



2019

MASC Municipal Association
of South CarolinaSM

Achievement Awards
Main Street SC Inspiration Awards



2019 Achievement Awards

Started in 1986, the Achievement Awards program gives cities and towns deserved recognition for superior and innovative efforts in local government. The program also provides a forum for sharing the best public service ideas in South Carolina.

This year, 29 municipalities entered the Achievement Awards program. Videos highlighting this year's winners are available on the Association's website at www.masc.sc (keyword: achievement).

Population 1 – 1,000 Category | Town of Eutawville Eutawville Community Emergency Response Team

Aiming to enhance its public safety services, the Town of Eutawville knew it faced the challenge of restricted resources, including limited funding, as well as the need to foster collaboration between its services and those of Orangeburg County. With these goals in mind, town leaders created the Eutawville Community Emergency Response Team, a way of pulling together local, state and federal agencies with the aim of placing trained residents in every neighborhood.

Administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, CERT teams have been established by communities in all 50 states as a way of improving the working relationships between public safety agencies and the residents they serve. The Eutawville CERT created a concerned citizens group to discuss and research the public safety needs specific to the community.

The Eutawville team's initial efforts included conducting stakeholder meetings, assembling volunteers and creating a leadership structure. Recruitment marketing efforts ranged from online material to the team's participation in the Town of Eutawville's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Training came from multiple organizations, including the Eutawville Police Department and Eutawville Fire Department. The Orangeburg County Office of Emergency Services provided disaster preparedness and even coordinated a disaster response simulation at the Eutawville Community Center, and the Orangeburg County Emergency Medical Services trained participants in CPR and first aid.

In 2019, the team is focusing on more intensive medical training including first aid and CPR, increasing recruitment, involving more surrounding communities in the effort, and in supporting a Eutawville Fire Department project that promotes community fire safety and distributes smoke detectors.

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Population 1,001 – 5,000 Category | Town of Seabrook Island

Seabrook Island Dolphin Education Center

The Town of Seabrook Island has the distinction of being one of the few places where visitors can observe Atlantic bottlenose dolphins in the process of strand feeding, a behavior in which they launch themselves up onto a beach to eat the fish they have driven out of the water before them.

The spectacular hunting strategy is a tourist draw, but it's also vulnerable to human interference. To protect it, the Town of Seabrook Island focused on education for beachgoers by building partnerships with a local nonprofit group, volunteers and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries.

The Seabrook Island Dolphin Education Program, designed by NOAA Fisheries and managed by the Lowcountry Marine Mammal Network, relies on volunteers working during peak tourist season to engage with and educate beachgoers about the process while also collecting data on strand feeding and the impact humans have on it. As a tourism project, the town supported it with state accommodations tax funding, and the program was coordinated with the neighboring Town of Kiawah Island.

In its initial 2018 season, program volunteers worked more than 600 hours on the beach, interacting with more than 1,400 beachgoers. The season ended with no significant dolphin disturbances, and the educators were able to track the behavior of 11 dolphins, including one new calf.

For 2019, the town aims to increase volunteer participation and coverage hours. It hopes to eventually build enough volunteer expertise to transition program management to a volunteer-run organization, similar to the Seabrook Island Turtle Patrol, Birders Group and National History Group.

Contact Joseph Cronin at jcronin@townofseabrookisland.org or 843.768.9121.

Population 5,001 – 10,000 Category | City of Hartsville

Neptune Island Waterpark

After experiencing an enthusiastic response to its existing splash pad, the City of Hartsville looked to provide more opportunity for local summertime entertainment. City leaders knew they wanted to push for a greatly expanded facility at the recreation complex that would broaden Hartsville's reputation as an attractive place to live and to provide a regional tourism destination. The city fulfilled that ambition in 2018 with the opening of Neptune Island Waterpark. The scope of this attraction is unusual for a rural community without direct interstate highway access. It offers slides, a wave pool and lazy river, and can accommodate 1,300 visitors.

Neptune Island Waterpark opened in June 2018 and brought in 64,000 visitors from 25 states and eight countries during the shortened season. Planners have set a goal of 80,000 visitors for the first full season in 2019.

The city funded the project with Combined System Improvement Revenue Bonds, in which the city's utility system and waterpark were combined into a single enterprise fund — the first of its kind in South Carolina. The city also used a capital lease for one-time opening capital expenditures and withheld a project fund to be used over the first three years of operations to continue to expand and improve the waterpark.

Neptune Island marks a major milestone in the development of the 93-acre Byerly Park Recreation Complex, which also welcomes families from around the nation every year for various baseball and softball tournaments. Further expansions to the water park are already planned, with growth based on the feedback from Hartsville's tourists.

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Population 10,001 – 20,000 Category | Town of Bluffton

Two Streetscapes – One Historic District: Two Streetscape Projects Unify Bluffton's Historic District Providing Walkability and Connectivity

The Town of Bluffton has grown rapidly in recent years. Counting 750 residents in 1998, it now has nearly 20,000. With this growth, the downtown core known as the Bluffton Historic District has surged in popularity, underscoring the need for the town to improve its walkability, accessibility and connectivity.

The town completed two streetscape projects in 2018: one for May River Road and another for Dr. Mellichamp Drive, which parallels May River Road to the north. These projects established the two locations as gateways, adding 220 parking spaces, 98 street lights, nearly 5,000 linear feet of sidewalks, benches and improved stormwater drainage. The projects also help provide safe pathways compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act from one end of the district to the other. Additionally, the town installed a device known as a Stormceptor to prevent hazardous materials like oil, grit and other pollutants from reaching the May River.

Of the \$6.3 million cost of the streetscaping, hospitality tax dollars covered about half, while the town used a combination of accommodations tax, stormwater utility fees, municipal improvement development funds, general fund money and capital improvement program funds. The project also included a grant from the SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

The public investment in the business core has spurred private investment, with one developer renovating a blighted shopping center. In its next steps, the town will enact a streetscaping project for Calhoun Street, the town's primary street, and will also complete the year-long renovation of Bluffton Town Hall.

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Communications Category | City of Goose Creek

#CreekRising

After years of population growth — the City of Goose Creek went from about 29,000 residents in 2000 to an more than 42,000 in 2018 — city leaders concluded that the reputation and regional perception of Goose Creek did not keep up with its growth. City Council authorized an effort to replace its decades-old branding, including a refreshed logo and style book, to help better cultivate an identity of vibrant growth and attractiveness to residents and visitors alike. City staff coordinated this project with a social media campaign.

The city secured the graphic design work for \$250. The city also budgeted for the placement of the brand on city property, such as police cruisers and other vehicles, as well as marketing materials.

To complement this effort, city staff created the "Creek Rising" campaign, which helped boost the city's image with both prospective investors and the public at large. As a social media effort, "#CreekRising" was regularly included with content posts spotlighting growth, progress and commitment to smart development. The "Creek Rising" message has been picked up by local businesses, who have included the phrase on materials such as T-shirts and stickers. City staff have applied their own creativity in finding ways to use the "Creek Rising" message, such as in the city's first-ever food truck event named "Truck Truck Goose."

City staff believe that an observed bump in local sales growth and hospitality tax revenue point to the success of the effort. The city will also be measuring long-term success by monitoring increased engagement and awareness through social media.

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Economic Development Category | City of North Augusta

Joseph P. Riley Jr. Award

A Field of Dreams

The City of North Augusta's location across the Savannah River from the much larger population center of Augusta, Ga., has historically caused difficulties in attracting and recruiting restaurants and retail to its side of the state line. In response to that challenge, the city pushed to build Riverside Village, a \$230-million project developed in partnership with Greenstone Properties. So far, the complex includes SRP Park, the new home of the Augusta GreenJackets stadium, which drew that Minor League Baseball team into the city, as well as a hotel, apartments and two parking decks.

Today's city leaders feel that the project fulfills some of the dreams of James U. Jackson, who in the late 19th century drove the development of North Augusta, including the Hampton Terrace Hotel that served as an enormous luxury resort until it burned in 1916.

City leaders said the project mentality was not "build it and they will come," but rather "we will build if you will build." The city worked with Aiken County and the Aiken County School District to create a tax increment financing district. Between the three entities, 23 public hearings were eventually held on the project. The city brought in financial advisors to create funding scenarios to see which levels of development would generate enough revenue to pay for the project, and more than 93 scenarios were modelled. The city also created a municipal improvement district, in which the developer would be obligated to make payments to the city equal to projected property taxes if the construction did not take place.

More development is planned in the park through 2020, and the city hopes that development spurred by the effort will spread into downtown North Augusta, situated next to the complex.

Contact Todd Glover at tglover@northaugusta.net or 803.441.4202.

Public Safety Category | City of Orangeburg

Working for Wheels — A Cycle of Success

For more than a decade, the City of Orangeburg Department of Public Safety has used bicycles in several ways to promote academic success and smart decision-making among the community's youth and to fight against the influence of gang activity.

The effort has several aspects including the Rivers Bridge Ramble, an organized bicycle ride and self-supporting fundraiser that takes place in the fall. The most recent event brought together nearly 130 riders and generated close to \$4,000 in funds for the project.

At the beginning of the school year, the Department of Public Safety contacts schools for nominations of students to receive bicycles based on their academic success and model behavior. This program, known as Working for Wheels, distributes the bicycles around Christmas and provided for more than 60 children last December. In some cases, local businesses donate bicycles that have been damaged or returned. The department has a dedicated space for bicycle repair and fixes up the bicycles to make them look new.

The department also hosts a gang prevention and intervention summit in September. The summit is aimed at fifth and sixth graders, who are at the age when officers say many begin making critical choices and could be tempted to gravitate toward gangs, given the wrong influences. The 2018 event at Claflin University brought in more than 1,200 fifth and sixth graders.

2019 will see the 12th Annual Rivers Bridge Ramble. For this year, the department is looking to gather more Working for Wheels bicycles than in years past by inviting participants to donate new or used bikes during the event.

Contact John Singh at jsingh@orangeburg.sc.us or 803.533.6000.



Public Service Category | City of Seneca

Jazz on the Alley

The City of Seneca's Jazz on the Alley event shares the same goals as many downtown concert events when it was first created in 2010. After years of disinvestment in the historic downtown, planners wanted to provide a reason for local residents and tourists alike to come downtown, stimulate local businesses and change perceptions of the district.

The event, a staple of the city's social calendar that takes place every Thursday night from April to October in Ram Cat Alley, has grown into something with a wider mission in the years since it started — it now provides a forum for local nonprofit and charitable organizations to advocate for their causes and pull in participation from the community.

Examples include the Foothills Alliance, which offers prevention, intervention and support services to survivors of sexual assault. It hosted the Walk A Mile In Her Shoes fundraiser, in which participants walk a mile in high heels. The Wild Hearts Equine Therapy Center staged a three-day Jazz Fest beginning on Thursday night, allowing them to raise enough money to build a handicapped restroom at their facility.

Jazz on the Alley provides a captive audience for nonprofits that can range from about 500 to 1,000 people. Participation is free for the nonprofits, and the event is funded primarily through hospitality and accommodations tax dollars.

The event has bolstered business development and longer business hours in Ram Cat Alley, now a place of shops, restaurants and even a coffee and craft beer bar. It's also generated more tourism for Seneca, with an air club flying in for the event and a Corvette club visiting from Kentucky.

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Public Works Category | City of Cayce

Cayce Waterline Replacement Project

With issues like water discoloration, flow and pressure problems, as well as line breaks, the City of Cayce faced growing challenges with its water system. Much of the infrastructure was built from the 1930s to the 1950s with galvanized, cast iron and asbestos cement piping.

System replacement is often handled incrementally, but since the city qualified for a low-interest State Revolving Fund loan, it created an ambitious \$29 million plan, the largest project in the city's history, to handle all the needed replacements at the same time to minimize the period of disruption. The city also enlisted the Cayce Utility Fund as well as a lease purchase agreement backed by that fund to finance the work.

After two years of design work, construction began in April 2017 and made use of seven contractors. When it completed in December 2018, crews had replaced 262,000 linear feet of existing water lines, 4,000 water meters, fire hydrants and a 1-million-gallon elevated storage tank. The completed project represents 75 percent of the city's water infrastructure.

Communication efforts formed a key part of the project, emphasizing that the city wanted transparency and valued business concerns and customer satisfaction. The city's engineer was contracted to handle all resident communications and complaints. Contracting out for a dedicated customer service phone, email and communication system allowed city staff to continue providing routine services. Councilmembers informed residents and gave updates at neighborhood meetings and community events, and all city staff carried Waterline Replacement Project business cards.

The success of the project has made an economic development impact. New housing development is taking place, and where people had expressed concern about buying and renting in the city before the project, leaders are reporting that new houses on the market are now finding buyers quickly.

Contact Tracy Hegler at thegler@caycesc.gov or 803.796.9020.

Other Entries

City of Aiken

New City of Aiken Public Safety Headquarters

In the 1970s, the City of Aiken became one of the first to embrace the concept of a combined police and fire department and built a public safety headquarters for the combined department. A 2016 analysis found that growth made this space inadequate. Storage closets were converted to office space, and the building became a morale and retention issue. City Council decided to replace the headquarters and obtained a shuttered grocery store for the new location.

The finished 46,000-square-foot facility was funded by a successful capital project sales tax referendum and utility bill franchise fee. The new headquarters includes police, fire, a courtroom that can also serve as multipurpose space, an emergency operations center/training facility and a 911/dispatch operations center.

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City of Clemson

Abernathy Park Community Redecking

Built in 2003 along Lake Hartwell, the Larry W. Abernathy Waterfront Park needed its boardwalk replaced after 15 years. City leaders decided to replace 7,000 linear feet of wood decking with a composite material and also provide landscaping, brush removal and litter removal using volunteer workers.

The project ultimately included four separate volunteer work periods and 248 volunteers. They replaced 13,000 boards, used 156,000 stainless steel screws and removed six tons of invasive plants. With an initial work period coinciding with Clemson University's spring break, the project used marketing efforts for recruitment and inexpensive signup management software. The liability waiver was crafted to be humorous and encourage volunteers to read it. The city also provided volunteers with lunch and a commemorative T-shirt.

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City of Conway

Hurricane Florence — Preparation, Response, Recovery, Transparency

Through the flooding events of 2013, 2015 and 2016, the City of Conway gathered valuable communications experience. It hired a public information officer just ahead of the flooding crises that came from Hurricane Florence. Before, during and after the storm, the city made strategic use of many communication channels to send consistent, transparent and engaging messages, telling the city's story in a way that put residents first. The city's social media messages ultimately reached 1.4 million people during the emergency period.


Door-to-door warnings also formed a key part of the communications effort. City staff used flood modelling to show what neighborhoods they needed to target for evacuation. They warned residents while facing the challenge of raising the alarm before flooding impacted the area. Efforts were justified when flooding experience matched up with predictions.

Contact Adam Emrick at aemrick@cityofconway.com or 843.248.1760.

City of Denmark

New Denmark City Hall

Denmark faced several concerns with the converted bank building it had been using as a city hall — the space was too small, it had no designated parking, it lacked a drive-thru for bill payment and it needed more meeting space. Leaders felt that the city needed something more modern that could efficiently provide for services.



City Council researched other city halls in the region and sought ideas and input from residents and city staff. The city acquired a property for the new site that was a former railroad bed. It also obtained and cleared an adjacent property, which will provide space for the Denmark Dogwood Festival. The new city hall ties into the larger strategic goal of encouraging downtown development.

Contact Heyward Robinson at admin@denmarksc.com or 803.793.3734.

City of Easley

Connecting Our Future: An Active Approach to Affordable Housing

The City of Easley wanted to promote affordable housing in its northern section, a historically African-American area that was facing rising home prices. It acquired properties adjacent to future development along the Doodle Trail — the rails-to-trails partnership between Easley and Pickens — allowing for build-to-suit homes for eligible buyers. Construction has started for these homes. The trail access will be a benefit to the residents and is in keeping with the recommendations of the city's Bike and Pedestrian Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

On the acquired properties, the city demolished more than 40 dilapidated homes to provide for the infill development. Successful applicants meeting the average median income of the area qualify for 100 percent financing of the construction loan through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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City of Fountain Inn

Community/Government Outreach — Neighborhood Roundtable Discussion Meetings

Fountain Inn staff set a goal of providing residents with a way to voice their concerns in an environment outside of City Hall and outside of council meetings. This goal encourages more resident involvement in local government and collaborating with people and neighborhoods that are not typically involved. City staff set up a series of Neighborhood Roundtable Discussion meetings in such places as churches, the public library and even in a resident's home.

Funding for the meetings came from a budget line item for community outreach as well as from a \$1,200 donation from the Chapman Foundation. The meetings are informal and included dinner. Residents at the outreach meetings have brought previously unknown issues to the attention of staff. The city is seeking to expand meeting locations and partnerships and to schedule 10 of these meetings per year.

Contact Ashlee Tolbert at ashlee.tolbert@fountaininn.org or 864.862.7233.

City of Greer

Anything Out of the Car: Community Outreach

Seeking to combat the impacts of gangs, opioids and illiteracy, the City of Greer Police Department created a program to build trust between the police and the community they serve, making sure that officers are having positive interactions with the public. The Anything Out of the Car programs encourage officers to initiate conversations with residents of all ages, both individually and in group settings.

The programs include neighborhood walk-and-talk events as well as community meetings. Fist Bump Friday events involve officers greeting students as they arrive at school in the morning. The Real Men Read effort, began at a local elementary school to counter the idea that men need literacy less than women, pulled in police officers as participants. The department also paid for the Gang Resistance Education and Training program from its own training budget.

Contact Steve Owens at sowens@cityofgreer.org or 864.416.0121.

City of Hardeeville

Hardeeville Commerce Park — “A Game Changer” for the City

Being small and rural presents an economic development challenge for cities like Hardeeville, but the city has now taken advantage of its Interstate 95 location with the 167-acre Hardeeville Commerce Park, a commercial and light industrial park located in its downtown.

The city received a donation of 131 acres for the park and purchased an adjoining 36 acres. Before the park could be built, the city harvested timber from the property twice, generating more than \$150,000 of the funding needed. SC Rural Infrastructure Authority funding provided for water and wastewater expansions, and Jasper County local option sales tax funding paid for entryway roads.

Hardeeville partnered with the Southern Carolina Alliance and SC Department of Commerce to market the park to business prospects. It sold three parcels for new business development and expansion, and will continue developing infrastructure to allow for as many as 15 new businesses.

Contact Neil Parsons at nparsons@cityofhardeevillesc.gov or 843.784.2231.

Town of Hilton Head Island

The Breeze Trolley

Significant population and visitor growth on Hilton Head Island have contributed to congestion, especially during the summer. In response, the town partnered with Palmetto Breeze to establish a shuttle service to reduce traffic, promoted with a marketing campaign and making careful use of branding.

Palmetto Breeze used Federal Transit Administration grant funding for three trolleys with additional money for marketing and operating. It also leveraged some town matching grant money. The trolleys, which run on clean diesel, feature wood interiors, free Wi-Fi and bicycle racks. Volunteer ambassadors ride the trolleys to welcome visitors and answer questions.

The initial 2018 season saw wide-ranging marketing efforts — print, television, web, social media and through local businesses — and more than 5,500 passengers rode the trolleys. For 2019, a new route will accommodate another shopping area, an RV resort and later operational hours.

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City of Johnsonville

Renovation of Odell Venters Landing

The Odell Venters Landing provides recreational access to the Lynches River and a historical connection as well: it stands on the site of Witherspoon’s Ferry, where Gen. Francis Marion accepted command of the Williamsburg Militia during the Revolutionary War. Since the concrete ramp was decaying and the parking lot provided insufficient space on busy days, valuable tourism traffic was shifting to other landings further away from the City of Johnsonville.


Recognizing the need to improve recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike, the city worked with the SC Department of Natural Resources and secured grants for a renovation of the landing. The finished product features a 155-foot-by-80-foot concrete ramp, an aluminum floating courtesy dock as well as a resurfaced and enlarged parking lot. The city also added a launch for kayaks and canoes and a sandy beach for mooring small boats.

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Town of Lexington

Town of Lexington’s I-20 Wastewater Treatment Facility Takeover

When the I-20 wastewater treatment center on the Saluda River was privately operated, it accumulated several SC Department of Health and Environmental Control violations. DHEC denied the private company its necessary permit, opening the door for the Town of Lexington to take over the facility.



In the first month of ownership, the town diverted all flow to the Joint Wastewater Treatment Facility in Cayce. Previously, Lexington worked with the City of Cayce and the Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission to create that facility. Since it opened, the Town of Lexington has shut down four older facilities in addition to the I-20 facility as part of a regional plan.

For funding, the town will use State Revolving Loan funds as much as possible along with bond issuances and operational income. Its long-term goal is for the I-20 system to be self-sustaining for operational costs.

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Town of Moncks Corner

Prom Promise Week

Outreach efforts of the Moncks Corner Police Department include engaging with Berkeley High School students ahead of their prom, helping them to understand the risks of alcohol and drug use as well as driving while impaired.

The department offers an impaired driving simulator as well as using inebriation-simulating goggles on a golf cart driving course. The officers aimed to engage personally with the students, even entertaining them by showing them how police perform in the impaired driving simulator. The department partners with several other regional agencies, brings in speakers from Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Lexington County, and even brings in local food vendors to sell lunch.

The effort has received positive feedback from students, parents and teachers. The 2018 prom saw no negative interactions with school officials or law enforcement, and the department is planning on expanding the program to Berkeley Middle College.

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Town of Mount Pleasant

Active Threat Preparedness Program

Responding to several years of high-profile violence incidents around the nation such as active shooter events, the Town of Mount Pleasant created an Active Threat Preparedness Program to prevent events and minimize the risks of harm.

The town used free instructor courses — Avoid, Deny Defend as well as Stop the Bleed — and spent \$800 on materials. The town's SWAT commander performed facility security assessments, complemented by free Federal Emergency Management Agency courses on environmental design for business safety. The town also obtained Tactical Emergency Casualty Care certification for \$15 per responder, as well as \$1,800 worth of exercise materials.

The program ultimately trained 275 people at Town Hall as well as teachers and administrators at 23 schools, staff and congregants at three churches, and community businesses. Future steps include facility security upgrades and more training and security assessments at community gathering places.

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City of Myrtle Beach

City Leadership Institute of Myrtle Beach

Facing the prospect of widespread retirement among department leaders with no formal succession plan, the City of Myrtle Beach created a progressive staff development program that helps to improve abilities at different levels: rising department heads and employees as well.

The City Leadership Institute of Myrtle Beach made use of budgeted funds to secure a local training and development professional. The program is voluntary and open to all employees. It uses about nine months of class time, including monthly brown-bag lunches featuring group discussions of topics.

With more than 260 graduates of the program, city leaders report a positive culture shift as one of the benefits, with a growing sense of trust and improved morale among employees, declining turnover and improving service.

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Town of North

Eartha Kitt Celebration

Singer, actress and dancer Eartha Kitt was a native of North, but despite her fame she had not been memorialized in her hometown. Seeking to change that, the Town of North staged a fundraiser in January 2019 for the establishment of a town museum, promoting tourism and economic development.

The event was the first of its kind in the town's history. It featured a dinner, silent auction, a video presentation by Sen. Tim Scott and a ballet with original choreography by the Columbia City Ballet. Kitt's daughter, Kitt Shapiro, travelled from Connecticut for the event, providing items from her mother's estate for the auction.

The celebration received significant media attention, brought a crowd of more than 200 for the ballet, and garnered about \$5,500 in proceeds for the museum. The town now plans to bring the Eartha Kitt Celebration back every other year and also explore other potential funding sources through Undiscovered SC and SC Arts Commission grant programs.

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Town of Springdale

Springdale PD's Daddy & Me 5K

The Springdale police chief at the time noted that he has repeatedly seen negative interactions between the police and young people lacking a parental figure. Believing that an active father figure can help stop bad influences, he came up with the idea of an annual 5K and "Dadlympics." The town partnered with Serve & Connect and the Midlands Fatherhood Coalition to plan the event with the simple message that "dads matter."

The event, aimed at raising awareness of the role of fathers and building partnerships, took place on Father's Day weekend in 2018. The 5K had more than 80 participants. The Dadlympics included activities like unfolding strollers while holding baby dolls, changing a baby doll's diaper, pushing a bubble lawn mower and strapping baby dolls into child restraint seats.

The event raised enough money to donate more than \$12,000 to the Midlands Fatherhood Coalition.

Contact the Ashley Watkins at awatkins@springdalessc.com or 803.794.0408.

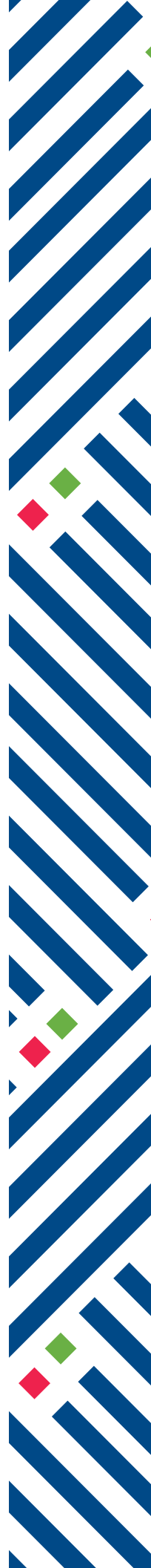
Town of Summerville

Communication Through Outreach

Aiming to change negative perceptions about interactions with law enforcement, the Town of Summerville Police Department has taken on numerous community outreach efforts. The initiative began with brainstorming on how to make engagement work in fun and relaxed settings and shifting officers to serve as the department's ambassadors to the community.

Results of that planning have included a No-Shave November for officers to raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, using a military vehicle for a food and toy donation drive, multiple Special Olympics events, a Senior Citizens' Prom, neighborhood cleanups, connecting with school resource officers to identify children in need of Christmas gifts, and events for having coffee and ice cream with officers. The Turkeys Instead of Tickets campaign had officers distributing Thanksgiving turkeys when stopping drivers for minor traffic violations. The department also focuses on highly positive social media postings and has drawn in about 40,000 social media followers.

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City of Sumter

eSTEAM Sumter

As the City of Sumter succeeds in recruiting national and international companies, the development of a reliable supply of talent for the area has become increasingly important. For this reason, eSTEAM Sumter exists to bring together pre-K and K-12 schools as well as universities and tech schools to promote STEAM, also known as science, technology, engineering, arts and math.

In its first year, eSTEAM Sumter brought together more than 3,000 participants, 16 partnering organizations and 63 exhibitors for activities encompassing an entire city block to expose students to career opportunities in the Sumter community through hands-on activities. Funding came from workforce development organizations like the Regional Economic Development Alliance, Sumter Chamber of Commerce and the SC Department of Commerce Workforce Division.

Although planners conceived of the project as a one-time event, the success of it led them to plan to host the event annually and to create more activities and events inside schools.

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City of West Columbia

West Columbia River District Redevelopment

In promoting its iconic River District, located on the bank of the Congaree River, West Columbia knew it needed more public parking, greenspace, connectivity and even public art.

To achieve this, the city commissioned a professional redevelopment plan, hosted community meetings and established a resident committee focused on development of an enabling park for children with special needs. The city also created an art review committee.

The city is building a bicycle lane connecting the district's State Street with the Triangle City area about a mile away. Grants and hospitality tax money contributed to the projects. Additionally, the city created a public/private partnership with the Brookland development, containing residential, retail and restaurant space.

The park projects, bicycle lane and interactive art sculptures are being completed in 2019. Additional sidewalk and crosswalk projects are scheduled for 2020.

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City of York

Revitalization of Former Gas Station Site

The City of York acquired an old gas station in its downtown in 2000, after which the property came to be used informally for parking and sometimes as a farmers market. In 2018, City Council provided funding for resurfacing and striping parking areas at what has come to be known as the City Market. The city considered removing the dilapidated canopy of the gas station, but instead chose to rehabilitate it in recognition of the property's historic character and with an eye towards its potential for event space.

Capital project funds supported the resurfacing and striping. Hospitality tax funds covered material costs for the canopy repair, while the York Fire Department performed all work on the canopy, with every member of the department participating.

The city has seen an increase in requests for special events at City Market, and it possesses adjacent property that could be used for an expansion.

Contact Domenic Manera at dmanera@yorksc.gov or 803.684.1700.



Main Street South Carolina Inspiration Awards

Main Street South Carolina empowers residents, business owners and local officials with the knowledge, skills, tools and organizational structure necessary to revitalize downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts into vibrant centers of commerce and community.

Main Street South Carolina is a service of the Municipal Association of SC and is accredited by the National Main Street Center. The program follows National Main Street's Four Point Approach — economic vitality, design, promotion and organization. Each year, Main Street South Carolina recognizes members' achievements and successes in downtown revitalization.

Excellence on Main Street Award

Outstanding Partnership

Hartsville's EdVenture Children's Museum

After first opening in Columbia in 2003, the EdVenture Children's Museum received acclaim as one of the best children's museums in the nation. In 2018 it expanded into Hartsville, thanks to a partnership that brought together groups including the City of Hartsville and nonprofit groups local to Hartsville, such as the Byerly Foundation.

The project, aimed at improving the community's downtown core alongside bolstering the area's opportunities for children, created a miniature version of Hartsville's downtown, familiarizing children with the city and helping them grow as residents. Some features include a grocery store, the Sonoco Maker's Space, where children learn the importance of recycling, as well as the Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center and ambulance.

Grants have allowed for decreased ticket pricing through the Yes, Every Child initiative. EdVenture has also obtained a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for efforts to address community violence, including the creation of a Future Leaders Program at Hartsville Middle School.

In the formative stage of the effort to bring EdVenture to Hartsville, initial organizers and Main Street Hartsville created an informal tea party to bring together interested women. The group emerging from this effort then organized a Ladies' Night Out Fashion Show Fundraiser spotlighting downtown clothing and accessory boutiques. The show is now an annual event aimed at raising operational funds for EdVenture.

The museum is housed in a 5,000-square-foot downtown building bought by the City of Hartsville. The city repaved the building's parking lot, repaired the roof and pledged \$100,000 every year for five years. The Byerly Foundation granted \$500,000, and other nonprofits contributed as well.

Contact Suzy Moyd at suzy.moyd@hartsvillesc.gov or 843.230.5837.



Inspiration Awards

Master Merchant – Michelle Compton, Laurens

In 2015, Michelle Compton bought a former bank building in downtown Laurens. She spent \$25,000 to renovate the ground floor for the business she opened — the Vault Salon and Spa. She continued the rehabilitation work in 2017, completing a \$40,000 renovation to the building's second floor to make it usable for massage and pedicure rooms.

Beyond her own business, Compton has actively served on the Main Street Laurens committees for design, promotion and economic development. Concerned that no one but property owners and the Main Street Laurens staff knew about downtown properties available for sale or rent, she led an effort to create window signage advertising available buildings to promote development. The signs featured historic images of the building as well as ideas on what kind of businesses could open in the location, based on market analysis. Main Street Laurens reported that phone calls began soon after the first sign went up, and three new businesses have opened since. Compton also identified the need for an improved inventory of available locations and a map, so she helped create these resources.

As part of the Main Street Laurens Design Team, Compton has worked to create visual interest for sidewalks and storefronts. Placing a newly painted old bicycle in front of her building, she now decorates it to match holiday seasons.

Compton also serves on the Promotion Team, working to plan and develop downtown events. Finally Friday on the Square is a key example, an event of live music, extended shopping hours and dinner specials on the final Friday of every month from April to September. For this series, Compton has helped foster participation from her fellow business owners and has added family games.

Contact Jonathan Irick at mail@mainstreetlaurens.org or 864.984.2119.

Outstanding Service – Nancy Cave, Manning

Although she is originally from Virginia, Nancy Cave adopted Clarendon County as her home after her late husband's retirement, and has come to serve as a tireless advocate for the appreciation of her community's history and its tourism efforts. As the retired archivist of the Clarendon County Archives and History Center and an original Design Committee member of Main Street Manning, Cave received the Manning Main Street Hero award in 2018.

As an archivist, she has provided a wealth of knowledge of the commercial district and the wider community for Main Street Manning. She served as an invaluable resource in providing historic images of downtown buildings for the architect who performs the design work for Main Street Manning's façade grants.

Cave has also contributed text for Manning's self-guided historic district walking tour brochure. She has provided support for many Main Street Manning events, including helping with the research and organization of a historic residential district walking tour event. She served as co-chair for the project to bring the Smithsonian Institution's travelling exhibit, Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America, to Manning. In addition to the Smithsonian, the effort required coordination with the SC Humanities Council and local committees.

Beyond her volunteer work for Main Street Manning, Cave volunteers with the Clarendon County Historical Society Museum, Francis Marion Living History Days and her church.

Contact Carrie Trebil at ctrebil@cityofmanning.org or 803.435.8477.

Outstanding Promotion – Orangeburg’s A Taste of the Market

A couple of years after establishing the Downtown Farmers Market, the Downtown Orangeburg Revitalization Association created A Taste of the Market, a farm-to-table four-course dinner spotlighting both the market and the downtown. This event is growing into a signature event for Orangeburg, helping to improve the visibility of downtown and interest in filling vacant storefronts.

Featuring produce grown entirely in Orangeburg County, most of which is donated, the dinner also spotlights Orangeburg’s Edisto Memorial Gardens, which provides floral centerpieces.

The event is a ticketed event with sponsors. In 2018, the second year of the dinner, sponsorship doubled and ticket sales increased by 50 percent, providing DORA with funds to help it grow the farmers market. The dinner sold out within two weeks of tickets going on sale.

Several of the City of Orangeburg’s departments contributed to the success of the event, including the Public Works and Service Departments for the closure of the block of Russell Street that hosts the event. The Parks and Recreation Department provides the setup of tables and chairs, and the Department of Public Utilities assists with stringing lights across the street. The event also received help from local merchants, which provided the sound system and space for storage and prep space. A local theater opened its facility for restrooms, while cheerleaders from Orangeburg Preparatory School worked as servers.

Contact Candice Roberson at croberson@orangeburg.sc.us or 803.531.6186.

Outstanding Special Project – Sumter’s Hyatt Place Hotel

With the Sumter Opera House, Prisma Health Tuomey Hospital, Shaw Air Force Base and Palmetto Tennis Center all drawing visitors to Sumter, the city’s downtown needed a hotel. After the city obtained and cleared a site across Main Street from the opera house, construction began and the Hyatt Place Hotel opened in April 2018.

The immediate proximity to the opera house allows for package deals combining tickets to a show with a night spent at the hotel, and the hotel also benefits from being located within walking distance of the hospital. The hotel booked several conferences before it opened and has since hosted numerous weddings, family reunions and class reunions.

In 2012, the City of Sumter acquired buildings on the hotel site that were in poor condition and considered to not have historic value. After demolishing these, the city established a temporary green space that also served as an event venue until the hotel could be built. The city also built a parking garage, funded with Tax Increment Financing money, as part of the effort to develop the hotel. The garage, which opened a few months before the hotel, serves hotel guests and provides free parking for other downtown visitors.

As a high-visibility downtown investment, the Hyatt Place has demonstrated the potential the district has for other businesses. The existing Hamptons Restaurant relocated to a space adjacent to the hotel and will open another restaurant in its former location, while construction has begun on a downtown brewery.

Contact Leigh Newman at lnewman@sumtersc.gov or 803.436.2635.



