

UPTOWN



a publication of the Municipal Association of South Carolina

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Cover photo: The mural "Dreamer," found on the side of the McFadden Building on East Main Street in Rock Hill, was completed by artist Darion Fleming, who also goes by "DaFlemingo," in 2020.

2024 HLAD, MEO Institute Coming in February

Hometown Legislative Action Day will take place Tuesday, February 6, the day before the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government and Advanced Institute. This makes attending both sessions convenient for participants.

Here are the dates attendees will need to know to register by the deadline:

Registration brochure available on Municipal Association website

Tuesday, December 12

Hotel reservations deadline

Friday, January 12

For the Columbia Marriott, make hotel reservations or by calling 1.800.593.6465 or 1.803.771.7000 and ask for the Municipal Association of SC HLAD rate of \$179 plus taxes and fees.

For the Hyatt Place Columbia, make hotel reservations or by calling 1.888.492.8847 and ask for the Municipal Association of SC HLAD rate of \$159 plus taxes fees. Use group code "G-HLD4."

Registration deadline for HLAD and MEO Institute

Friday, January 26

Hometown Legislative Action Day

Tuesday, February 6 | Columbia Marriott

Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government, Advanced Institute and Advanced Continuing Education

Wednesday, February 7 | Columbia Marriott

MCTI Recognizes Newest Graduate

The South Carolina Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute gained another graduate in September: Julie Emory, office manager for the Town of Blythewood.

MCTI is a three-year program providing municipal clerks and treasurers with skills critical to their profession. Graduation from the program requires participants to complete more than 120 hours of classroom instruction on topics such as business license management, accounting and municipal law.

Completion of MCTI satisfies the education requirements for the certifications offered by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks and some of the requirements for the Association of Public Treasurers of the United States and Canada certification. Those seeking IIMC's Certified Municipal Clerk designation also need to complete a capstone project. MCTI is scheduled as six sessions, each taking place over two and a half days. Participants can begin the program at any point and are encouraged to attend sessions consecutively.

Learn more about the program at www.masc.sc (keyword: MCTI).



The Municipal Association Needs Your Updated City Information

The time has come again for every city and town to review, update and verify its information the Municipal Association uses for its Municipal Directory.

This year, the deadline for doing so is Monday, November 20. Information about each city and town may be updated by using the Association's Municipal Information Dashboard.

Aside from this annual update campaign, cities and towns should keep their information updated with the Association throughout the year. Updating frequently helps the Association keep all of South Carolina's municipalities informed of key issues affecting their operations and residents.

With accurate and up-to-date contact information, the Association can provide local municipal staff with

- the latest information on legislative action at the State House that can have a major impact on local government operations;
- registration opportunities for meetings, conferences and workshops, such as the Association's Annual Meeting and Hometown Legislative Action Day; and
- other training opportunities from the Association's affiliate organizations and Risk Management Services.

The South Carolina Municipal Directory, covering details and contact information for all 271 municipalities, is available online at www.masc.sc (keyword: municipal online directory), as well as in print. It also lists items such as the form of government used in each city and town, the regular schedule of council meetings and the names of all elected officials and key staff positions.

The online version of the directory allows users to search for municipalities based on characteristics like the county in which the municipality is located, its population, or which state representatives and state senators serve it.

The Association allows only one person from each municipality to handle the annual update — the municipal clerk or the clerk's designee — as a way of maintaining the accuracy of all submitted information.

For assistance, or to make a new designation for the person responsible for the update, contact Joanna Ayers at jayers@masc.sc or 803.933.1259.

NEWS BRIEFS

Members of the Municipal Court Administration Association of SC recently elected their 2023 – 2024 board of directors. They are President **Brittany Burns**, Town of Pine Ridge; Vice President **Patricia McTeer**, Town of Hampton; Second Vice President **Brenda Armstrong**, City of Charleston; Members-at-Large **Courtney Boughton**, Town of Monck Corner; **Sarah Farrow**, City of Beaufort; **Pam Larson**, City of Greenville; and Past President **Kirsten Pressley**, City of Greer.

U.S. News & World Report ranked several cities in South Carolina among its fastest-growing places in the nation. The report included the **City of Myrtle Beach** as the 1st fastest-growing, the **City of Spartanburg** as the 12th fastest-growing, and the **City of Greenville** as the 23rd fastest-growing.

November 20

The deadline for clerks or the designee to update their information on the Municipal Association Dashboard is Monday, November 20.

The screenshot shows the Municipal Association of South Carolina website. The navigation bar includes links for About, Advocacy & Legislation, Education & Events, Risk Management Services, Programs, and Resources. The main heading is "Municipal Information Dashboard: Town of Timmonsville" with a "change" link. Below the heading, there is a paragraph explaining the purpose of the dashboard: "Throughout the year, update information about your city, elected officials and key personnel. At certain times during the year such as after an election, the application will require you to review and verify all of the information for your city." This is followed by a list of benefits: "The Municipal Association uses the information you provide to" communicate with municipal officials, display real-time information, and print information in the *South Carolina Municipal Officials and Legislative Directory*. A help line is provided: "Need help? Call 803.933.1297 during normal business hours." At the bottom, there are five certification tiles for "Municipal Contact Information", "Municipal Demographics", "Elected Officials", "Key Municipal Personnel", and "Other Personnel", all certified on 6/07/2023 by Mary Bines-Robinson.

Regional Advocacy Meetings Bring Crowds, Great Discussion

After seven in-person Regional Advocacy Meetings and one virtual meeting, a common theme emerged for what municipal leaders want out of legislative action at the State House — protect the ability of cities and towns to make decisions at the local level that work best for residents.

Since 2006, Municipal Association of SC staff have hosted local legislative meetings to provide a convenient and quick way to communicate with municipal officials about legislative action without a trip to Columbia. These meetings have also proven helpful in gathering information about proactive legislative that can benefit cities and towns.

The Association's advocacy staff crisscrossed the state in September and October, meeting with local officials from the Upstate to the Lowcountry to discussed legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2023, as well as

bills that remain active for the legislative session beginning in January.

The legislative team outlined recently passed bills that had an effect on local government. From the state budget to squat trucks, financial audits, fentanyl and everything in between, municipal officials discussed these topics and asked questions about how to apply these new laws to their hometowns.

The agenda also included bills that are still active for the 2024 session. Attendees discussed the possibility of the hate crimes bill passing, as well as a municipal elections law bill that's in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Support for a zero-millage bill, a bill that would allow cities and towns with no operating millage to impose a millage, was also discussed, along with the effort to change the current language found in state law about liquor liability, and the attempt to extend the Abandoned Buildings Tax Credit.

Participants talked about the political possibilities of the upcoming SC House and Senate elections. The biggest topic of the sessions was the effort in the General Assembly to take away the ability of cities and towns to regulate short-term rentals. Officials discussed the differences in communities across the state and the needs of the resident to be met by local officials.

There was never a lack of discussion topics, fellowship among the elected officials, staff and Municipal Association staff and great food from local restaurants.

Keep up with legislative action during the session by subscribing to From the Dome to Your Home weekly email reports at www.masc.sc (keyword: Dome). Also, listeners to the From the Dome to Your Home podcast can get legislative insight each week from the Association's Director of Advocacy and Communications Scott Slatton and Manager for Municipal Advocacy Casey Fields. Learn more at www.masc.sc (keyword: podcast).



Municipal Association legislative staff, including, from left, Erica Wright, Joannie Nickel and Scott Slatton, speak during the Regional Advocacy Meeting at the Hartsville Museum.

LAW ENFORCEMENT POLICIES

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Act 218 took effect in 2023, requiring all law enforcement agencies to adopt and implement a set of minimum operating standards. The law allows departments to establish additional standards that are more restrictive.

The Municipal Association's Risk Management Services drafted model policies for each of the standards, available for use by all cities and towns at www.masc.sc (keyword: law enforcement model policies). Departments that are not SC Municipal Insurance Trust or SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund members should reach out to the SC Criminal Justice Academy for policy questions.

The ninth and final model policy in this series addresses a police department's personnel early warning system. The policy describes such systems as a way to identify those "employees exhibiting symptoms of stress or other behavior that could pose a liability to the community, the Department or the officer."

These systems aim to identify "at-risk behavior" that could create the risk of injury or a civil rights violation. It could be anything from repeated violations of department policy to at-fault traffic accidents, improper vehicle pursuits or domestic misconduct incidents, among other issues.

The policy requires each police department to use either an internal affairs department, human resources officials or someone designated as an internal affairs officer to manage the early warning system. In cases where the system has identified at-risk behavior in need of a response, the supervising chain of command must produce a written report recommending remedial action.

The actions taken by an employee's superiors could be one of several identified in the policy:

- The process may find that no action is needed. After superiors thoroughly review an officer's actions that triggered the early warning system, they may find that the evidence points toward no needed corrective action.
- Supervisors may assign either supervisory counseling or peer counseling for the employee. They might also assign a period of observation in the field by the first-line supervisor to determine whether the at-risk behavior is habitual or ongoing.

- They may refer the officer for remedial training, anger management training or stress reduction training. They might also refer the employee to psychological services.
- Supervisors might reassign the officer to duties that would not involve the at-risk behavior.

Once the early warning system is in use and has led to an appropriate remedial action, the policy requires follow-up steps. Supervisors must provide a written report of the outcome to the person or department managing the system, helping to ensure that the behavior that led to the intervention is no longer a concern.

The policy also requires that the person designated as the police department's internal affairs officer meet annually with the chief of police to evaluate the early warning system, and all data produced on those officers who met the thresholds for triggering the system.

Find more information about all of the Act 218 model policies at www.masc.sc (keyword: Act 218).

The full list of policies addresses all of these areas:

- **Use of force and response to resistance**
- **Uniform vehicle pursuit standards**
- **Duty to intervene**
- **Hiring and terminating practices**
- **Mandatory and uniform post-basic academy field training**
- **Body-worn cameras**
- **No-knock warrants**
- **Internal affairs and citizen complaints**
- **Early warning system for at-risk officer behavior**

WeShopSC

is Open for Business



Over the past year and a half, the Municipal Association of SC and Main Street South Carolina have worked behind the scenes alongside local Main Street communities to test and pilot a statewide e-commerce marketplace. In August, WeShopSC was officially introduced as the state's only online collection of small businesses.

The WeShopSC web platform is designed to support small business owners from the most basic startup stage to those that are IT savvy, as well as owners that are struggling to establish an online presence.

Small business owners can set up a free online profile, connecting them to a statewide online marketplace that offers commission-free selling opportunities, product searching, promotional capabilities and gift card options. It also offers automated order fulfillment options such as in-store and curbside pickup, local delivery and shipping capabilities.

WeShopSC helps minimize barriers and costs associated with websites, and provides a community-centric buying environment that can yield a greater local economic impact.



WeShopSC training included professional lightbox photography of products for the website.

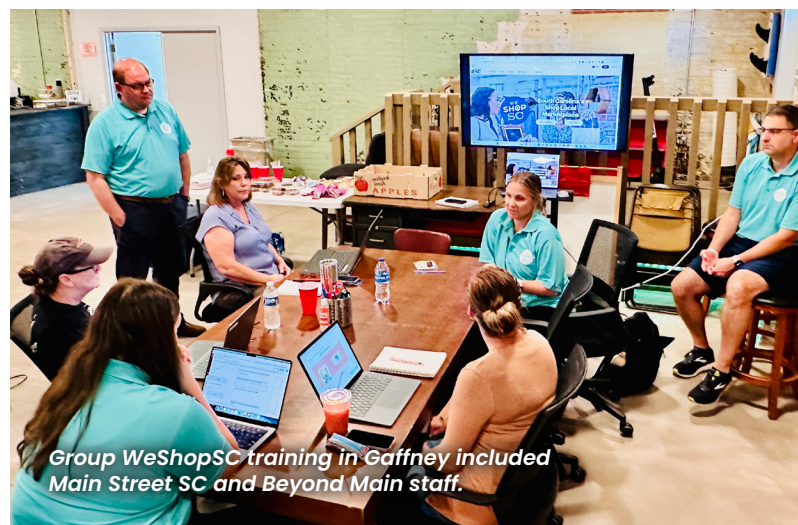
Joining WeShopSC

At the website WeShopSC.com, businesses can set up a free business profile page, and can add features like gift card functionality for a small subscription fee. Shoppers can use their own profiles to save their favorite businesses, save their billing and order information, and use gift cards for in-store and online purchases.

Once businesses have registered and created a free profile, they can personalize their business directory page with details about the business as well as photos, videos, events, testimonials and more.

The nationwide online marketplace company and website Beyond Main, partnered with Main Street SC to develop WeShopSC. Through this partnership, technical support and training is offered to WeShopSC communities and business members. Sample training includes marketing, merchandising, and promotions.

"Beyond Main is thrilled to support South Carolina as they build a digital home for South Carolina based businesses to leverage the digital economy," said Kate Giovambattista, founder and CEO of Beyond Main. "South Carolina's leaders understand the importance of developing the ecosystem that will support the long-term growth of the small business sector. Our team of retail, technology, e-commerce, and marketing experts are looking forward to collaborating with community leaders, small business owners, and customers looking to make a greater local impact."



Group WeShopSC training in Gaffney included Main Street SC and Beyond Main staff.

WeShopSC roadshow

In September, a team of Main Street SC and Beyond Main staff traveled more 2,000 miles to facilitate specialized e-commerce training. A grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission enabled the WeShopSC team to provide hands-on, in-person technical assistance to small business owners in a targeted, regional approach. As a result of the roadshow, more than a dozen small businesses have created a full e-commerce storefront on WeShopSC.



One of the WeShopSC training site visits in Gaffney was the Johnny & June Boutique.

Heather Moore is the owner of Market on Mill in historic downtown Inman. She participated in one of the workshops.

“Whatever the Municipal Association develops, it’s always done with the highest caliber of excellence. WeShopSC is no different,” she said. “We’ve been watching this platform as it was being built. Participating in the hands-on workshops has provided step by step guidance — from personalizing my business profile to

adding testimonials and product listings. The photography light box demonstrations and training were great — especially the tricks like using sticky putty, considering different angles, and utilizing natural light. The best part of this platform is being more accessible. We often hear people say that we are never open. Well, now we are, 24/7.”

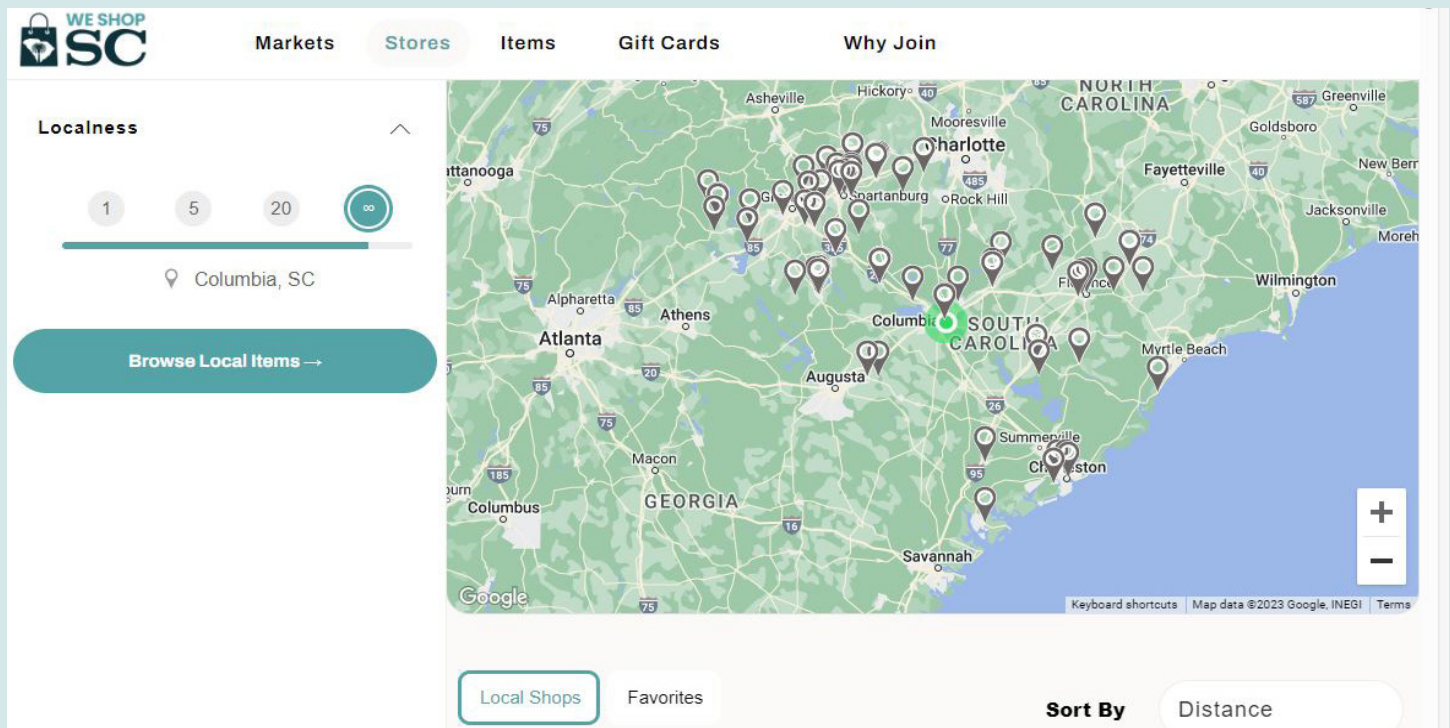
Less than 24 hours after Moore created her online storefront, she received her first online transaction, totaling more than \$60.

With the initial goal of assisting 3,000 small businesses by the upcoming holiday season, more than 300 small businesses have already created their free profile listing on WeShopSC and over 40 towns have created a local market.

“Having a centralized hub for South Carolina’s unique small businesses and local communities is fulfilling a larger economic development mission of the Municipal Association. As the downtown revitalization technical assistance program of the Municipal Association, Main Street SC is taking a grassroots approach to sharing this e-commerce opportunity across the state. This is a space for the smallest of our cities and towns — and the largest. WeShopSC is helping to expand the state’s physical brick-and-mortar square footage with individual, customizable online storefronts,” said Jenny Boulware, Main Street SC Manager.

Learn more by listening to a recent episode of the Municipal Association’s City Quick Connect podcast where Main Street SC staff, Jenny Boulware and Jonathan Irick, discuss how the website works, the e-commerce build out and the recent grant award. Listen to the podcast at www.masc.sc (keyword: podcast).

For questions or more information about WeShopSC.com, contact Jenny Boulware at jboulware@masc.sc or 803.354.4792.



The WeShopSC.com store locator illustrates the locations of all participating stores.

Auto Wrecks Drive Insurance Costs

**EMERGENCY
911**

Automotive insurance claims are a major driver of insurance premium costs, as the experience of recent years has shown.

For the SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund, automobile claims have grown year over year since 2019. In early 2023, the loss control team of the Municipal Association of SC Risk Management Services analyzed its claims data to get a better understanding of the types, frequency and severity of auto losses.

The study found that about 51% of the auto physical damage and auto liability claims involved law enforcement vehicles. 70% of the claims that happen in police vehicles occur while routinely driving. Most of the losses were “at-fault” claims and could have been prevented with attentive driving.

The most expensive physical damage claims involved sanitation truck fires, an overturned sanitation truck, a fire engine fire and an overturned firetruck. Many fire-related claims can be prevented with proper maintenance.

Public works was responsible for about 29% of the auto claims from 2019 to 2023. Of those claims, about 68% were determined to be “at-fault” loss types, indicating inattentive or distracted driving.

In July, Risk Management Services hosted Auto Safety Road Shows at locations around the state to help SMIRF and SC Municipal Insurance Trust members understand the cost drivers for premiums, and preventive efforts such as enforcement of employee policies and training. The sessions drew from the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety’s Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes. That guide focuses on several key areas:

Emphasize senior management commitment and employee involvement – both the attention of top management as well as engagement from the employees operating vehicles are key to an organization’s capacity for focusing on vehicle safety. Reward and incentive programs for safe driving can also contribute to this goal, as can regular driver training.

Establish written policies and procedures focusing on traffic safety – This can include, among others, an alcohol and drug use policy, as well as a seat belt use policy.

Establish driving agreements – This can address all employees who drive for work purposes. By signing the agreement, employees indicate that they understand all traffic safety policies and expectations, and will abide by them.

Focus on vehicle selection, maintenance and inspection – Both the choice of vehicle and regularly scheduled maintenance help prevent crashes.

Perform Motor Vehicle Record, or MVR checks, regularly – Employers should regularly review MVRs, and set the number of driving violations that would cause an employee to be barred from driving for work.

Ensure that crashes are reported and investigated – Employees need to report all crashes, no matter how severe, to their supervisors immediately, and employers should then review the crashes to determine their cause and whether they were preventable.

Use a disciplinary action system when needed – Typically, these will assign points for moving violation and assign corrective actions.

Find the full Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes at www.osha.gov (keyword: reduce motor vehicle crashes).

Take Steps Now to Stay Compliant With Business Licensing Law

When the General Assembly passed the Business License Tax Standardization Act, or Act 176, in 2020, it put into motion an ongoing effort to standardize business licensing practices among municipalities and counties that administer a local business license. While the new law went into effect at the beginning of 2022, that did not mark the end of standardization work for cities and towns across the state — in fact, remaining compliant with the law means that municipalities will need to update their practices regularly going forward.

Legislators intended for Act 176 to streamline the business licensing process, making it uniform and consistent for businesses operating in multiple jurisdictions across South Carolina. The requirements of the law therefore aim to ensure the licensing process will work the same for the business, no matter the jurisdiction involved.

Two of those requirements are for cities to use the most current North American Industry Classification System codes, also known as NAICS codes, and for cities to update their class schedules every odd year to comply with the most recent statistical profitability data from the Internal Revenue Service.

NAICS codes

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget updates NAICS codes every five years and released the most recent NAICS codes in 2022. Cities and towns need to ensure they assign the current NAICS codes to businesses beginning with the May 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024, business license year.

Updating the class schedule

Act 176 also requires jurisdictions with business licenses to use a standard class schedule for categorizing businesses accurately, which helps ensure that businesses are placed in the appropriate class. A standardized class schedule promotes clarity by providing businesses with an understanding of their licensing requirements based on their specific business activity. The standard schedule also ensures that licensing rates are equitable, regardless of the size or nature of the business.

To make updating the class schedule as simple a process as possible, the Municipal Association of SC developed a model business license ordinance that includes the updated standard class schedule. The Association distributed the 2023 class schedule in June.

The ordinance to adopt the new class schedule and the schedule can be found online at www.masc.sc (keywords: business license ordinance updates).

Municipalities must adopt this class schedule by ordinance by December 31, 2023. This class schedule will be used for the business licensing year running from May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025, as well as the license year running from May 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026. Once completed, cities and towns will not need to complete this process again until December 2025.

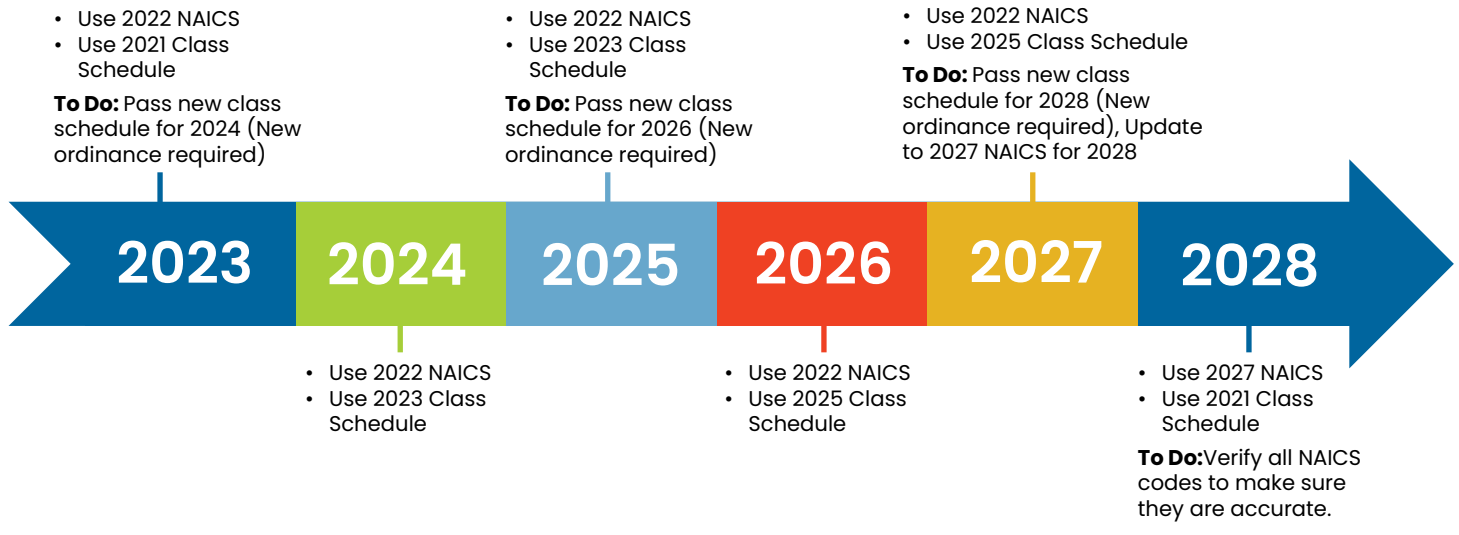
Keep Up With Business Licensing Issues

The Municipal Association provides business licensing officials with several easy ways to stay up to date with business licensing practices. It offers “Business Licensing Essentials,” a virtual session for officials to learn about difficult licensing topics. Find future dates and topics at www.masc.sc (keyword: training calendar). In 2024, these sessions will take place quarterly.

The Association also offers membership in the SC Business Licensing Officials Association, which promotes best practices for administering and enforcing local business license taxes to its members. BLOA membership includes an opportunity to achieve an Accreditation in Business Licensing and a Masters in Business Licensing, and also offers a listserve for business licensing officials around the state to ask questions and provide insight. Learn more at www.masc.sc (keyword: BLOA).

NAICS Codes and Class Schedule Timeline

Act 176, the Business License Standardization Act, establishes a standard class schedule, where businesses are placed into classes using the latest edition of North American Industry Classification System code based on profitability. The **class schedule must be updated every two years and approved by ordinance**. The Municipal Association of SC will provide a sample ordinance for every update. The **NAICS code is reviewed and revised every five years** to keep the classification system current with changes to economic activities. The update to the NAICS code does not require an ordinance or approval by council.



Complete (and Take Advantage of) the 2024 Compensation Survey



Each year, the Municipal Association of SC helps cities and towns compile an annual report of the wages and salaries paid to their employees and elected officials — but the data relies on reporting from each municipality in order to be valuable. At the beginning of every year, the Association asks each municipality to update its compensation information through an online survey.

Competitive pay provides one of the most critical tools to help municipalities attract and retain employees. Local governments compete for job candidates with state agencies, county governments and the private sector. Data on current salary ranges can help cities and towns maintain an edge.

The Municipal Association makes the data from its compensation survey available through its website, www.masc.sc. Cities and towns can use this online tool to make sure that their compensation scales are on par with other municipalities with comparable populations and budgets. The report is helpful when looking at one-off comparisons or in years between formal studies, but it does not provide all the data of a full class and compensation study.

Responding to the survey is optional, but the Association encourages all municipalities to complete it every year, since widespread participation makes the data more useful.

The 2024 survey will be available for data entry from January 2 to February 23. For more information, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: compensation survey), and for questions, contact Sara Whitaker at swhitaker@masc.sc or 803.933.1240.

Public Art Requires Management

The mural on Rock Hill's East White Street, created by nationally famous artist Shepard Fairey, celebrates Rock Hill's history. Photo: City of Rock Hill.

Highly visible and often popular, public art has become an increasingly common sight in South Carolina's cities and towns – adding life, color and energy to communities.

In those cities now championing public art, the question of whether or not to pursue it has been replaced with more logistical questions — how can the city navigate everything that goes into soliciting, constructing, maintaining and marketing the artwork?

In the City of Greenville, where there are more than 180 pieces of public art, the city has developed a formal application and review process.

“It’s all about creative place making — everyone coming together to shape the character of an area and give it character,” said Tracy Ramseur, Greenville’s cultural arts manager. “When somebody comes to Greenville they say, ‘Oh my gosh, your public art is amazing and it’s different from other cities.’ That’s something we pride ourselves on.”

It’s also something that takes work and commitment. It can start with the city’s planning and zoning staff making sure that “public art” is a term they use when meeting with developers or others investing in the community.

“If you asked me 10 or 15 years ago, I would tell you public art was not in their regular planning language. They would talk about where to put a tree or a driveway,” Ramseur said. “Now, our planning staff sees the value in public art. Before they go to public meetings with the design review board or the planning commission, they’ll say to people, ‘You’ve got a plaza here, have you thought about

a sculpture?’ or ‘You’ve got a wall, have you thought about a mural or some sort of artistic element?’ It’s becoming more common vernacular in the planning world. And fortunately, our development community is very receptive to that. They’re saying, ‘That’s a great idea, I hadn’t thought of that.’”

Public art in Greenville can come in a number of forms, ranging from the city commissioning a piece of artwork for a public spot, a developer or property owner wanting to place artwork on their land or an organization or nonprofit hoping to honor someone through art.

And the city backs up its commitment. Since 2013, city council has appropriated \$75,000 to \$150,000 a year for public art, with the money coming from accommodations tax revenue. The council also appoints a nine-person advisory board of people involved personally or professionally in visual art. The group meets monthly to evaluate applications and make recommendations to the city.

“What’s really great about these commissioners is they get interested in the project. I’ll assign one to work with an applicant, so they have a champion to help them along the way,” Ramseur said.

There are numerous steps from the time an artist or group approaches the city with an idea to the time an artist is selected, the work is complete and the project is installed. Ultimately, the city takes ownership of the artwork, since it has the ability to maintain and insure the piece.

Ramseur also stressed the importance of keeping up with the inventory and maintenance. She keeps a detailed spreadsheet with everything about the

artwork – the title, artist name, year installed, medium, cost and maintenance schedule.

“One thing I like to tell people in cities that are just starting off: It’s great when you add to your collection, but those things need to be managed,” she said “To be set up for success, you can’t just have a budget for acquiring, you have to have budget to maintain [the artwork]. And you have to keep track of it.”

In Sumter, the city’s downtown was home to one mural, painted in 1980 by Columbia artist Blue Sky. As the downtown revitalization effort expanded, there was a desire to add more public art.



The “Rose Crystal Tower,” created by Dale Chihuly, is located in Harriet’s Garden, the section of Falls Park on the Reedy, honoring Harriet Wyche, a leader of the effort to establish the park. Photo: City of Greenville.



The series of painted fiberglass butterflies throughout downtown Sumter include one outside the Sumter Opera House. Photo: City of Sumter.

“It was a big piece that was missing,” said Leigh Newman, Sumter’s downtown development coordinator. “All downtowns need art. It’s a big part of revitalization.”

The city’s Main Street Society chose to add fiberglass butterflies painted by artists and placed in downtown.

“Downtown has been growing and evolving and emerging since 2000 when this revitalization began. I think the butterfly is very symbolic of what’s going on downtown,” Newman said.

The city started with seven butterflies to hang from light poles in downtown. It secured sponsors who paid \$500 for each butterfly, and put out a call for Sumter County artists.

“We had just enough artists for the first seven. On the second round, we had to turn away artists,” she said. “People had seen what we had done and said, ‘Oh, we want to be a part of this.’ Artists in this town have blown us away with their talent and ideas.”

The 14 downtown butterflies have been a big hit with residents and visitors, and the city is working on a free map available for visitors to highlight the artists and the butterfly locations.

Sumter also is home to several new murals, including three downtown and a couple more in South Sumter, one of the city’s original communities. One of the murals off Main Street features an underwater scene from Swan Lake,

while the Sumter County Museum wall is home to a mural of local landmarks and historical figures.

Sumter County’s cultural director approached the city’s downtown development organization to join an application for a grant from the Central Carolina Community Foundation to create the murals, Newman said. Funding also came from the Main Street Society, Sumter County Museum, the Bank of Clarendon, Sumter Economic Development and the Sumter County Cultural Commission.

“The hardest thing about art in a community is deciding what kind of art you want,” Newman said. “With the murals, we didn’t want anything polarizing. We wanted something representative of Sumter that was just pretty and engaging and would get people talking.”

Newman’s advice to other towns is to be transparent about how the projects are financed.

“As much as people love art, they don’t want to think their tax money is being used to pay for it,” she said. “From the start, we made sure people knew this is being paid for by private funds; this is in no way being paid for by the City of Sumter. It helps get a lot more people on board when they realize we are doing something nice for downtown and it’s not costing them anything.”

In Rock Hill, one of the goals of the Knowledge Park Action Plan, the city’s downtown revitalization strategy, was to create amenities that would make spaces

memorable. That included adding murals by local, regional and national artists, said Lisa Brown, Rock Hill’s director of economic and urban development.

What is now known as “the Mural Mile” was born as a way to use public art to revitalize underutilized spaces, encourage community dialogue and raise the city’s art tourism profile.

“The Mural Mile has become synonymous with public art in Rock Hill,” Brown said. “The whole purpose of the mural effort was to create a wayfinding opportunity through eight to 10 murals that were supported through public/private partnerships.”

The mural project was spearheaded by the Old Town Association, a resident group committed to the redevelopment of downtown Rock Hill.

“Due to its nonprofit status, the Old Town Association could apply for grants, primarily through the [National Endowment for the Arts],” she said. “The OTA worked collaboratively with the city and the Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation’s Quality of Life Committee.”

The process for creating murals is spelled out in a 10-page guide that includes everything from how to identify a mural site, working with a mural coordinator, choosing an artist, permitting and other issues.

Brown said there has been extensive coverage of the Mural Mile in media outlets, cultural guides, social media and other sources. The city is in the process of adding QR codes to each mural offering additional information, and there is discussion about additional ways to share the work, including art-specific maps and tours.

For those looking to add or manage murals in their city, here’s Brown’s advice: Look to collaborative public-private partnerships for broad support; apply early and often for grant funding; experienced artists are worth the cost; be sure to include design requirements in the process; require high-quality external paint and an anti-graffiti sealer; and make sure the private property owners know they are responsible for the maintenance.

Telling the Community Story

City-supported Museums Preserve Local History



Mac Arnold & Plate Full O'Blues perform in the garden space of the Clemson Area African American Museum. Photo: City of Clemson.

Local museums are some of the best places for communities to tell their stories, and some cities and towns are backing that effort with funding or even by owning and operating the museums as part of the city.

The City of Clemson, for example, operates the Clemson Area African American Museum, housed in what was a segregation-era school for Black children.

The museum serves as an anchor for festivals, such as the community's Juneteenth celebration, commemorating the final enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation at the end of the Civil War. The museum will also be a stop on a planned Black Heritage Trail in the South Carolina Upstate.

"The key mission of CAAAM is to collect, to preserve, to exhibit and to tell the stories of African Americans in the Clemson area," said Angela Agard, the museum's executive director. "This

museum is the only museum focused on African American history in Pickens County."

Agard came to Clemson after 20 years at the New York Transit Museum. She says the city made the decision to hire a professional manager and gave her the freedom to run the museum. She partners with nearby Clemson University and volunteers to help create the exhibits.

"I think the challenge was in terms of some of the volunteers who really didn't have museum training and who didn't understand why having a room jam-packed with artifacts and articles and stories was not accomplishing what they would like to, which is to tell the story of local African Americans in the Upstate," she said.

The first exhibit the museum focused on was about education, partly because of its location, and partly because one of the museum's volunteers attended the school.

"So that was a catalyst to get people to bring in photographs, articles, information, anything that they could to help us understand that school and that time," Agard said. "So the key is research, and for us, that has to come from the community. You can't just go to a library and find books on Black people in the South Carolina Upstate."

To help on that front, Agard finds the education goes both ways. She

is trying to help community members curate the things they have from earlier generations.

"I usually start out asking questions. I said, 'The photo albums that you have at home, when you look at them, do you do you know who the people are in the photos? Do you know where it was taken? Is there anything written on the back of the photos?' And for the most part, there's no information," she said. "Then I say 'Think about this. When those people die and the young people look at a photo album with no information, what do you think happens with it?'"

Protecting precious artifacts was what led the Town of Hampton to obtain a unique item for its museum collection.

For more than 70 years, the town kept time by a factory whistle at what was commonly known as the Westinghouse plant. Though it had different names and made different products over the years, the plant employed thousands in the Lowcountry town and that whistle signaled the end of each workday.

When the plant closed shop in 2014, the whistle went to the Hampton Museum and Visitors' Center, which had also placed a historical marker outside the facility about five years earlier.

"Everybody for miles around could hear that whistle," said Norma Jarrell, co-curator at the Hampton Museum.



The Hampton Museum and Visitors Center is home to key artifacts from Hampton's history, such as the the iconic whistle of the Westinghouse plant. Photo: Town of Hampton.

“That was one thing that I think everybody missed when the Westinghouse plant closed, because that was blown every time everybody got off work.”

The whistle is now mounted at the museum and many visitors, especially locals, come to see it. It is just one of many artifacts collected over the years by Jarrell, her co-curator, Linda Shaffer, and their predecessor Marie Ellis. Some items are on display, but much of what has been collected over the years remains in storage as there is more than the museum can exhibit.

Even the building that houses the museum tells a story. Originally built in 1892 as a bank, the building still has the bank's safe.

“That's one feature that people like to go in and look at. I think the building must have been built around the safe more or less, because you couldn't get it out. It has really heavy doors on it and people enjoy going in there to look at that and move the doors.”

The Hampton Museum relies on a few employees to staff its open hours of 2 to 5 p.m. on Thursday and Saturday. Jarrell said the museum recently completed an inventory of its 5,000 individual items with information about the object, who it belonged to and what it signifies for the town's history.

“When I'm gone, people will know who things belong to,” said Jarrell, who has lived in Hampton since 1953 when her father relocated for a job at the Westinghouse plant.

The executive director of the Greenwood Museum and Railroad Historical Center also has a personal connection to her town's history. A native and member of the family that owned the famed Park Seed Co., Karen Jennings was the company's chief executive officer before she retired.

“This is my retirement job,” she said of her position at the museum, which is part of Greenwood's “Emerald Triangle” of neighboring arts and cultural organizations.

The other parts of the Emerald Triangle are Greenwood's Arts Center, housed in



the city's historic federal building, and the Greenwood Community Theatre, also located in a historic building. The storefront that became the home of the Greenwood Museum received its renovations in 2008, funded through a capital campaign, the City of Greenwood and a U.S. Housing and Urban Development Economic Development Initiative Grant. The museum's Railroad Historical Center is a separate facility that houses a restored 1906 steam locomotive and passenger cars.

“Our mission for our museums is to save, share and celebrate Greenwood history. That's the core of what we do,” Jennings said.

Part of that history is told through exhibits that feature her family's company — specifically the “Seeds in Space” project, a 1980s NASA experiment that saw a payload of tomato seeds and hay from Park Seed shot into space to see how radiation would affect them when they got back to Earth.

The seeds were supposed to be in orbit just a few months, but ended up being in orbit nearly six years, Jennings said, “so they got a good dose of radiation from space.”

When the seeds were retrieved, they were packaged and sent to schools for science experiments to see how they would grow compared with seeds that had never left Earth.

“The differences were fairly minor, which was amazing,” Jennings said. “There were very few mutations, which means

that it is feasible to take seeds to a colony in space and for them to be viable, to grow and provide food. It sounds kind of simple, but it's really profound in what could happen in the future if we have space colonies or if we try to spend any significant time in space.”

Personal experiences like Jennings' aside, no one on the museum staff is a historian, and most of the exhibits rely on the know-how of retired college music professor and choir director Marion Smith, who is the exhibits coordinator.

“He has a really good eye for creating a display,” Jennings said. “He's also very smart and likes to learn new things, so he does a lot of the research for these exhibits. The research is interviewing people who have been involved in whatever the exhibit is about and who know the history.”

Jennings said the key skill for a small-town museum director is business sense — and good rapport with their city and county officials.

“Running museums is like running a business, you've got to find money, you've got to do a budget, you've got to figure out how to pay for things and keep the doors open,” she said. “You need a good supportive board that is willing to work and to donate and to ask other people for money.”

“This has nothing to do with fun historical objects or creating an exhibit. But if you don't do this part first, you don't have the other part. And if you're going to do one of these museums, you need to learn how to write a grant.”



Manage the Risks of Special Events

A parade, festival, outdoor concert or other public event can cultivate a sense of community, boost the local economy and foster residents' attachment to their city. Even so, any event that draws crowds can lead to some out-of-the-ordinary risk exposures for cities and towns, so municipal officials and staff should plan ahead to control the liabilities associated with special events.

Event planners should consider everything from ensuring that a road is adequately blocked off, if necessary, to adhering to the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, to screening volunteers for violent criminal histories, and managing onsite consumption of alcohol.

It's also important to clearly establish the city's role in a public event. Is it directly managing the event by exercising primary control over staff or a hired contractor for event services? Is the city a sponsor of the event? Or is another organization, such as a service or civic organization, working on behalf of the city? The city's liability depends on what role it takes.

These are some general guidelines to keep event attendees, volunteers and vendors safe and to protect the city from liability exposure:

Develop a special events policy that outlines what activities are allowed. It should also address if or how the city's name will be used in promotions, what coverage and limits of insurance are required, and what services will be provided and required.

Have an application or permit process. This lets the city regulate and manage the event. Require all event organizers to complete an application regardless of the event size.

Have a special events committee or coordinator help the city identify and address risks. They can help develop effective risk controls, and can help decide what resources, special services or staffing may be required to handle the event safely.

Make sure the city has proper insurance. Require third parties, contractors and vendors to provide a certificate of insurance, name the city as an additional insured, and sign a hold-harmless and indemnity agreement. Get the certificate of insurance directly from the insurance agent. Require a \$1 million minimum for general liability insurance for businesses and organizations participating in the event.

If a city property is rented for an event that isn't sponsored by the city, require a \$1 million minimum for general liability insurance. Do this by obtaining a certificate of insurance.

Get a waiver or pre-event release from individuals participating in any sporting or participatory event.

Conduct facility or site inspections before and after an event to help prevent premise liability claims.

When hiring a contract event coordinator or contractor to handle a city-sponsored special event, the municipality should vet and screen the contractor to ensure the contractor has the experience and expertise to oversee the event. The city should obtain a copy of the contractor's certificate of insurance before the event and call to verify coverage with the issuing agent the day before the event.

Be on the lookout for activities that aren't covered by the city's insurance policy, and make sure that the contractor's policy covers activities excluded by the city's insurance.

Be careful not to exercise too much control over the event and the contractor, as this could result in the event no longer being considered to be managed independently.

Here are some activities commonly excluded by liability coverage:

- **Bungee jumping and similar amusement devices**
- **Fireworks displays**
- **Skateboarding**
- **Parachuting and hang gliding**
- **Airplane, helicopter or ballooning rides and shows**
- **Archery**
- **Mechanical amusement devices**
- **Zoos**
- **Traveling carnivals and circuses**
- **Rodeos**
- **Trampolines and rebounding equipment, commonly known as bounce houses**
- **Concerts organized and promoted by third parties**

For more information, contact Bethany Pendley, loss control manager, at bpendley@masc.sc or 803.933.1210.



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Calendar

For a complete listing of the Association's training opportunities, visit www.masc.sc to view the calendar.

NOVEMBER

2 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Fourth Quarter Meeting. Cooperative Conference Center, Columbia. Topics topics include easement acquisitions and the Roper Mountain Science Center's education and outreach efforts.

9 Municipal Association of SC Risk Management Services Annual Members Meeting. Cooperative Conference Center, Columbia.

14 Communications Workshop. Municipal Association of SC, Columbia. Topics include crisis communication, resident engagement, social media and First Amendment audits.

15 - 17 SC Municipal Human Resources Association Annual Meeting. SpringHill Suites, Greenville. Topics include workforce forecasts, inclusive cultures, apprenticeships, employee handbooks and legal updates.

21 Business Licensing Essentials - The SC Freedom of Information Act. Virtual.

DECEMBER

8 SC Municipal Attorneys Association Annual Meeting and Continuing Legal Education Seminar. Hilton Columbia Center.

19 Business Licensing Essentials - H-Tax, A-Tax, Caterers, Personal Chefs, Food Trucks. Virtual.

2024 FEBRUARY

6 Hometown Legislative Action Day. Marriott Columbia.

7 Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government. Marriott Columbia.

MARCH

7 SC Association of Stormwater Managers First Quarter Meeting. Cooperative Conference Center, Columbia.

11 - 13 SC Utility Billing Association Annual Meeting. Marina Inn at Grande Dunes, Myrtle Beach.

21 Municipal Technology Association of SC Spring Meeting. Cooperative Conference Center, Columbia.

APRIL

12 Municipal Court Administration Association of SC Spring Meeting. Cooperative Conference Center, Columbia.

25 SC Municipal Human Resources Association Spring Meeting. Cooperative Conference Center, Columbia.

MAY

8 - 10 SC Community Development Association Annual Meeting. Cambria Rock Hill - University Center, Rock Hill.

14 Risk Management Services: Law Enforcement Training. Cooperative Conference Center, Columbia.

JUNE

2 - 5 SC Association of Municipal Power Systems Annual Meeting. Embassy Suites, Myrtle Beach.

6 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Second Quarter Meeting. Cooperative Conference Center, Columbia.