtown improvements. *Staff Contact: Sara Johnson*

SC Municipal Attorneys Association

The South Carolina Municipal Attorneys Association's meeting covered issues important to municipal attorneys, whether working as municipal staff or as a municipality's outside counsel. The Supreme Court of South Carolina Commission on CLE and Specialization approved this training session for continuing education credits. This year, municipal attorneys gathered for an evening networking event before the conference. *Staff Contact: Tigerron Wells*

SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association

The South Carolina Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association offered training programs covering diverse responsibilities of its 252 members from 133 cities and towns. All of these training sessions qualified for a combination of continuing education credits for certified municipal clerks, certified public accountants and certified public treasurers. MFOCTA sponsors the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute with the Municipal Association and the College of Charleston's Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities. *Staff Contact: Jeff Shacker*

SC Municipal Human Resources Association

The South Carolina Municipal Human Resources Association promoted sound human resources administration and encouraged the use of innovative programs. Through its training programs, MHRA provided information and the opportunity to exchange ideas among its 234 members. The national Human Resources Certification Institute and the Society for Human Resources Management recognized this training for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Sara Johnson*

SC Utility Billing Association

The South Carolina Utility Billing Association provided training and networking opportunities for its 219 members, including billing clerks, meter readers and managers. SCUBA's meetings encompass a variety of topics focused on customer service, safety in the workplace, and new technologies to increase the efficiencies of utility billing and collections. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

South Carolina Community Development Association membership increased 11 percent.

Seventy percent of municipalities participated in the online compensation survey, the highest percentage since 2006.

Nearly 300 elected officials attended the Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute courses.

Training Institutes

Educational opportunities were available to municipal officials through four training institutes.

SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

The SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government offered specialized training for elected officials to increase their understanding of local government operations. Elected officials take seven required courses to complete the Institute. The required courses consist of two day-long sessions held each February in Columbia in conjunction with the Hometown Legislative Action Day and five additional classes, held yearly at the 10 councils of governments' locations or on-demand from the Association's website. Fifty-six mayors and councilmembers graduated. *Staff Contact: Urica Floyd*

SC Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

Offered exclusively for graduates of the MEO Institute, the Advanced Institute gives elected officials the opportunity to continue their education. To complete the Advanced Institute, participants must take four of the six offered courses that explore in greater depth topics included in the MEO Institute and other topics critical for effective municipal operations. Enrollment for advanced courses reached 300. The graduating class of 70 was the largest to date. *Staff Contact: Urica Floyd*

Business Licensing Training Institute

The Business Licensing Training Institute offered specialized training to municipal and county officials in the basics of administering a business licensing program. To complete the institute, officials must take three classes, which are offered across three years. Ninety officials attended the Training Institute, including 15 who graduated. The SC Business Licensing Officials Association sponsors the institute. *Staff Contact: Scott Slatton*

Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute

The Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute offered instruction in several areas, including forms of government, financial management, the role of the municipal clerk and business licensing. The Association sponsors MCTI in partnership with the SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association and the College of Charleston's Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities. Sixty-two municipal employees attended the semiannual sessions, including 12 who completed the institute. *Staff Contact: Jeff Shacker*

Orientation Training for Local Government Planning and Zoning Officials

State law requires training for all appointees and staff involved in local planning and zoning. These individuals must complete, within the first year of service, a six-hour orientation course approved by the State Advisory Committee on Educational Requirements. The Association offered an approved orientation course and awarded certificates to 99 individuals who completed the training. *Staff Contact: Lea Ann Mitchell*

Annual Meeting

The Association's 2016 Annual Meeting drew the highest municipal official attendance since 2008. Municipal officials representing 128 cities convened in Charleston. Double keynote speeches from Curt Steinhorst and Peter Kageyama focused on how millennials and seniors have more in common every day and how successful communities convert technology trends into opportunities to engage residents. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

Technical Assistance Field Services

The Association's two field services managers traveled the state to offer hands-on technical assistance, training and consultation to help municipalities address challenges. The field services managers made more than 1,000 in-person contacts with municipal officials and staff through one-on-one visits, council meetings and retreats. *Staff Contacts: Jeff Shacker and Bill Taylor*

Main Street South Carolina

Main Street SC helps its members revitalize their downtowns into vibrant centers of commerce and community by using the National Main Street Center's "Main Street Approach," which emphasizes organization, promotion, design and economic vitality.

The boot camp program is a three-year intensive technical assistance and training program for cities and towns, competitively selected. Upon completion, participants become full Main Street SC members. Gaffney, Hartsville and Williamston completed the boot camp program, while Camden and Clinton entered the program. The current membership is 17, six members in boot camp and 11 full members.

Main Street SC presented four training sessions, each one highlighting a Main Street member, and presented five Inspiration Awards for exceptional member accomplishments. The City of Sumter won the Excellence on Main Street award, which recognizes the most outstanding project of the Main Street Inspiration Awards. *Staff Contact: Bepie LeGrand*

Information Resources

The Association's print and online resources address hundreds of topics related to municipal government.

Publications

The Association publishes a variety of manuals and handbooks on topics of municipal interest.

- *Annexation Handbook*
- *Comprehensive Planning Guide for Local Governments*
- *Election Handbook*
- *Forms and Powers of Municipal Government*
- *Handbook for Municipal Officials in South Carolina* (updated in 2017)
- *The Municipal Association of South Carolina 1930-2015: A History of Shared Voices, Shared Knowledge, Shared Solutions*
- *How to Conduct Effective Meetings* (updated in 2017)
- *Incorporation Handbook*
- *Model Employee Handbook for SC Municipalities*
- *Municipal Officials and Legislative Directory*
- *Public Official's Guide to Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act* (published by the S.C. Press Association)
- *Raising Hometown Voices to a New Level of Influence, an advocacy guide*
- *SC Business Licensing Handbook*
- *Tips for Hometown Media Success*

Staff Contact: Eric Budds

The Association's 2016 Annual Meeting in Charleston drew the highest municipal official attendance since 2008.

Association staff met with 47 municipal councils to train on municipal topics or facilitate a goal-setting session.

The Association's website had more than 1.3 million page views, an increase of 27 percent over last year, and 126,000 unique visitors, an increase of 9 percent over last year.

Website

The Municipal Association's website, www.masc.sc, offered more than 2,000 pages; 1,500 documents, presentations and links to external resources; and more than 770 in-state municipal job postings. With a responsive design to fit the needs and formats of mobile and desktop devices, the site includes a powerful search engine and information center to help users navigate to specific resources of interest.

The Association's site was recognized for site structure and navigability by the South Carolina Press Association, the South Carolina Society of Association Executives and the South Carolina chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. *Staff Contact: Meredith Houck*

Uptown

The monthly newsletter in print and electronic formats featured articles on a variety of topics important to municipal officials. Each issue's special section looked in depth at a topic central to local government. This year's sections focused on social services, infrastructure, water, law enforcement, sustainability, community development, communications, open government and planning/land use.

At more than 400, the number of subscribers to the online edition of *Uptown* increased by 27 percent from last year. A weekly e-newsletter, *Uptown Update*, informed municipal officials about a variety of timely opportunities, including meeting registrations, training events and grants. A new feature, "In Case You Missed It," gave *Uptown Update* readers a second look at an *Uptown* article from a past issue. *Staff Contact: Sarita Chourey*

Daily News

Daily News provides links to news stories about the state's smallest rural towns and largest cities. The articles highlighted how local governments deliver services. This year, the number of subscribers exceeded 620. *Staff Contact: Sarita Chourey*

Achievement Awards

Thirty-two cities and towns entered the annual awards program. Since its creation in 1987, 865 municipal projects have vied for the awards, which recognize successful and innovative projects that improve the quality of life for residents and add value to communities. The program also encourages sharing ideas among municipal officials.

The 2017 population category winners were Ridgeway (1 - 1,000), Saluda (1,001 - 5,000), Hartsville (5,001 - 10,000) and Lexington (10,001 - 20,000). The subject category winners were Hilton Head Island (communication), Florence (economic development), Camden (public safety), Mount Pleasant (public service) and Cheraw (public works). *Staff Contact: Meredith Houck*

Timely Training Topics

The Association sponsored more than 60 training events covering a range of topics of interest to municipal officials.

- **Association of SC Mayors:** active-shooter response, crisis communication, public speaking and building trust through proactive police-community relations
- **Building Officials Association of SC:** International Building Codes topics on building access, construction and design, and training on personal communication
- **Municipal Court Administration Association of SC:** court financials, bond estreatments, bond hearings, jury trials, pretrial intervention and conditional discharges
- **Municipal Technology Association of SC:** GIS for emergency management, Smart City technology, maximizing the IT budget, cybersecurity updates, data storage options, cyber risk assessment, GIS data applications and police car technology
- **SC Association of Municipal Power Systems:** cybersecurity, customer service, managing a utility's financial and ethical risks, disaster recovery and cost-efficient LED street lighting
- **SC Association of Stormwater Managers:** stormwater review plans, construction and post-construction best management practices, importance of stormwater controls on redevelopment projects, Adopt-a-Stream in S.C., MS4 audits and permit requirements
- **SC Business Licensing Officials Association:** food truck ordinances, conversion from SIC to NAICS, business license auditing and enforcement, the sharing economy and coin-operated machines
- **SC Community Development Association:** tax increment finance districts, craft breweries and tourism, small business development resources and Rural Infrastructure Authority grants
- **SC Municipal Attorneys Association:** the Freedom of Information Act and digital communications, redistricting, regulating adult novelty stores, and updates on state legislation and state and federal case law
- **SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association:** the sharing economy, business license incentives, sovereign citizens, the Freedom of Information Act's notice and agenda requirements, selecting an auditor, municipal services in a tourism destination, standardizing municipal business licensing, flood recovery, fund balance and enterprise fund transfer policies
- **SC Municipal Human Resources Association:** employee retention, workplace crises, transgender issues in the workplace, emotional intelligence, law enforcement recruitment and retention, mental health awareness, public retirement and health insurance benefits
- **SC Utility Billing Association:** customer service, workplace safety, delinquent debt collection, cybersecurity and generational diversity in the workplace
- **Main Street SC:** value of parks and parklets for downtown greenspace, abandoned and dilapidated buildings, community branding, board development and effective meetings, and updates from the National Main Street Center
- **Municipal Association Annual Meeting:** downtown development, parliamentary procedure, strategic planning, trends in public recreation, the role of municipal leaders in public health crises and law enforcement recruiting
- **Hometown Legislative Action Day:** building code enforcement, new income disclosure requirements for Statement of Economic Interest, and updates from the S.C. Retirement System and S.C. Department of Transportation
- **Insurance and Risk Management Services:** defensive driving, law enforcement liability, emergency management, employment liability, law enforcement leadership, and trenching and excavation safety standards

Highlights: Shared Solutions

Insurance and Risk Management Services

The Association offers two self-funded insurance programs to South Carolina's local governments. The SC Municipal Insurance Risk and Financing Fund provides all lines of property and casualty coverage, while the SC Municipal Insurance Trust provides workers' compensation insurance.

SCMIRF convened a member law enforcement advisory committee to focus on improving officer safety while also reducing law enforcement incidents and liability claims. As a result, the Association, in coordination with police chiefs from SCMIRF member-cities, developed a formal law enforcement review process to confirm that each member-department's training and operating procedures meet industry standards and current law. Also, SCMIRF and SCMIT purchased a law enforcement training simulator. It trains police officers to comply with the new policy of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which emphasizes de-escalation, observation skills and making decisions between deadly force and less lethal force.

For the first time, SCMIT and SCMIRF members used an online underwriting portal to renew their policies. SCMIT members also began filing insurance claims online, joining SCMIRF members, which have been doing so since 2011. In addition, Association staff transitioned to a paperless system for processing SCMIT and SCMIRF claims. These systems saved time and money and ensured claims processing and renewals can continue even if disaster strikes.

Collection Programs

The Association continued to leverage new technology to streamline its collection programs and ensure an effective disaster recovery plan. The Setoff Debt Collection program is now 100 percent paperless. All participants now upload required documents rather than mailing or faxing documents to the Association.

The Association created an online portal for cities participating in the insurance, brokers and telecommunications tax collection programs. While insurance and telecommunication companies already had access to a portal for reporting and paying business license taxes online, cities now have 24/7 easy and secure access to their current and past collection program documents through this new portal. This provides convenience to the cities and reduces printing and mailing costs.

Hometown Economic Development Grants

The Association awarded \$200,000 in economic development grants to eight cities and towns in 2016, the inaugural year of the grant program. The total award increases to \$250,000 in 2017.

Cities and towns face many of the same challenges and can find solutions by pooling resources and ideas through the Association.

Collection Programs

Municipalities contract with the Association to collect delinquent debts and certain business license taxes on their behalf. These programs provide centralized and efficient collections for participating municipalities and streamline the tax payment process for businesses. The Association collected more than \$177 million in 2016 on behalf of cities and towns.

Brokers Tax Collection Program

The S.C. Department of Insurance collects the municipal brokers premium tax, and cities and towns contract with the Municipal Association to disburse the tax. During the 2016 license year, the Association disbursed \$12.5 million to 269 participating municipalities. *Staff Contacts: Melissa Brown, Caitlin Cothran, Brenda Kyzer*

Insurance Tax Collection Program

The Municipal Association collected \$155 million in municipal business license taxes due from insurance companies and distributed the taxes to 269 municipalities.

The Association notified all 1,500 insurance companies of the payment process, used industry data to confirm all companies paid according to municipal ordinances, and provided a portal for the reporting and payment of the tax. Cities saved time and money by contracting with the Association for these services rather than all duplicating the same processes. Insurance companies saved time and money by reporting to and paying one entity rather than multiple cities and towns. Many paid the tax through the Association's portal. *Staff Contacts: Brenda Kyzer, Caitlin Cothran, Melissa Brown, Susan Gainey*

Setoff Debt Collection Program

In cooperation with the S.C. Department of Revenue, the Association collected \$2.5 million in delinquent debts, such as utility bills, taxes and court fines, from 13,179 debtors. These payments were remitted to 174 participating entities to whom the debts were owed. The Association provided software to all participating entities to streamline their program administration and ensure compliance with state regulations. *Staff Contacts: Melissa Brown, Brenda Kyzer*

Telecommunications Tax Collection Program

The Association collected \$7.8 million in business license taxes owed to 268 participating municipalities from 388 telecommunication companies.

Cities and towns contracted with the Association to collect the tax as provided for in state law. The contract streamlines the payment process for telecommunications companies. It also saves cities and towns time and money by eliminating the need for each to perform the same processes. *Staff Contacts: Susan Gainey, Brenda Kyzer*

Risk Management Services

The two self-funded insurance programs administered by the Association's Risk Management Services staff are prime examples of strength and efficiency through combined efforts of member cities. Each program operates under the direction of a board of trustees composed of representatives from its membership.

The SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund, which has 112 members, provides all lines of property and casualty coverage, including tort liability, law enforcement liability, public officials' liability, and property and automobile coverage, with total insured values of \$3.4 billion.

City participation reached 100 percent for both Brokers Tax and Insurance Tax collection programs.

SCMIT provided workers' compensation coverage for more than 16,700 municipal employees, representing an annual payroll of \$520 million.

SCMIRF insured property valued at \$3.4 billion.

SCMIT distributed a new Workers Compensation Toolkit to members.

The SC Municipal Insurance Trust, which has 119 members, provided workers' compensation coverage for more than 16,700 municipal employees, representing an annual payroll of \$520 million.

RMS processed approximately 2,500 new claims this year and provided grants, attorney hotlines, employee training and loss control services to members. These services helped members improve risk management efforts, prevent claims and reduce the cost of insurance. *Staff contact: Heather Ricard*

SCMIRF offered enhanced cyber liability coverage.

Training

RMS members have access to both online and in-person training at no charge.

- Customized, on-site training: RMS provided training for members in their hometowns, allowing city employees to attend sessions together. RMS staff conducted 16 on-site classes on topics including defensive driving, incident investigation, mindfulness in safety and Risk Management 101.
- Online training: Participation in online training continued to grow with members taking more than 11,000 courses this year. The online training opportunities included a variety of risk management, human resources, safety and law enforcement topics, including use of force and pursuit driving.
- Statewide and regional training: SCMIT and SCMIRF offered members regional training sessions on topics such as law enforcement liability, OSHA confined space training, risk management 101 and defensive driving.

1,022 city employees attended 29 customized risk management training sessions conducted at member locations.

519 city employees attended five regional risk management training sessions.

- Risk Management Institute: RMI offered participants from SCMIT and SCMIRF-member organizations specialized training in the role of risk manager and safety coordinator. Nine graduated from the institute.
- *RiskLetter*: The quarterly e-newsletter provided information on a wide range of risk management topics. Special sections focused on workplace violence, active shooter training, risk leadership, public officials' liability and the workers' compensation process, with an emphasis on employee safety and minimizing employer costs.

Loss Control/Technical Assistance

RMS helped its members build effective safety and loss control programs.

- Model policies and procedures manuals for law enforcement and fire services: SCMIRF members received updated law enforcement policies, including updated policies reflecting the U.S. Supreme Court decision regarding restrictions on TASER use.
- One-on-one technical assistance visits: The loss control staff met with member organizations to evaluate their claims experience.
- Legal hotlines: SCMIRF members had access to up to 10 hours of free legal advice on each legal hotline for labor and liability issues.
- Education tools: SCMIRF members had access to cyber protection services through the online tool, eRisk Hub, in addition to specialized toolkits, including parks and recreation liability, public official liability, sewer backups, special events liability and workers' compensation.

Grants

The RMS grant program helped RMS members purchase products or equipment to reduce the frequency and severity of claims.

- The Law Enforcement Liability Reduction Grant Program divided \$100,000 among member law enforcement agencies to purchase stun guns or Tasers, Taser cameras, body cameras and equipment.
- SCMIT provided a total of \$205,000 to member law enforcement, fire and public works departments to purchase work-zone safety equipment, soft body armor and other protective gear.

South Carolina Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust

The South Carolina Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust allows cities to set aside funds for non-pension benefits, such as retiree healthcare, as required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board's Statement 45. Each member shares in the Trust's administrative and investment related expenses, lowering the overall cost of compliance to each local government. Forty-three local governments are members. *Staff Contact: Heather Ricard*

Hometown Economic Development Grants

The Municipal Association's Hometown Economic Development Grants provided cities and towns with funds to implement economic development projects that will make a positive impact on the quality of life in their communities. The Hometown Economic Development Grants are awarded annually.

Introduced in 2016, grants of \$25,000 each were awarded to eight cities and towns. Interest in the program was high with 76 cities applying. The eight winners were Beaufort, Clinton, Gaffney, Manning, Ridgeway, Walterboro, West Pelzer/Pelzer and Williamston. Winning projects included development of a digital corridor for small businesses, downtown economic development and master plans, retail recruitment strategy development, a Main Street challenge for small businesses, and development of a visitor and nature center. *Staff Contact: Scott Slatton*

Technology Services

The Association, in partnership with VC3, provided affordable technology services to cities and towns. VC3, an information technology company headquartered in Columbia, designs and hosts municipal websites; designs and implements computer networks; and provides disaster recovery, strategic technology planning and voice communication services. Through VC3's private cloud, cities and towns can limit their investment in hardware and software while providing employees full access to applications and data from any computer linked to the internet. The cloud also gives cities and towns access to disaster recovery and online backup services. *Staff Contact: Miriam Hair*

Cable Franchise Assistance and Telecommunication Infrastructure Siting Program

The Association continued to partner with Local Government Services, LLC, to assist members with cable franchises, pole attachment agreements, and cellular and small cell antenna leases and ordinances. This gives local governments access to the expertise required to negotiate benefits and services with reasonable terms. *Staff Contact: Eric Budds*

76 cities applied for eight Hometown Economic Development Grants.

Internal Services

History is important to all organizations. The Association implemented a digital system to archive its historical photographs.

To comply with new credit card security regulations and to reduce costs associated with compliance of the regulations, the Association implemented new processes and systems for accepting credit cards.

Visitors to the Association's website used more than 20 new online forms to submit information. These new forms replaced paper versions and streamlined data collection for members and staff.

A new automated process helps staff easily schedule web pages and documents for review keeping the Association's website fresh and content up to date.

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Deputy Executive Director

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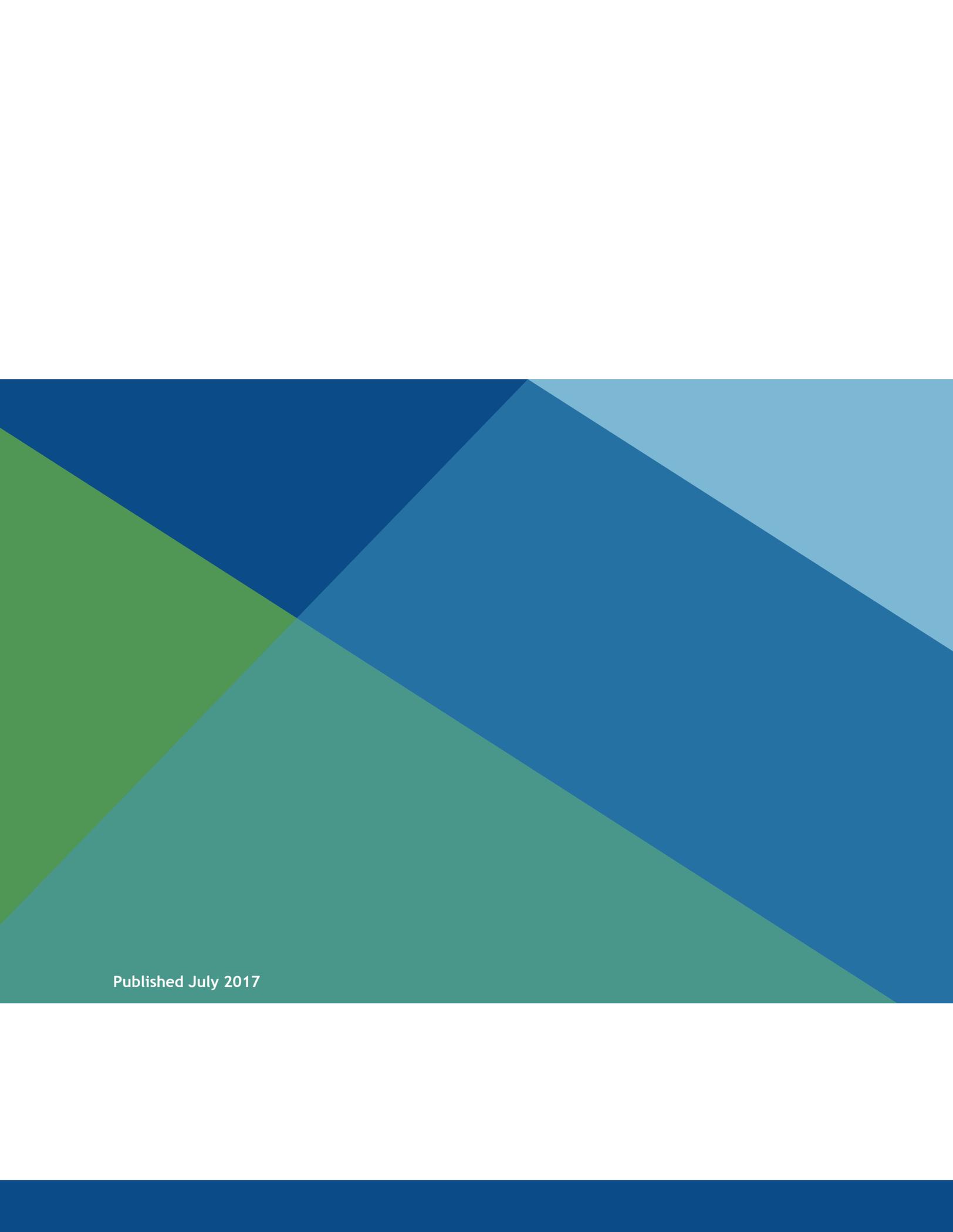
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The image features a complex geometric design composed of several overlapping triangles in various shades of blue and green. The top half of the image is white. The bottom half is dominated by these colored shapes, which create a sense of depth and movement. The colors range from a deep, dark blue to a light, sky blue, and from a vibrant green to a muted, teal green. The text 'Published July 2017' is positioned in the lower-left area of the colored section.

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