

a publication of the municipal association of south carolina

Cities build trust with social capital



By Mayor Bill Young, Walterboro, Municipal Association of SC President

Today, in our cities and in our nation, we live in a time of great uncertainty. We are in unfamiliar territory, and no city or town is immune to the heartbreaking incidents that have devastated some communities. How do we as city leaders go about restoring a respectful community? What steps can we take to change peoples' hearts and prevent these acts? How do we prepare for the aftermath of unthinkable actions even before they occur?

At July's Annual Meeting, the idea of building social capital and trusting relationships showed up in many of the presentations and hallway conversations as a way to navigate and overcome troubling times in our communities.

Simply put, social capital can be defined as the value created by the networks that connect similar people and build bridges between diverse people. By developing ongoing personal and trusting relationships within communities, city leaders have created the social capital necessary when facing challenges.

Several examples of social capital came out of law enforcement sessions. Charleston Police Chief Greg Mullen talked about the years of relationship-building between police and various sectors of the community. This groundwork meant the community was prepared to trust and talk to one another

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across demographic lines after the Mother Emmanuel shootings. He used Charleston's Illumination Project, started in March 2016, as an example of engaging the community before challenges happen rather than waiting for events to occur.

During the awards breakfast, the City of Anderson shared its community policing task force. Aware that their city was not immune to the tensions facing many cities around the country, officials took a proactive step to encourage a positive relationship between Anderson residents and their police department. A grassroots task force focused on minority neighborhoods by holding open-forum meetings to encourage frank, and sometimes uncomfortable, discussions with the goal of building trusting relationships.

Columbia Police Chief Skip Holbrook explained how one city program is putting its new Criminal Justice Academy graduates on the streets in a different way for their first week on the job. These new officers spend a week volunteering in the churches, recreation centers, soup kitchens and parks in the part of town where they will be working. This helps those being served, as well as those who are serving, see the human side of the people and situations they will encounter on the street.

But social capital and relationship building go beyond just policing. Peter Kageyama, author, community development specialist and one of the general session speakers, talked about building social capital in the context of creating cities for all generations and across demographic lines. This can be as easy as paying attention to the small things that connect

people to each other and to their city. He used dog parks as a simple example. Dog parks can be one of the most social places in a city, and they are inexpensive to build and maintain. Plus, dogs are great at helping people connect beyond social, economic and generational barriers.

The Annual Meeting's other general session speaker made the case that leaders can build social capital using technology as a way to communicate and build trust across generational, racial and geographic lines. For instance, Curt Steinhorst, an expert on generational trends and the age of distraction, said city officials can build relationships with their millennial residents by having a responsive social media presence.

Through its Achievement Awards winner video, the Town of Mount Pleasant illustrated how it is building social capital with its Government Outreach Office that takes city hall out into the community. Using a four-part approach, council members and senior town staff get out in neighborhoods all over town on a regular basis, helping residents get to know them and letting them really experience the town's neighborhoods.

These are just a few of the many examples speakers at the Annual Meeting used to illustrate the importance of social capital. The bottom line is that the relationships and trust necessary to build and maintain social capital don't just happen. City leaders must be aligned both philosophically and strategically to connect people and create true community engagement.

Young was elected president of the Municipal Association at the Annual Meeting in July.

Advanced Institute courses focus on State House, utilities



July graduates of the MEO Institute include Councilmember Scott Crosby of Mauldin, Councilmember Melvin Fowler of Inman, Councilmember Matthew T. Gooch of Simpsonville, Councilmember Larry Goodson of Mauldin, Councilmember Eddie Lee of Andrews, Councilmember Virginia Moore of Greeleyville, Councilmember James Shirey of Fort Mill and Mayor James R. Wilson of Chapin. Photo/ Minette Hand Photography.

At the Annual Meeting, eight elected officials graduated from the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

These officials are now eligible to participate in the Advanced Institute of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government. This new program graduated its first 28 participants in February. Pendleton Councilmember Sandra Gantt was among them.

“We firmly believe in educating ourselves in order to help our constituents and all of the residents of the town,” she said.

Gantt, a Municipal Association board member, added that enrolling in the Advanced Institute helps elected officials keep up with governing changes that constantly affect towns and cities. “We got the basics during the other classes,” she said. “This is just adding more substance.”

The next Advanced Institute sessions will be offered on October 19.

“Advanced Advocacy and Intergovernmental Relations” will offer participants an insider’s look at how things work at the State House. The class will include a

behind-the-scenes tour to show participants how to find their way around the capitol complex, along with information about how House and Senate rules can drive a bill’s progress—or its demise—in each body.

The other course offered in October, “Municipal Utility Policy and Administration,” will introduce basic engineering concepts used in operating a utility system. The session will cover the fundamentals of utility policy, administration and compliance requirements, the legal authority municipal utilities have to operate and expand, and information about the environmental regulatory system.

Advanced Institute enrollees must first graduate from the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government.

The Advanced Institute courses will be held at the Columbia Marriott on October 19. The Association will offer two additional sessions on January 31, the day before the 2017 Hometown Legislative Action Day. For more information, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: Advanced Institute).

NEWS BRIEFS

The **City of Charleston** is the best city in the world, *Travel+Leisure* magazine says. Charleston bested Barcelona, Spain; Cape Town, South Africa; Florence, Italy and others in the 15-city list that only included two other American cities, Savannah, Georgia, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

The **Town of Bluffton** is among the 25 best cities and towns in the nation for retirees, according to *Forbes* magazine’s unranked list, “The 25 Best Places to Retire in 2016.”

The National Civic League has selected the **City of Hartsville** for a 2016 All-America City Award. It is the second time since 1996 the city has received the designation. Other South Carolina cities and towns that have won include Aiken in 1997, Charleston in 1977-78, Columbia in 1951 and 1964, Florence in 1965, Mount Pleasant in 2010 and Rock Hill in 1969.

The Association of South Carolina Mayors elected 2016-17 officers and board members: President Foster Senn, Newberry, and Vice President Linda Page, Mount Pleasant. New board members elected for a three-year term are Wayne McCall, Travelers Rest; Mary Jane Darby, Edisto Beach; Kenneth Gist, Woodruff; and Jason Stapleton, Williston. John Howard, Lancaster, was elected to fill a one-year unexpired term. Returning board members are Dennis Raines, Mauldin; Francenia Ellis, Furman; Tony Scully, Camden; Terrence Culbreath, Johnston; and Steve McDougall, Lexington.



2016 Annual Meeting

Millennials and seniors: More in common every day

Creative zoning and a fresh approach to digital communication are two ways to bring a city's younger and older residents together.

The opening general session of the Municipal Association's Annual Meeting highlighted two speakers with distinct but overlapping philosophies on this idea of building cities for all generations. Curt Steinhorst, an expert on generational trends and the age of distraction, and Peter Kageyama, a community development specialist and author, presented ideas to bridge the cultural and geographic gaps between seniors and millennials. And both noted that older residents and millennials—adults ages 18 to 34 in 2015—have an increasing number of interests in common.

Take communicating, for one.

"Something fascinating has occurred where we're seeing the converging of our relationship with our technology, so that even older generations and younger generations are all starting to look just like

what you often associate with this millennial generation," Steinhorst said. "If it hasn't happened to you yet, just wait another year.

If you're thinking, 'Oh, I'm going to ignore this younger generation and do it the way the older generation wants,' know that you're also going to lose the older generation over the next five years, as well, as we see technology transforming everyone from the youngest to the oldest."

What's in: Short, bulleted lists; texting instead of calling; social media as a way to get the fastest results; cities and businesses using websites combined with apps to offer services; and quick, explanatory YouTube videos. **What's out:** Telephone calls, voicemails, wordy emails with vague subject lines and instruction manuals.

There are compelling reasons city and town leaders should accommodate younger residents, but at the same time not forget the needs of older residents.

Millennials are the largest generation in the workforce and the largest segment of the population in cities, and they are on

track to overtake baby boomers' purchasing power in less than two years, said Steinhorst, himself a millennial.

"As you look into the future, you must understand that people of all ages are changing rapidly as a result of technology. And what feels new and challenging today is quickly becoming the minimum expectations of tomorrow," he said. "If you don't understand what's driving these shifts in behaviors, then you will have massive challenges moving forward."

Young people and seniors will increasingly resemble one another in the ways they interact with technology, he said.

The trend goes beyond technology. Kageyama, too, revealed ways that different age groups are becoming unexpected allies. Millennials and seniors often want the same things from their city—walkability, cost-efficient housing, a vibrant food scene—but at different times of day, he said. He also pointed out how that's good for restaurants. For example, it extends their hours.

Kageyama urged city leaders to consider plans that encourage senior citizens to interact with the larger neighborhood. He gave an example of New York City's micro-apartments—structures far smaller than the 400-square-foot minimum of a conventional apartment—that appeal to new college graduates, millennials and retirees. It's an idea that could take root in small communities, too, if the zoning and approvals allow it.

"Let's rethink rules and regulations around housing," he said, emphasizing that cities are already multigenerational. It's just a matter of enhancing the existing amenities. For example, a playground should be recast as a "grandparent-friendly playground," complete with design features to appeal to older residents who may be visiting the park with their grandchildren.

Kageyama said the "tower-type mentality" of concentrating a single

demographic group in a given building, such as the now-demolished Cabrini Green public housing high-rise in Chicago, should not be replicated in senior housing.



"One of our great downfalls as people get older is isolation. As we get older, our world tends to shrink."

Peter Kageyama,
Community development specialist and author

"We need to spread these folks out," he said. "We need to integrate them into other communities."

He described a plan in East Lansing, Michigan, to convert an old elementary school into senior housing, an approach used in many South Carolina cities.

The building is near the Michigan State University campus, placing seniors in a neighborhood surrounded by fraternity houses and student rental houses. Ideally, city leaders will add amenities, such as a dog park, to bring college students and seniors in contact with one another, said Kageyama.

"One of our great downfalls as people get older is isolation," he said. "As we get older, our world tends to shrink."

But what about the unspoken things that keep people from going downtown? Kageyama described one city's solution to its public restroom shortage. In Traverse City, Michigan, the downtown development authority effectively created more public restrooms by offsetting the cleaning expenses of some downtown merchants' bathrooms, in exchange for opening the facilities to the general public.

"Little things actually do make a difference," he said.

2016-17 board of directors

Members at the Annual Meeting in July elected Association officers and board members. Executive committee members serve a one-year term.

President

Mayor Bill Young, Walterboro

First Vice President

Mayor Elise Partin, Cayce

Second Vice President

Councilmember Octavia Williams-Blake, Florence

Third Vice President

Mayor Dick Cronin, Isle of Palms

Past President

Mayor Terence Roberts, Anderson

Members elected five municipal officials to serve a three-year term on the board of directors.

Mayor Bobby Davis, Marion

Representing: Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments area

Mayor Billy Keyserling, Beaufort

Representing: Lowcountry Council of Governments area

Mayor Wade McLeod, Paxville

Representing: Santee-Lynches Council of Governments area

Mayor Michael Locklear, Moncks Corner

Representing: Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments area

City Administrator John Yow, Orangeburg

Representing: At large seat

Eight members continue to serve on the board.

Councilmember Sandra Gantt, Pendleton

Representing: At large seat

Mayor Charlene Herring, Ridgeway

Representing: Central Midlands Council of Governments area

Mayor Cornelius Huff, Inman

Representing: At large seat

Councilmember Mark Johnson, Surfside Beach

Representing: Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments area

Councilmember Kathy Pender, Rock Hill

Representing: Catawba Regional Council of Governments area

Mayor Dennis Raines, Mauldin

Representing: Appalachian Regional Council of Governments area

Councilmember Norman Scarborough, Clinton

Representing: Upper Savannah Council of Governments area

Mayor Gerald Wright, Denmark

Representing: Lower Savannah Council of Governments area

The board is composed of representatives from each area of the 10 councils of governments and three at large seats.

New disclosure law takes effect in January

After years of debate and many pages of ethics reform proposals, the General Assembly passed legislation that adds new reporting requirements for anyone who must file a Statement of Economic Interests.

Starting in January, an official who is required to file a Statement of Economic Interests must include the source and type of income received during the previous year. This includes income

received by the official and his immediate family.

Current law defines immediate family simply as the filer's spouse, any child living in the filer's household and anyone the filer claimed on his taxes during the previous year. The question of income, however, is more complicated.

The new law first defines income as anything of value received by the filer or his immediate family that would be listed

on an IRS form filed for the disclosure of income. Then, it provides a lengthy list of sources or types of income that are expressly excluded from the definition, including retirement, annuity, pension, IRA, disability or deferred compensation payments.

To make understanding and following the new law easier, the Municipal Association has developed a flow chart to walk filers through its requirements.

New income disclosure requirements for Statement of Economic Interests



Are you required to file a Statement of Economic Interests?

No

Section 8-13-1120 does not apply to you.

Yes

Starting Jan. 1, 2017, you must include the source and type of income you and immediate family members received in the previous year.

Who is considered immediate family?

- 1) your spouse;
- 2) a child residing in your household; and
- 3) any dependent claimed on last year's taxes

How do I know if it is income?

Is it something of value reported or disclosed on an IRS form as income received?

No

Nothing is required to be reported.

Yes

Provide the source and type of income. The dollar amount is not required.

Source and type?

i.e.: Your child works at Starbucks. You would list "Starbucks" as the source of income and "wages and tips" as the type.

i.e.: If you are employed by an insurance company, you would list "ABC Insurance" as the source of income and "salary" as the type of income.

Are there sources of income not required to be reported on the SEI?

Yes

- Income received pursuant to a court order (i.e. child support, alimony or damages)
- Income from a savings, checking or brokerage account, unless you received special terms due to a status defined in Section 8-13-100 (25)-(27)
- Income received from a mutual fund or similar fund where shareholders' money is invested in diverse securities
- Retirement income
- Pension, IRA, disability or annuity income
- Deferred compensation



2016 Annual Report

MASC Municipal Association
of South CarolinaSM

Highlights from the Executive Director



Miriam Hair
Executive Director

Last year at this time, we were eagerly looking forward to our 85th Annual Meeting. It turned out even better than we imagined. Not only were the speakers and learning opportunities exceptional, but we also reflected on and celebrated the Association's 85-year history by unveiling our history book and honoring our past presidents, 21 of whom were in attendance.

What continues to resonate with me is that although only six of these past presidents still held municipal office, all of them showed their belief in and continued support of the Association by accepting our invitation to the meeting.

These individuals and many others built a solid foundation for the Association. In this Annual Report, read about four highlights of our work this year as we continue to build on this rich history.

Shared Voices: Successfully advocating for municipalities at the state and federal levels requires the shared voices of officials from all cities and towns. To amplify our shared voices, we must **cultivate partnerships**. This year, we worked closely with the SC Chamber of Commerce, a task force of business licensing professionals, and other stakeholders on business licensing legislation.

Shared Knowledge: From the early days of the Association, municipal officials have come together to share their knowledge and best practices. This year, we **expanded training opportunities** available to municipal officials. Our Advanced Institute for Municipal Elected Officials reached two milestones. We added a fall training date to the schedule and recognized our first graduating class of 28 mayors and councilmembers during February's Hometown Legislative Action Day.

Shared Solutions: Cities and towns working together to find solutions to common challenges is an important goal of the Association. Recognizing that limited resources often prevent local officials from reaching their economic development goals, we **created the Hometown Economic Development Grant program**. We will begin accepting grant applications this fall.

Internal Services: The Association's internal operations play a critical role in effectively delivering services to cities and towns. In particular, we continued to leverage technology to offer additional and improved resources to members.

I invite you to read the Annual Report to learn more about these highlights.



Shared Voices

Highlights from the Executive Director ...

Cultivated partnerships

This year, we continued to cultivate and strengthen partnerships with other associations and organizations to promote legislation favorable to cities, towns and the state. Most notably, we worked with the SC Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders to address business licensing concerns raised by the business community. After months of study, collaboration and research, the partners identified potential solutions to streamline the business licensing process.

Another key player in the process was a business license task force formed to help ensure proposed legislation took into account the day-to-day aspects of administering a business license ordinance. Fifteen business licensing professionals, finance directors and a city manager serve on the task force.

Additionally, our board of directors agreed to make an investment on behalf of all cities and towns to build an online portal so businesses will have an easier way to renew their business licenses.

During the coming year, we will continue to work with our partners on legislation that streamlines the businesses licensing process while retaining local officials' policymaking role.

From the early days of the Association in the 1930s, South Carolina municipal officials understood their collective voices were essential to advocating for the needs of cities and towns.


Lobbying the State Legislature and Congress

With recommendations from the Association's legislative committee, the board of directors set the Association's 2016 state advocacy initiatives. The Association advocated for changes in state law to address these initiatives and sought out partnerships and coalitions to support its advocacy efforts. The Association also provided training and education for municipal officials and legislators on topics related to these initiatives and conducted research to support its advocacy positions.

The Association also monitored federal legislation through the National League of Cities. *Staff Contact: Reba Campbell*

Regional Advocacy Meetings

The Association hosted a series of Regional Advocacy Meetings during the fall of 2015. More than 300 municipal officials met at 10 different locations to talk about the 2016 legislative session and challenges facing cities and towns. These conversations were the starting point for building the Association's 2016 advocacy initiatives which included streamlining business licensing processes, clearing blight, embracing the sharing economy and fixing roads. *Staff Contact: Casey Fields*



Nearly 550 bills, 15 percent of all bills introduced during the two-year legislative, impacted cities and towns.

2016 advocacy initiatives

- 
- Streamline business licensing processes
 - Clear blight
 - Embrace the sharing economy
 - Fix roads

Legislative Tracking and Reports

During the 2015-16 South Carolina legislative session, the Association actively monitored 548 bills impacting cities and towns. The Association updated its online monitoring system daily during the legislative session to allow municipal leaders to track the progress of these bills.

Emailed to more than 4,000 municipal elected officials and staff each Friday during the legislative session, *From the Dome to Your Home* recapped the week's major legislative events and previewed activities for the upcoming week.


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

Hometown Legislative Action Day

The annual Hometown Legislative Action Day held in February updated municipal officials on current legislative issues and gave them an opportunity to visit their legislators at the State House.

This year, 564 officials from 149 cities attended the event. They heard from a panel of leaders from partner organizations who discussed the value of diverse interests working together on legislative issues and from State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman about partnerships between cities and schools. Attendees also heard from a panel of five legislators who gave their perspectives on priorities for the 2016 legislative session.

To increase participation from legislators, the Association “shook up” the legislative reception. The event highlighted local foods and craft brews. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*



A flowchart developed with the SC Press Association illustrates the new process required when adding items to a public meeting agenda.

Public Engagement

Legislators, business leaders and the news media learn about successes in cities and towns through online and print resources from the Association.

Social Media Channels

The Association’s Twitter (@MuniAssnSC) and Facebook (CitiesMeanBusiness) pages provided up-to-the-minute information on State House activity and shared good news stories about cities and towns. The Association’s Twitter followers doubled this year. *Staff Contact: Reba Campbell*

Cities Mean Business magazine

The Association published the biannual *Cities Mean Business* magazine that spotlights how strong cities are important to the state’s economic success. Targeted to business leaders and policy makers, the magazine had a circulation of 15,000 readers. Topics included downtown revitalization, business-friendly practices, farmers markets and redevelopment successes. *Staff Contact: Reba Campbell*



Shared Knowledge

Highlights from the Executive Director ...

Expanded training opportunities

In February, we recognized the first graduating class of the South Carolina Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government. Twenty-eight mayors and councilmembers received their certificates during the Hometown Legislative Action Day. Another first for the Advanced Institute was the addition of fall classes in October attended by 104 elected officials.

The Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association offered more concurrent sessions at its meetings. This change gave attendees more education on topics relevant to their day-to-day job responsibilities.

Risk Management Services visited members of the SC Municipal Insurance Trust and the SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund to deliver customized training.

In total, we offered 55 training opportunities this year.

The Association plays an important role in building municipal and professional capacity through a wide range of training programs, publications and meetings that encourage the most efficient and effective municipal government operations.

Affiliate Associations

The Municipal Association supported 11 affiliate organizations by providing training and networking opportunities for a variety of local government positions with specialized training needs. This year, these 11 affiliates had a combined membership of 1,800 municipal officials and together offered 31 meetings/events, providing more than 200 hours of training.

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

More than 2,200 officials attended 31 training events offered by affiliate associations.

Association of South Carolina Mayors

The Association of South Carolina Mayors provided opportunities for its members to more fully engage in advocating for issues that affect cities and towns, to network, to take part in educational activities, and to share ideas and best practices. In 2016, 110 mayors were members of ASCM.

This year, ASCM hosted its third annual city tour to the City of Greenwood and a bonus tour of the Town of Lexington during its November membership meeting.

Staff Contact: Casey Fields

Municipal Court Administration Association of SC

The Municipal Court Administration Association of South Carolina gained 38 new members this year, bringing its total membership to 284. MCAA offered training to court administrators, clerks of court, municipal judges and other municipal employees involved in court administration. The Supreme Court of South Carolina Commission on CLE and Specialization and the Office of Victims Services recognized these training sessions for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Bill Taylor*

Municipal Technology Association of SC

With 110 members, the Municipal Technology Association of SC promoted the effective use of technology by municipalities. This year, MTASC offered its members training on cybersecurity, body-worn cameras and GIS in emergency response scenarios. *Staff Contact: Sara Johnson*

SC Association of Municipal Power Systems

All of the state's 21 municipal electric utilities are members of the SC Association of Municipal Power Systems and were supported by 49 associate members this year. SCAMPS maintained a mutual aid network to help each other (and other municipal electric utilities in the Southeast) restore power in the event of weather emergencies.

Training sessions emphasized the effective, efficient, reliable and safe operation of municipal electric systems. SCAMPS continued to participate in the process to establish a state energy plan. The annual lineman training event drew 141 participants and 11 exhibitors. The group's annual meeting drew 150 meeting registrants and exhibitors, representing 19 municipal utilities and 38 associate members. *Staff Contact: Eric Budds*

SC Association of Stormwater Managers

The SC Association of Stormwater Managers offered its 206 members quarterly training on stormwater management policies and best practices. It also provided a forum for members to share ideas and keep current on state and federal laws and regulations. The SC Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors recognized this training for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Sara Johnson*

SC Municipal Human Resources Association

The South Carolina Municipal Human Resources Association promoted sound human resources administration and encouraged innovative programs. Through its training programs, MHRA provided information and the opportunity to exchange ideas among its 232 members. The HR Certification Institute approved the training for recertification credit hours. *Staff Contact: Sara Johnson*

Cities' participation in the survey of municipal salaries increased across all population categories.

SC Municipal Attorneys Association

The South Carolina Municipal Attorneys Association's annual meeting tackled important issues facing cities and towns across the state. The Supreme Court of South Carolina Commission on CLE and Specialization approved this training session for continuing education credits. This year, the annual meeting was preceded by an event for municipal attorneys to network. *Staff Contact: Tigerron Wells*

SC Business Licensing Officials Association

Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2016, the South Carolina Business Licensing Officials Association played a critical role in developing the SC Business License Tax Standardization Act that was introduced in the General Assembly in 2016.

In addition to their advocacy efforts, BLOA's 331 members, through rigorous training sessions, learned skills and practices to make licensing in their cities and towns more efficient and business-friendly. BLOA offers a two-level accreditation program for members, the Accreditation in Business Licensing and Masters in Business Licensing. These designations indicate a commitment to professionalism and continuing education. This year, five business licensing professionals received the ABL designation, and six received the MBL designation. *Staff Contact: Scott Slatton*

SC Community Development Association

The South Carolina Community Development Association provided educational forums for its 151 members to address economic and community development needs and to enhance members' professional performance. Members included municipal, county, regional and state community development professionals; employees of private companies with an interest in community development; elected officials and volunteers. SCCDA presented its annual Award of Excellence to the City of Hartsville for its downtown revitalization efforts. *Staff Contact: Sara Johnson*

Day-long training session for public information officers featured a panel of local PIOs discussing best practices when facing the national spotlight in a crisis.

SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association

The South Carolina Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association offered its 270 members, representing 142 cities and towns, training programs covering the wide range of responsibilities of its members. Many of these training sessions qualified for continuing education credits for certified municipal clerks, certified public accountants and certified public treasurers. MFOCTA sponsors the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute with the Municipal Association and the College of Charleston's Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities. *Staff Contact: Jeff Shacker*

SC Utility Billing Association

The South Carolina Utility Billing Association provided its 205 members training on billing, collections, personal safety, technology and customer service. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

Training Institutes

Additional educational opportunities were available to municipal officials through three training institutes.

Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute

The Association sponsors the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute in partnership with the SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association and the College of Charleston's Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities. The Institute provides specialized training for municipal clerks and treasurers. Twelve individuals completed the Institute, and 62 municipal employees attended the semiannual sessions. *Staff Contact: Jeff Shacker*

MEO Institute graduated 48 mayors and councilmembers. The Advanced Institute graduated its first class of 28 municipal elected officials.

SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

The SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government offered specialized training for elected officials to increase their understanding of local government operations. Elected officials must take seven courses to complete the Institute. Forty-eight mayors and councilmembers graduated this year.

The required courses consist of two day-long sessions held in Columbia each February, the day prior to the Hometown Legislative Action Day. Five additional classes are available online through the Association's website or by attending sessions held at the 10 councils of governments' locations throughout the year.

Staff Contact: Urica Floyd

SC Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

Offered exclusively for graduates of the MEO Institute, the Advanced Institute gives elected officials the opportunity to continue their education. To complete the Advanced Institute, participants must take four of the six offered courses that explore in greater depth topics included in the MEO Institute and other topics critical for effective municipal operations. More than 300 elected officials attended the advanced courses this year, and 28 graduated in the first class. *Staff Contact: Urica Floyd*

Timely training topics

- **Association of SC Mayors:** building community relationships, parliamentary procedure and crisis communication
- **Municipal Court Administration Association of SC:** court financials; bond estreatments; and fundamentals of bond hearings, jury trials, pretrial intervention and conditional discharges
- **Municipal Technology Association of SC:** cybersecurity, body-worn cameras and GIS in emergency response scenarios
- **SC Association of Municipal Power Systems:** future of distributed generation in South Carolina, best practices in utility debt administration and revenue bonds, new lighting technology and OSHA regulations
- **SC Association of Stormwater Managers:** illicit discharge detection and elimination, collaborative water quality monitoring, and flood response and recovery
- **SC Business Licensing Officials Association:** one-stop shops, duties and responsibilities of a business licensing official, and contractor licenses
- **SC Community Development Association:** brownsfields redevelopment, regional consolidation of water systems, and generational diversity
- **SC Municipal Attorneys Association:** Freedom of Information Act changes, indigent defense, the sharing economy, enterprise fund transfers, and Securities Exchange Commission continuing disclosure requirements
- **SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association:** wage and hour laws, Affordable Care Act reporting requirements, borrowing options, GASB Statement 68, enterprise fund transfer policies and procedures, and municipal elections
- **SC Municipal Human Resources Association:** employee health and wellness plans, workplace violence and generational diversity
- **SC Utility Billing Association:** challenges of difficult people, team dynamics, cash handling procedures, verbal judo and cybersecurity
- **Main Street SC:** abandoned and dilapidated buildings, creative placemaking, economic development resources and business-friendly cities
- **Municipal Association Annual Meeting:** reducing police liability, body-worn cameras, the future of cities, cyber liability, the sharing economy and business licensing
- **Hometown Legislative Action Day:** business licensing, advocacy partnerships, the economic impact of the craft beer and food truck industries, and public safety
- **Risk Management Services:** defensive driving, law enforcement liability, emergency management, employment liability, and trenching and excavation safety standards

Orientation Training for Local Government Planning and Zoning Officials

The South Carolina Local Government Planning Act established mandatory training requirements for all appointees and staff involved with local planning and zoning. These individuals must complete, within the first year of service, a six-hour orientation course approved by the State Advisory Committee on Educational Requirements. The Association offers an approved orientation course and provides transcripts to officials completing the training. The Association awarded certificates to 81 individuals who completed the training.

Staff Contact: Lea Ann Mitchell

Annual Meeting

The Association celebrated its 85th anniversary during the 2015 Annual Meeting, which drew 600 municipal officials to Hilton Head. Each received a copy of the Association's history book unveiled during the Opening Session. While celebrating the past, the Association also looked toward the future. Keynote speaker Rebecca Ryan, author, economist and futurist, held the standing-room-only crowd's attention as she discussed the future of cities and towns. Attendees also got a first-hand look at new technology by attending drone demonstrations, test-driving a Tesla and exploring Microsoft products. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

The four newest Main Street SC cities—Georgetown, Sumter, Aiken and Moncks Corner—were previous members. Each returned to the program during the last two years to take advantage of the training, networking and technical assistance.

Technical Assistance

Field Services

Assigned a specific region in the state, the field services managers received feedback from members and helped municipal officials address issues of local concern. This year, the field services managers made more than 1,000 in-person contacts with municipal officials and staff through one-on-one visits, council meetings and retreats. *Staff Contacts: Jeff Shacker and Bill Taylor*

Field services managers averaged 90 technical inquiries per week from municipal officials.

Main Street South Carolina

Main Street SC added Aiken and Moncks Corner to its Boot Camp program, bringing the number of communities participating in the program to 15. Main Street SC helps its members revitalize their downtowns into vibrant centers of commerce and community by using the National Main Street's Four Point Approach—organization, promotion, design and economic vitality. Members received one-on-one training and technical assistance from staff and nationally recognized specialists.

Main Street SC presented five Inspiration Awards for exceptional member accomplishments. *Staff Contact: Bepie LeGrand*

Information Resources

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

Publications

The Association publishes a variety of manuals and handbooks on topics of municipal interest. *How to Conduct Effective Meetings* was updated this year.

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

Staff Contact: Sarita Chourey

Website

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

The Association's site was recognized this year by the South Carolina Press Association, the South Carolina Society of Association Executives and the South Carolina chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. The Press Association judges remarked that "the site is attractive and organized with the search functions well-incorporated throughout the site." Staff Contact: Meredith Houck

Uptown

The monthly newsletter in print and electronic formats featured articles on a variety of issues of municipal interest. Each issue's feature section looked in-depth at a municipal service area. This year's sections focused on risk management, infrastructure, the role of elected officials, law enforcement, fire service, utilities, parks and recreation, economic development and public works.

More than 320 individuals opted to receive electronic notifications when new issues were posted online. A weekly e-newsletter, *Uptown Update*, provided information about upcoming training opportunities and other timely topics. Staff Contact: Sarita Chourey

City Connect blog and *City Quick Connect* podcast

The Association launched the *City Quick Connect* podcast this year as an addition to the *City Connect* blog. The podcast featured short interviews with Association staff, leaders of partner organizations and experts. The blog and podcast packaged information in a “quick read and listen” format for local officials. Topics were timely and often related to court cases and issues being considered at the State House or on Capitol Hill. Subscriptions to the blog increased 25 percent over last year.

Staff Contact: Reba Campbell

Daily News

Daily News provides a quick, “at a glance” email summary of news stories of municipal interest from around the state and country. Almost 600 individuals subscribed to the service this year. *Staff Contact: Sarita Chourey*

Achievement Awards

In 2016, 26 cities and towns entered the annual awards program. Since its creation in 1987, 833 municipal projects have vied for the awards which recognize successful and innovative projects that improve the quality of life for residents and add value to communities. The program also encourages sharing ideas among municipal officials. *Staff Contact: Meredith Houck*





Shared Solutions

Highlights from the Executive Director ...

Created economic development grant program

Limited resources often prevent local officials from reaching their economic development goals. Recognizing this challenge, we created the Hometown Economic Development Grant program. Cities and towns can apply for grants up to \$25,000 to fund local projects. The board of directors earmarked \$200,000 for 2016 grant awards.

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

Collection Programs

Municipalities contract with the Association to collect delinquent debts and certain business license taxes on their behalf. These programs provide centralized and efficient collections for participating municipalities and streamline the tax payment process for businesses. The Association collected more than \$172 million in 2015 on behalf of cities and towns.

Brokers Tax Collection Program

The Municipal Association serves as the municipal agent to disburse to the appropriate cities and towns the municipal broker's premium tax collected by the South Carolina Department of Insurance. The Association disbursed \$11.2 million during the 2015 license year to 268 participating municipalities. *Staff Contacts: Melissa Brown, Brenda Kyzer*

Insurance Tax Collection Program

The Municipal Association collected \$150 million in business license taxes from insurance companies owed to municipalities. The Association distributed taxes collected to 268 participating municipalities. *Staff Contacts: Brenda Kyzer, Melissa Brown, Susan Gainey*

Setoff Debt Collection Program

In cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Revenue, the Association collected \$2.5 million in delinquent debts (utility bills, taxes, court fines, etc.) owed to 168 participating entities. *Staff Contacts: Melissa Brown, Brenda Kyzer*

Telecommunications Tax Collection Program

The Association collected \$8.2 million in business license taxes from telecommunications companies owed to 268 participating municipalities. *Staff Contacts: Susan Gainey and Brenda Kyzer*

Risk Management Services

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

The SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund provides all lines of property and casualty coverage including tort liability, law enforcement liability, public officials' liability, and property and automobile coverage while the SC Municipal Insurance Trust provides workers' compensation coverage. RMS processed approximately 2,500 new claims this year.

For a decade, RMS maintained or reduced rates while also returning surplus funds to the members of the two programs. RMS's work to locate quality vendors at the best available pricing is a major contributing factor to stable rates. This year, RMS issued an RFP for a new pharmacy benefit management provider, which resulted in cost savings and improved customer service for members.

SCMIT and SCMIRF also provide grants, training and loss control services that help members enhance risk management efforts and prevent claims. *Staff contact: Heather Ricard*

More than 500 municipal officials participated in training sessions offered by SCMIT and SCMIRF

Training

- Customized, on-site training: RMS provided training for members in their hometowns, allowing departments to attend training together. Staff conducted 16 on-site classes on topics including defensive driving, incident investigation, mindfulness in safety and Risk Management 101.
- LocalGovU: Participation in online training continued to grow with more than 11,000 courses taken this year. The online training covered a variety of risk management, human resources, safety and law enforcement topics.
- Statewide and regional training: SCMIT and SCMIRF offered members 12 training sessions on topics including employment liability, emergency management and defensive driving.

SCMIRF insured property valued at \$3 billion

- Law enforcement training videos: Through a partnership with the Public Agency Training Council, SCMIT and SCMIRF offered online training videos on constitutional law and use of force, deadly force and pursuit driving policies.
- Risk Management Institute: SCMIT and SCMIRF offered members specialized training on the roles of risk managers and safety coordinators. Nine graduated from the Institute.
- *RiskLetter*: The quarterly e-newsletter provided information on a wide range of risk management topics. Special sections this year focused on emergency management, public works and public safety.

Loss control/technical assistance

RMS helps its members build effective safety programs and loss control capacity.

- Model policies and procedures manuals for law enforcement and fire services: SCMIT and SCMIRF members received updated law enforcement policies including a model policy for body-worn cameras that meets the state standard.
- One-on-one technical assistance visits: The loss control staff met with member organizations to evaluate their claims experience.
- Legal hotlines: SCMIRF provided member organizations up to 10 hours of free legal advice on each legal hotline for labor and liability issues.
- SCMIRF provided member organizations specialized cybersecurity and disaster recovery and business continuity services in addition to toolkits for sewer backups, parks and recreation, public officials and special events liability.

Grants

The grants program is designed to help SCMIT and SCMIRF members purchase products or equipment to reduce the frequency and severity of claims.

- Law Enforcement Liability Reduction Grant Program provided a total of \$50,000 to member law enforcement agencies.
- Public Works Sewer Backup Liability Grant Program provided members of SCMIRF a total of \$20,000 to purchase equipment to reduce liability claims associated with sewer backups.
- SCMIT awarded a total of \$182,000 to member law enforcement, fire and public works departments to purchase work-zone safety equipment, soft body armor and other protective gear.

SCMIT provided workers' compensation coverage for more than 16,000 municipal employees, representing an annual payroll of \$550.2 million.

South Carolina Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust

The South Carolina Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust is a qualified irrevocable trust available to local governments to prefund retirement benefits other than pensions. The Trust pools funds, allowing members to reduce costs by sharing administrative and investment-related expenses and to take advantage of negotiated rates for actuarial reports. Forty-three local governments are members.

Staff Contact: Heather Ricard

Technology Services

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

Cable Franchise Assistance Program

The Association continued working with Local Government Services, LLC to provide members technical assistance with cable franchise management. The technical assistance gave local governments access to the expertise required to negotiate benefits and services with reasonable terms and conditions. *Staff Contact: Miriam Hair*





Internal Services

Highlights from the Executive Director ...

Leveraging Technology

Our programs and services flourish because of the infrastructure (technology, human resources and financial management) supporting them. We have always prided ourselves on our proactive use of technology that allows us to work efficiently and offer exceptional member services.

Ten years ago, we invested in an association management system to better manage member information. We have strategically added functionality to the AMS over the years and integrated it with other internal systems to give members greater access to services and information.

This year, the collections and IT staff worked together to integrate our setoff debt collections system with the AMS. This was the final integration needed to allow members to have one user name and password to access all the Association's online services and resources.

Our Risk Management Services staff took on numerous technology-related projects this year to better serve members of the workers' compensation and property/liability programs. RMS unveiled a revamped annual report card made possible by integrating several systems including underwriting and claims. This provides members with a 360-degree look at their loss control history. Members can also use the report card to analyze their loss history over time.

IT staff used videoconferencing for the first time to allow a speaker unable to attend an affiliate meeting to present his information remotely. The Association also implemented a photo archiving system to store and catalog the Association's thousands of digital photographs.

Other highlights

- The finance staff restructured the Association's reserve fund to finance the Hometown Economic Development Grant program.
- The Association received awards from the SC Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America, the SC Society of Association Executives and the SC Press Association for the Association's history book.
- Mary Brantner, former communications manager, received the Retiree Service Award in recognition of her 28-year career with the Association. The award recognizes Association staff retiring with more than 28 years of service.



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Tigerron Wells

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Michelle Willm

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Meredith Kaiser

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Amy Lindler

Technology Operations Manager

Cindy Martellini

Claims Manager

Connie Martin

Senior Adjuster – SCMIRF

Leigh Polhill

Underwriting Manager

Janice Smith

Administrative Assistant

Todd Williams

Public Safety Loss Control Consultant

Rem Williams

Senior Adjuster – SCMIRF

Mike Woodall

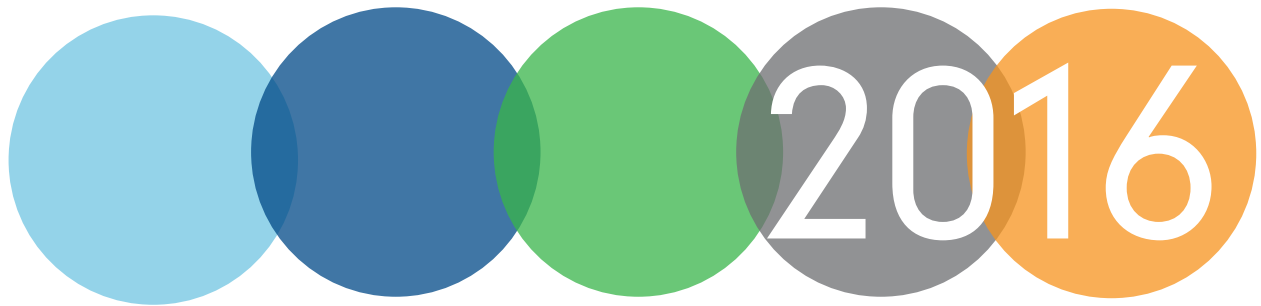
Senior Adjuster – SCMIT

To reach staff via email,
address as follows:
first initial last name@masc.sc
(ex. mhair@masc.sc)
Main Phone: 803.799.9574



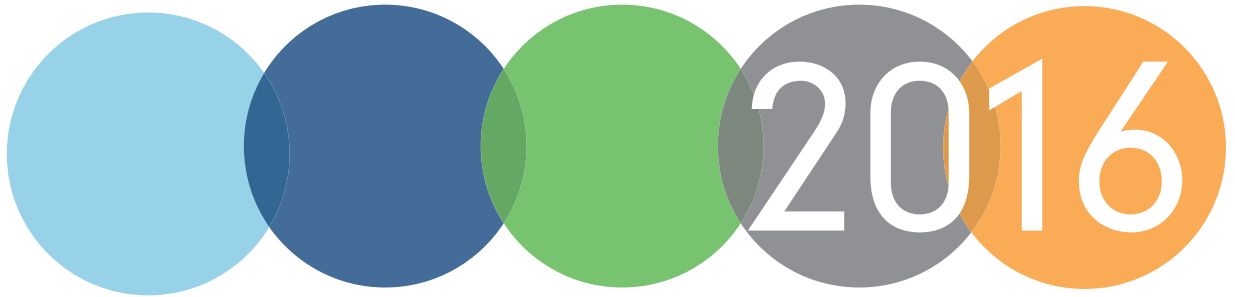
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MASC Municipal Association
of South CarolinaSM



Achievement Awards

Main Street SC Inspiration Awards



Achievement Awards

Started in 1986, the program provides municipal officials with 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, 26 municipalities entered the Achievement Awards program. A video highlighting this year's winners is available on the Association's website at www.masc.sc (keyword: achievement).

Population 1-1,000 Category | Town of Edisto Beach Sidewalk Enhancement

The Town of Edisto Beach has a small population of permanent residents but accommodates up to 15,000 visitors daily during the summer months. Thanks to Edisto's compact area, residents and visitors alike enjoy the scenery and ambiance of the town on foot or by bicycle.

Since the safety of all who enjoy Edisto is of utmost importance to town officials and local residents, the community came together to address sidewalk issues.

Using a combination of funding sources and a multi-phase approach over the course of 15 years, the Town of Edisto Beach repaired and drastically improved its sidewalks to make them safe, attractive and ADA compliant. Officials funded the project in five phases using a combination of accommodations tax revenue, "C" funds, and federal and state transportation grants.

Throughout the project, local officials involved community members and other entities, including the South Carolina Department of Transportation; the electric, cable and phone companies; and the garbage collection contractor. Sidewalk replacement was combined with planned resurfacing projects and drainage improvements, saving the town money and inconvenience.

In addition, SCDOT expanded the town's main thoroughfare, Palmetto Boulevard, from two lanes to four lanes. Bike lanes were added throughout the town and along Highway 174, the only access road to the island.

Tourists and residents of Edisto Beach are safer, due in part to the new sidewalks. Some things are worth the wait.

Contact Deborah Hargis at dhargis@townofedistobeach.com or 843.869.2505 x 213.

Population 1,001-5,000 Category | City of Isle of Palms

Doggy Day at the Rec

During the summer, tourists flock to Isle of Palms to enjoy the surf and sandy beaches. There is no shortage of activities for residents and visitors to enjoy. However, during the off-season, city officials are always on the lookout for fun, family-focused activities to engage residents and visitors.

The Isle of Palms has long been a popular spot for residents and visitors to walk their dogs, especially after the city established special off-leash hours during the off-season for furry beach-goers. The city-run dog park has also been wildly popular.

Doggy Day at the Rec came about as a new way for the city to give canine residents and their owners even more chances to interact. Doggy Day brings together the city's animal control staff with the community and their precious pups.

Island dogs and out-of-town pups are invited to compete in creative categories like "Most Ear'Resistable," "Best Smile" and "Best Costume." Audience members answer dog-related trivia questions for prizes and interact with community animal organizations.

While highly entertaining, the event is inexpensive for the city and relatively simple to plan with the help of sponsors and the public. The minimal budget covers goodie bags for participants, promotional materials for the event, and a photo booth for owners and pets.

Most importantly, Doggy Day provides pet owners with the opportunity to register their dogs with the city and to vaccinate their dogs against rabies. Animal welfare groups are also on hand to promote rescue and adoption.

Not surprisingly, combining city services with the chance to watch Isle of Palms' cutest strut their stuff has made Doggy Days one of the city's most popular events of the year. In the future, city officials plan to include participation from military dogs, search and rescue dogs, K-9 units and service dogs.

Contact Desireé Frago at desireef@iop.net or 843.886.6428.

Population 5,001-10,000 Category | City of Fountain Inn

Main Street Streetscape

A decade ago, a committee of community members and city staff put together a progressive master plan called Fountain Inn Forward. One of the plan's major goals was to improve Fountain Inn's central business district, especially a dangerous and deteriorating Main Street.

The four-lane highway that runs through downtown was efficient at moving traffic but not much else. Downtown was missing critical safety signals and way-finding signage, and the sidewalks were cracked and narrow. The thoroughfare lacked proper drainage and greenery, and new businesses were in desperate need of additional parking.

Funding this ambitious project was the biggest hurdle that officials faced. They knew the massive project would require both city dollars and funding from other sources. After several attempts, officials secured a matching grant from the South Carolina Department of Transportation. A variety of government agencies and local utility providers provided the rest of the funding. Throughout the project, city officials sought the public's input and regularly consulted business owners along Main Street.

When the project was completed, Fountain Inn's central business district was transformed. Sidewalks and sewers were repaired, signage and safety signals were installed, and shrubbery was planted. Occupancy in downtown buildings has almost doubled. Instead vehicles of being funneled rapidly through downtown, visitors are being lured to stop and explore Main Street. These days in Fountain Inn, tourists and residents alike enjoy a stroll down a bustling and beautiful Main Street.

Contact Eddie Case at eddie.case@fountaininn.org or 864.862.4421.

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

The Old Town Master Plan

The Town of Bluffton experienced extraordinary growth during the last two decades. Town limits expanded from a one-square mile jurisdiction to 54-square miles, making it one of the largest municipalities in the state, land-wise. Population increased by 1,233 percent.

Remarkably, this growth has been far from a drain on infrastructure and city services. In fact, Bluffton's historic district, affectionately known as Old Town, has enjoyed a booming rebirth while maintaining its historic charm.

In 2006, town leaders adopted the Old Town Master Plan to help responsibly manage this growth and its impact on the town's historic commercial district. The plan maintains balance between promoting growth and preserving the historical character of the area.

Through this long-range plan, local officials responded to current and anticipated growth by setting 34 goals aimed at preserving and promoting the town's uniqueness as one of the South's last coastal village towns.

The town accomplished major goals by adopting a form-based code regulating building and site design. This promoted mixed-use, denser development which was previously prohibited. The town also established business-friendly policies that streamlined its permitting processes.

These policies have encouraged significant private investment and growth in Old Town, including the addition of affordable housing and a new police station. To date, town officials have invested \$6 million in the area, leading to an additional \$70 million in private investment - a more than ten to one return on investment.

Not surprisingly, Old Town has been touted in numerous publications as a can't-miss Southern destination. New projects are constantly in the works. A day dock to allow boaters easy access to Old Town, the rehabilitation of the home owned by the earliest-known freed slave on the May River and additional streetscaping will make downtown Bluffton even more vibrant.

Contact Debbie Szpanka at dszpanka@townofbluffton.com or 843.706.4534.

Communications Category | Town of Mount Pleasant

Town of Mount Pleasant Government Outreach Strategy

Mount Pleasant is one of the fastest growing cities in America. Town leaders understand that decisions made today will significantly impact residents into the future. They found ways to engage residents more to hear their diverse perspectives.

To develop their government outreach initiatives, town officials not only studied best practices from around the country but also asked the public, both in person and online, how they would like to participate in town affairs. To be successful, officials knew they had to "get town hall out of town hall," meet residents where they already were and include them in informal interactions.

Local officials created the Government Outreach Office dedicated to civic engagement and developed four innovative, but low cost, programs that can be replicated in all cities regardless of their size.

Coffee with the Mayor takes places at a local business where residents can come and discuss current events and concerns. Residents feel heard and, as an added benefit, the event supports a local business with the purchase of coffee and breakfast for attendees. Similarly, the town administrator holds mobile office hours at different locations in the community.

The town also schedules community roundtable meetings with community organizations, civic groups and neighborhood associations. These meetings give time for these groups to meet with their elected officials and senior city staff members to discuss community priorities, preferences and opinions. The small-group format allows for more in-depth discussion in an informal setting.

The fourth program is the town administrator's monthly E-brief. The electronic newsletter is filled with important information about local issues and city services.

In Mount Pleasant, officials have implemented targeted efforts to transform their relationship with the public from merely customer service into collaborative partnerships.

Contact Lauren Sims at lsims@tompsc.com or 843.884.8517.

Economic Development Category | City of Sumter

Joseph P. Riley Jr Award

Community Investment

Around 2007, City of Sumter officials were struggling to find new or alternative funding sources to attract new businesses and industry to the area.

Joining an effort initiated by the local chamber of commerce, city and county officials agreed to collectively encourage the community to invest in itself by passing a county-wide penny capital projects sales tax. The stakeholders, with input from the community, created a list of 16 capital projects that the new sales tax would fund, primarily infrastructure and asset improvements, such as recreation, public safety, utilities and education. Then, city, county and chamber officials worked together to show residents the potential return on investment. Voters agreed to add the new tax in 2008.

The \$75 million generated by the penny tax over a seven-year period has transformed the community.

Today, the Patriot Park Athletic Complex hosts large tournaments drawing visitors from all over the southeast, with a \$10 million impact on the local economy. Penny tax investments upgraded utilities, rehabilitated downtown retail facilities and provided safer intersection crossings in downtown Sumter. This investment resulted in upper story housing, additional retail shops and a new hotel.

Proceeds from the capital projects sales tax also went to other projects to support economic growth, such as water and wastewater expansions, industrial park infrastructure and road improvements. The community is reaping the benefits of the investment it made in itself, including landing one of the state's largest economic development projects, Continental Tire.

While the initial 2008 penny sales tax passed by a very slim margin, voters renewed the tax in 2014 with 60 percent voting to continue the progress. The tax revenues will fund 28 additional improvement projects. Thanks to a strong plan and strong community support, the City of Sumter remains poised for growth.

Contact Shelley Kile at skile@sumter-sc.com or 803.774.1661.

Public Safety Category | City of Anderson

Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force

City of Anderson officials were disheartened and concerned by the national climate of mistrust and anger toward police. Aware that their city was not immune to these tensions, officials took a proactive step of creating the Law Enforcement and Community Relations Task Force to encourage a positive relationship between Anderson residents and their police department.

The task force began with a partnership among the Anderson Police Department, African American Ministerial Council and the City of Anderson administration. The group launched open-forum meetings to encourage frank, and sometimes uncomfortable, discussions with the goal of building trusting relationships.

With its core mission of public outreach, task force members engaged 4,000 individuals at 63 events in 2015. They visited organizations as varied as schools, churches, nonprofits and social service providers, hosting events as diverse as ice cream socials to educational discussions. Each interaction gave the task force members an opportunity to listen and learn from residents, address questions and concerns, and build trust.

This extensive community outreach is making a difference. Among African-American leaders in Anderson, stated confidence in the police has increased substantially in one year. Total crime in Anderson has also decreased significantly, dropping approximately 16 percent in the same time frame.

The task force has no plans of slowing down. Plans to publish a community resource guide and create innovative educational campaigns are already in the works. These efforts will continue to make Anderson safe and foster positive relationships between police officers and the community they serve.

Contact Beth Batson at bbatson@cityofandersonsc.com or 864.934.3054.

Public Service Category | City of Florence

A Dream Comes True: Brownsfields Cleanup

For decades, 20 blighted acres of property stood at the northern entrance to historic downtown Florence. Worse yet, the land contained an active junkyard with pervasive soil contamination. The land was not only unattractive to visitors but it also caused problems for residents. Many of the economically disadvantaged minority residents who lived adjacent to the property experienced higher than average rates of chronic illness.

Hoping to spur downtown revitalization and unite the community, officials initiated an ambitious 6-year project to remove the blight and build a public health asset.

After relocating the junkyard, the city completed an environmental site assessment followed by a voluntary Brownsfields Cleanup Contract. The \$14.5 million clean-up project was funded with dollars from the EPA Brownsfields Grant, Brownsfields Cleanup Revolving loan fund, a local non-profit foundation and the city budget. The city successfully removed 27,000 tons of contaminated soil, 1,500 tons of debris and several underground storage tanks. The area was then backfilled with clean soil.

The next step for officials was determining what to build on the previously unused land. With the goals of improving public health and the quality of life for all residents, officials offered the land to HopeHealth, a federally qualified health center in Florence planning an expansion. HopeHealth recently completed construction of a 50,000-square-foot health center on the property that will serve predominantly low-income, uninsured patients.

The combination of public clean-up and private investment on the site has been a boon for the entire downtown area. Development in the area surrounding the former junkyard has increased dramatically, with more than \$100 million of investment pouring into redevelopment.

Land that once was a blight on the community is now a unifying public asset that furthers the city's goals of advancing community health and wellness while fostering sustainable development.

Contact Andrew H. Griffin at dgriffin@cityofflorence.com or 843.665.3113.

Public Works Category | City of Seneca

Seneca Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

Constructed in the late 60s on scenic Lake Keowee, the Seneca water treatment plant supplies water to more than half of Oconee County. In the time since its construction, a residential area was developed next to the plant. Throughout the years, the unattractive facility developed operational and safety issues. A major concern for both city officials and nearby residents was the hazardous chlorine gas used during the disinfection process.

City officials formed a partnership with the neighboring homeowners' association to address residents' safety and aesthetic concerns. At the same time, they began brainstorming ways to improve the plant's operations while providing an aesthetically appealing venue for community functions.

With input from city leaders and neighborhood representatives, the project's engineers and architects developed logistical and design strategies for a new treatment plant on the existing site. Funding for the facility came from the State Revolving Fund.

While the facility was designed to complement the natural beauty of the lake, it was also constructed to accommodate state-of-the-art water treatment procedures. Addressing a major concern, Seneca no longer uses chlorine gas at the upgraded plant. Instead, the utility uses an on-site generated sodium hydrochloride process.

The upgrade also enhanced the plant's spill containment capabilities and site security. The plant now has upgraded fencing, automated entrances and security cameras.

The new public meeting space at the operations center takes full advantage of its scenic location. The space offers breathtaking views of the adjoining lake and turned the plant into a flagship city facility. Seneca officials have applied for LEED certification. They have also applied for Envision certification. If successful, the Seneca plant would be the first facility in South Carolina to achieve the designation from the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure.

With the completion of the treatment plant's upgrade and the addition of public meeting space, Seneca officials have increased the visibility of an often overlooked, but essential, city service.

Contact Robert W. Faires, III at rfaires@seneca.sc.us or 864.710.4649.

Other Entries

Town of Batesburg-Leesville

Town leaders in Batesburg-Leesville knew their antiquated communication resources could be costing them economic development projects and potential new residents. The town's website and community access channel had not been updated in decades, and its social media presence was nonexistent. Also, technology and Wi-Fi speed at town hall were lacking.

Town officials made it a priority to invest in their communication efforts. They initiated conversations with community members, service providers and neighboring municipalities.

Batesburg-Leesville now boasts a clean, modern website to assist residents and attract visitors. The town became active on social media platforms, and its public access channel received an up-to-date look. A public relations firm was hired to assist with internal and external communications, and town hall received a technological makeover.

The ambitious communications overhaul will be a great resource for residents, visitors and town hall staff for years to come.

Contact Ted Luckadoo at tluckadoo@batesburg-leesville.org or 803.532.4601.

City of Camden

Visitors traveling from the interstate into downtown Camden were greeted by Camden City Arena, an aging recreational complex badly in need of repairs. Vines grew over chipped paint, and an unpaved parking lot lacked designated spaces. The interior of the arena wasn't much better. Kitchens were inadequate, stagnant air lingered in need of an HVAC system, and the architectural style was outdated.

Hoping to restore the arena to its original purpose and create a more attractive entryway into downtown, officials set aside money in the annual budget for a massive overhaul of the building. Before hiring a design firm, city leaders met with a diverse group of community members, civic organizations and business owners to amass a comprehensive list of recommendations for the new facility.

The long-term planning and meticulous design process paid off. The Camden City Arena is now an attractive and functional space for community members to enjoy. The versatile space can transform from hosting job fairs to staging basketball tournaments. The

building's architectural style was also changed to complement other downtown buildings. Local officials are pleased with a durable investment that meets the needs and matches the aesthetics of the community.

Contact Caitlin Corbett at ccorbett@camdensc.org or 803.432.2421.

City of Clinton

For many years, the City of Clinton hosted two well-received events to celebrate Fire Prevention Week and Public Power Week. The trouble was that the events were held simultaneously. Realizing they were hosting competing events, city staff decided to combine their efforts. The result was FirePower.

FirePower was a natural fit because fire prevention and electrical safety go hand-in-hand. By combining budgets, staff was able to secure large-order discounts on handouts, promotional materials and giveaways.

The combined events are a hit with the community. In addition to offering important fire and electrical safety and prevention educational materials, fire and electric utility personnel and their vehicles are on hand for demonstrations as well as meet and greets. Food, drinks, bounce houses and fire dogs provide fun for the whole family.

Now residents in Clinton don't have to decide which event to attend and which one to miss; they can enjoy a larger, more dynamic FirePower!

Contact Mary-Wallace Riley at mriley@cityofclintonsc.com or 864.200.4503.

City of Columbia

The City of Columbia's Police Department understands that without the public's trust, effective policing is impossible. Leaders of the department have found the best way to promote this trust is to actively and positively engage with the community. Beyond the Badge—a program that requires newly sworn officers to spend a week immersed in their community—encourages just that kind of engagement.

Beyond the Badge came about after months of research and meetings with sponsors and partners of the program. For no additional funding beyond the officers' salary, new graduates from the Criminal Justice Academy spend the first

week on the job working in local social service and community organizations learning how to serve the people they will also protect.

These service opportunities benefit the officers who take away a better understanding of the community's diverse population. Local organizations appreciate the extra assistance. The city benefits as well, enjoying a more productive and cooperative relationship between residents and their police officers.

Contact Chris Segars at cmsegars@columbiasc.net or 803.545.4143.

City of Denmark

The intersection of two major federal highways in downtown Denmark was hazardous for drivers and pedestrians alike. Drivers of large trucks encountered maneuverability issues and damaged nearby trees, buildings and light poles when trying to make the tight turns. For pedestrians, crosswalks were barely visible, and roots pushed through the sidewalks. After two years of planning and hosting public meetings, Denmark officials moved forward to create a safer, more attractive intersection.

Using federal money administered by the South Carolina Department of Transportation and working with the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, the city converted the four-lane highways into two-lane corridors with wide turn lanes. Upgraded sidewalks accommodated downtown's large trees, and new lighting, trash cans, bike racks and benches made the intersection more pedestrian-friendly.

The project satisfied a component of Denmark's revitalization and master plans, plus it encourages more pedestrian traffic downtown. The redesigned interchange also reduced congestion and damage to nearby structures. Pleased with the new streetscape, city officials are pursuing additional funds to improve more downtown intersections.

Contact Heyward Robinson at heywardrobinson@bellsouth.net or 803.793.3734.

City of Easley

More than a century ago, the railroad between the cities of Easley and Pickens was nicknamed the Doodle because the trains ran backward and forward, reminding residents of a doodlebug. Earlier this decade, the rail line

was abandoned after bringing a century of commerce to the area. Officials in Easley were not happy to see the tracks sitting unused. While at the same time, they were dissatisfied with the recreational offerings in town.

Easley officials decided to participate in the national Rails to Trails program to transform the rail bed into a multi-use trail for community members. In the spirit of the railway's shared history, officials forged a partnership with the City of Pickens to make the trail a reality. Each city contributed half of the funds to convert the old rail bed into a tree-lined, all-purpose trail.

The completed trail is popular with residents in both cities, and coincides with the City of Easley's strategic plan to provide more recreational opportunities and a higher quality of life for the community.

Contact Lindsay Cunningham at lcunningham@cityofeasley.com or 864.380.9923.

Town of Elgin

For many years, the Elgin Police Department operated out of a leased building separate from town hall. This forced the chief and officers to make frequent commutes between the two facilities to accomplish their work or appear in municipal court. Plus, residents and business owners looking for officers or assistance were confused about where to find them.

When the county built a new facility for the rural fire department previously housed at town hall, space became available to relocate the police department. Before the move could occur, the space that once housed fire trucks and equipment needed renovating.

Not wanting to incur debt, town officials opted to pay for the project using cash on hand. When feasible, the contractor hired local subcontractors and bought the materials from local businesses in an effort to stimulate the local economy.

By remodeling a portion of town hall, all of Elgin's offices and departments are now housed under one roof. The project also included new council chambers, conference rooms and courtroom. A large lobby in the center of town hall now welcomes residents and visitors.

Contact Melissa S. Emmons at emmons@townofelginsc.com or 803.438.2362.

City of Gaffney

The City of Gaffney is the county seat of Cherokee County and holds the distinction of being the only county in America with three national parks, all of which commemorate the American Revolution. When the 2011 federal government shutdown closed the parks temporarily, the city hosted a celebration of the Battle of Kings Mountain. Although the parks soon reopened, a partnership between the National Park Service and city officials established Gaffney as a historic tourism destination.

City officials set aside funds from hospitality tax revenues to enhance the city's historic tourism efforts. They created new events to celebrate the county's unique history. One of the new events, Education Day, allows every fourth grader in the county to visit local historic sites. In the visitors' center, city officials installed a vinyl floor map to help tourists find important Revolutionary War sites, and staff often dresses in period costumes to speak to students and groups.

These efforts have educated thousands of residents and visitors, and solidified Gaffney's flourishing historic tourism economy.

Contact LeighAnn K. Snuggs at lsnuggs@getintogaffney.com or 864.487.6244.

City of Greenville

Greenville is thriving. Economic development shows no signs of slowing in the central business district. During the work week, the city's population nearly doubles. Additionally, approximately 6 million tourists visit the Upstate hot spot annually. Faced with an impending parking shortage in the downtown, city officials committed to an ambitious plan to build three parking garages and a surface lot in a tight time frame.

City officials also worked closely with downtown developers to ensure that projects and parking would complement one another both in terms of purpose and design. Staff worked with construction professionals throughout the building phase of the parking projects to monitor progress and timelines. Despite an unusually rainy season, all projects were completed on time, increasing city-owned parking by more than 23 percent.

Instead of waiting for a crisis, Greenville officials acted proactively to ensure the central business district remained accessible and accommodating to growth.

Contact Brittany Moore at bmoore@greenville.gov or 864.467.4449.

City of Greer

Concerned with startling statewide domestic violence statistics, low conviction rates and high recidivism rates, Greer officials decided to take a proactive step. They established a specialized domestic violence court. The monthly court session handles bench trials and pretrial conferences for cases that will be heard by a jury.

Held on a day separate from other summary court cases, the domestic violence court gives cases focused attention. The court is able to schedule and adjudicate the cases in a shorter time period, allowing for quicker resolution within the family and faster access to services such as counseling.

Partnerships were key to establishing the court. By working with a neighboring municipality to ensure a full caseload, Greer officials successfully recruited a prosecutor from the state attorney general's office to try the cases.

On court day, counselors are available for both the victim and defendant, and victim's advocates attend from both the police department and the attorney general's office. Representatives from local domestic violence shelters also attend.

While the new court necessitated a change in process, it did not require extra funding. Court personnel are already in place, and the prosecutor and domestic violence specialists volunteer their time.

Though the program is new, officials are optimistic the specialized court will break the cycle of violence by reducing the number of repeat offenders and providing counseling for all involved.

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

City of Hartsville

South Hartsville had seen better days. The predominantly African-American, low-income neighborhood was in disrepair. Many of the approximately 1,100 aging homes sat empty, lots were overgrown, and litter and other debris were a persistent issue.

When city planning staff turned their attention to revitalizing the neighborhood, they knew they could not do it alone. They successfully applied to the SC Chapter of the American Planning Association for the assistance of a Community Planning Assistance Team to help develop a plan to bring South Hartsville back to life. The CPAT team visited the neighborhood multiple times, touring the area and speaking with community stakeholders.

With a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy in place, city officials got to work putting it into action. They created an oversight committee and reinstated a dormant neighborhood association, which then partnered with Habitat for Humanity to work with homeowners on renovation plans. City officials also established a residential demolition program to tear down blighted properties.

While still a work in progress, South Hartsville is already safer and more attractive. Officials are also encouraged by a recent Community Development Block Grant to further rehabilitate the neighborhood.

Contact Brenda Kelley at brenda.kelley@hartsvillesc.gov or 843.383.3009.

Town of Kiawah Island

The beach community of Kiawah Island touts endless recreational activities; however, residents had to drive 45 minutes to Charleston, the largest nearby city, to enjoy art, music and other cultural events. Many of the town's retired residents felt the drive was inconvenient, and even dangerous, to make at night. Recognizing the shortage of cultural opportunities close to home, town officials partnered with Charleston arts organizations to bring these events directly to the island.

The newly formed Kiawah Island Arts and Cultural Events Council, made up of residents and chaired by a town councilmember, began by first enticing College of Charleston performance groups to bring their talents to island residents. This effort gradually expanded to include local artists as well as national talent. Almost all events are free and open to the general public.

Last year, approximately 17,000 people enjoyed cultural events on Kiawah Island that incorporated everything from dance recitals to film screenings to symphony performances. The town provides a small budget from its general fund and inexpensively promotes events through its social media outlets. Now Kiawah Island offers not only beautiful beaches and endless outdoor activities, but it also has top-notch cultural opportunities.

Contact Mary Q. Johnson at qjtiger@msn.com or 843.693.5707.

Town of Lexington

When Lexington officials adopted the town's vision plan in 2012, they made sure that a major component of that plan focused on beautification efforts. They recognized the need to maintain and enhance the town's aesthetic appeal in the midst of an incredible population boom.

The major goals of the beautification efforts included a facelift for the "front porches" of the community—the thoroughfares through which residents and visitors enter the town. The first goal involved revamping the commercial district's Interstate 20 interchange. The plan also called for a large park at the center of downtown to host events and activities. Miscellaneous corridor improvements and new green space rounded out the plan.

These goals became a reality using various town, county and state funding sources and partnering with the Lexington Beautification Foundation, a nonprofit organization formed by young professionals in town.

The public provided its input when the vision plan was written and participated in the beautification efforts through fundraising events. The completed projects increased civic pride and set the stage for the town's continued growth.

Contact Jennifer Dowden at jdowden@lexsc.com or 803.356.8238.

City of Loris

When Loris residents began voicing the need for safe, centrally-located community spaces, city officials focused their attention on the underutilized Watson Park. With goals of encouraging community events and discouraging crime, they set to work finding funding to revitalize the park.

The City of Loris struck a deal with Horry County. The city agreed to pay for the materials, and the county agreed to provide the skilled labor. This arrangement made the park possible without a tax hike or an extra burden to the community. Officials also secured a grant to help pay for the project.

This partnership along with input from the public resulted in a refurbished park with a concession stand, bathrooms, and storage areas for gatherings or sporting events.

These upgrades are only the beginning. Recognizing that recreational opportunities play an important role in the social and physical health of the community, Loris officials plan to further improve the park with upgraded lighting, additional playground equipment and expanded parking lots.

Contact Henry Nichols at mayornichols@sccoast.net or 843.756.4004.

City of Mullins

Similar to other communities, Mullins was impacted by the recent economic downturn. The decline meant less money available for upgrading and maintaining community recreation facilities. Parks in town were run-down and no longer met residents' needs. Hoping to reverse this trend and increase civic pride, officials buckled down to find a way to fund the expansion and renovation of two town parks.

Officials opted to use accumulated hospitality tax revenue to kick-start the projects with the remainder of the funding coming from city issued debt. With financing in place, city staff met with residents to determine what they would like to see added to existing parks.

These efforts came to fruition when the city renovated Dogwood Park and Gapway Park. There are new tournament-ready basketball courts at Dogwood Park, a small park in a historically African-American neighborhood. Gapway Park, the larger recreational facility, now boasts three new soccer fields, playgrounds and basketball courts.

Mullins residents are enjoying their safe and modern parks, thanks to the determination and creativity of city officials.

Contact David E. Hudspeth at dhudspeth@mullinssc.us or 843.464.9583.

Town of Patrick

In the early part of the decade, town officials lamented the poor attendance at monthly council meetings. Seeking a way to keep community members apprised of what was happening in town, officials included production of a local calendar in the budget.

After printing and distributing the calendar, officials knew they had achieved their goal when they noticed an uptick in the number of residents participating in local government events. They established a beautification commission, planning commission, volunteer fire department, rescue squad and a variety of town events to take advantage of residents' growing community involvement.

The calendar features photos taken at community events throughout the year. With each new calendar, residents look forward to finding friends, neighbors and even themselves in the pictures. The Town of Patrick's investment in this critical communication tool makes a big difference for the small town in the Pee Dee.

Contact Rosa Lee Privette at privette@townofpatrick.com or 843.498.6994.

Town of Ridgeland

The Town of Ridgeland has experienced tremendous growth in land area and population, but municipal facilities had not kept up with development. Despite an increase in service area, Ridgeland police offices were still crammed into town hall, making it hard to serve the public and impossible to expand personnel. Officials saw a chance to remedy the situation when a local SCE&G building became vacant.

After negotiating with the town, SCE&G donated the property and the 5,000-square-foot building to the town. Town officials paid for building renovations through the U.S. Department of Justice's asset forfeiture program, which allows a local government to use money it seizes in drugs busts for community development projects. The money allowed the town to renovate the former SCE&G building into police offices.

By forming partnerships with other private and public entities, as well as securing grant funding, officials were able to provide upgraded facilities and improve law enforcement services at no extra cost to residents.

Contact Penny Daley at pdaleyridgeland@gmail.com or 843.726.7500.

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—organization, promotion, design and economic restructuring. Each year, Main Street South Carolina recognizes members' achievements and successes in downtown revitalization.

Downtown Service Award

Jimmy Evans, Orangeburg

A believer in the value of downtown development, Jimmy Evans left his mark on the City of Orangeburg when he died unexpectedly in January 2016.

As a board member and board president of the Downtown Orangeburg Revitalization Association, Jimmy knew first-hand the issues facing Orangeburg's downtown redevelopment. His insight, practical knowledge and will to get things done helped city leaders, business owners and volunteers plot a plan to revitalize downtown and make it a destination again.

Jimmy's company, AMCO Construction, was the general contractor for several of the City of Orangeburg's recent facade grant recipients. In working on these projects, Jimmy's company went above and beyond the grant requirements to beautify downtown.

Over the years, Jimmy and his company provided in-kind staffing for the Orangeburg Downtown Farmers Market. As well, he was the general contractor in the renovation of 1122 Church Street, which created a concept shop and rental-ready space downtown.

Jimmy Evans truly left his mark on downtown Orangeburg.

Contact Jeanna Reynolds at jreynolds@majorgraphicsllc.com or 803.664.4089.

Gaines Jontz Rehabilitation Award

The Mantissa Executive Suites & Spa, Hartsville

A run-down furniture store that was originally a Belk department store in downtown Hartsville has found new life. Facade renovations over the years had erased the original architecture of the early 20th century building. But today, the building is home to a boutique hotel with a medical spa, a fine dining restaurant and rooftop bar.

The upscale design includes a glass front facade for the restaurant. The 17 suites have decorative upper-story brickwork, new windows with individual awnings, copper downspouts, wrought iron private balconies and a monogrammed glass breezeway.

The hotel's courtyard is an attractive pedestrian thoroughfare connecting the street to parking at the rear entrance. Where an old canopy and cinder blocks once made the rear entrance uninviting, a pocket park with string lights and picnic tables is now inviting.

The City of Hartsville worked with private investors to create a financial environment that supported the hotel's location downtown. Through an economic development ordinance the hotel owners received several incentives. This investment by the city has resulted in an explosion of other businesses in the block adjacent to the hotel.

Contact Suzy Moyd at suzy.moyd@hartsvillesc.gov or 843.383.3015 Ext. 1003.

Master Merchant

Greg and Danielle Thompson, Sumter

Danielle and Greg Thompson could have chosen anywhere to open their various businesses, but they chose downtown Sumter, bringing a strong business sense and creative thinking to downtown revitalization efforts.

The Thompsons took risks opening businesses downtown while the city's revitalization process was still in its early years. Now the couple has multiple businesses in downtown Sumter including Hamptons, Sumter's fine dining restaurant, and its adjoining smaller restaurant and bar. They also own buildings that house an event rental facility, office suites and apartments. As well, the Thompsons built downtown's only upper-floor housing in 2011.

When Continental Tire announced it was bringing a plant to Sumter, the Thompsons renovated a downtown building for the company to use rent-free as its headquarters for two years until the plant was ready. Today that building is home to two downtown businesses.

Active participants in downtown events, the Thompsons have helped create several successful events including OctoberFest, the United Way Derby Day, the Microbrew Festival, and Sip and Stroll.

The Thompsons not only actively recruit new businesses for downtown, but they also invest their own time and resources as devoted supporters of downtown Sumter.

Contact *Howie Owens* at howens@sumter-sc.com or 803.607.8222.

Outstanding Business Development Programs

Downtown Orangeburg Revitalization Association

Based on the focus of Orangeburg's Community Vision Plan, leaders of the Downtown Orangeburg Revitalization Association understood it was important to show potential investors that locating downtown could reap positive results.

To give businesses a taste of what it would be like to locate downtown, DORA identified a vacant building in disrepair and created a

rental-ready space. With the support of several partners and a DORA investment of \$10,000, this renovation happened in just eight weeks. DORA also secured a long-term zero dollar lease for the 1,100-square-foot property with the goal of establishing a new business in the building.

During the 2015 holiday season, eight local businesses participated in DORA's first pop-up shop located in this building. The pop-up shop gave these businesses exposure to hundreds of shoppers who browsed and purchased goods not previously available downtown.

DORA selected the pop-up shop vendors based on business sectors that had been targeted in the city's Community Vision Plan.

Next DORA plans to work with the private sector to create a cluster of these rental-ready properties and to launch a recruitment plan to fill them with businesses that meet the needs identified in the vision plan.

Contact *Jeanna Reynolds* at jreynolds@majorgraphicsllc.com or 803.664.4089.

Outstanding New Construction

Billie S. Fleming Protective Services Center, Manning

The Manning police and fire departments faced a challenge sharing space that was becoming increasingly cramped for both expanding departments. Volunteer firefighters did not have sleeping quarters, and the police department was running out of office space. Rather than move the facility away from downtown, the city chose to add on to its existing facility by infilling an unsightly lot next to the existing building.

The architects used the rounded bays of the existing fire and police station to guide the design of the new construction. The design is also in keeping with nearby architecture.

Now, police officers and firefighters have plenty of space that includes offices, sleeping quarters, recreation space and a commercial-style kitchen.

This project not only filled the vacant lot but also protects Manning's historic design integrity and enhances its economic vitality.

Contact *Carrie Trebil* at ctrebil@cityofmanning.org or 803.435.8477 Ext. 5132.

Outstanding Promotion Series

Downtown Orangeburg Revitalization Association

It's not just adults who find downtown Orangeburg a destination these days. The Downtown Orangeburg Revitalization Association sponsored a contest called "Paint a Good Word" for children to turn downtown Orangeburg into an art gallery for two months in the spring of 2015.

More than 300 children of all ages painted their interpretation of good words that included many of the city's "community of character" traits plus "good words" such as peace, joy, family and laugh. Local artists, including the nationally renowned Leo Twiggs, selected 50 finalists whose artwork was displayed in downtown businesses. A *Times and Democrat* article encouraged the general public to vote for their favorite drawings. This generated more traffic to downtown Orangeburg and led to three winners.

In addition to wide media coverage of the promotion in the local newspaper and on television stations, the elementary school winner of the art contest used the iPad he won to produce a short video about the downtown farmers market and the Good Words contest further promoting the event.

The contest not only brought more than 1,000 visitors downtown, but it also generated a social media sensation. Using creativity and imagination, DORA gave Orangeburg residents a reason to be proud of their community and show off that pride.

Contact Jeanna Reynolds at jreynolds@majorgraphicsllc.com or 803.664.4089.

Outstanding Public/Private Partnership

Main Street Manning

It's not often that a town the size of Manning gets the chance to host an exhibit from the Smithsonian Museum in Washington. But that's just what happened when Manning was selected as one of six South Carolina small towns to host a traveling exhibit called Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America.

Main Street Manning joined with Clarendon County, the Historical Society, the Clarendon County Archives, Harvin Clarendon County Library and the City of Manning to apply for a grant from the SC Humanities Council to bring this exhibit to the city's Weldon Auditorium.

The Smithsonian exhibit included interactive displays of how sports shape our everyday lives. But the Smithsonian exhibit was only part of this community-wide project. In addition, a localized sports exhibits featured area sports legends and memorabilia. An additional grant from the Smithsonian supported a student-produced documentary of local sports history.

A local art competition featuring the softer side of sports drew more than 30 entries from artists of all ages. The competition was held in conjunction with the Main Street Manning Annual Meeting, introducing many participants to this program for the first time.

The Central Carolina Community Foundation helped fund the opening night tailgate event and sports parade.

This community-wide event showed what partnerships and creative funding can do to enhance economic vitality downtown.

Contact Carrie Trebil at ctrebil@cityofmanning.org or 803.435.8477 Ext. 5132.

MASC Municipal Association
of South CarolinaSM

PO Box 12109
Columbia, SC 29211
Phone: 803.799.9574
www.masc.sc

New insurance portal offers efficiency



The physical assets of a city or town consist of buildings, contents, vehicles and equipment. It is important to keep this inventory up to date and to communicate it to the insurance provider.

A new tool is now available to make this process easier.

The SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund and the SC Municipal Insurance Trust recently launched an online portal to allow members to report assets in a timely, convenient way. The portal also gives members immediate access to reports and schedules to examine at their convenience.

“Although SCMIRF allows its members to wait until renewal time to report assets meeting certain values, we always encourage our members to report a new asset when they acquire it. This can help prevent missing the change at renewal,” said Leigh Polhill, underwriting manager for the Municipal Association’s Risk Management Services.

She said part of the renewal process involves using the Association’s new portal or mailing schedules of assets to each member for review and allowing

them to make revisions, additions or deletions as necessary.

“Doing so makes sure the asset is protected in the event of a covered loss,” she said. “Keeping accurate exposure information on file also makes the SCMIRF and SCMIT programs more attractive to reinsurers and enables us to provide the best rates possible for the membership,” Polhill said.

“The time a member spends providing asset information during the year and at renewal will not only benefit the member individually, but will also increase stability and strength for the entire membership.”

Deadline to apply for new grants program is September 30

The Municipal Association’s Hometown Economic Development Grants support economic development projects that enhance the quality of life in South Carolina cities and towns. The grant program also promotes and recognizes innovation in economic development practices. Any city that is a member of the Municipal Association of South Carolina may submit a grant application. The maximum award per city is \$25,000.

Grant dollars may be spent on professional services such as developing master plans; assets such as publicly owned water or sewer projects; and programs such as business incubators.

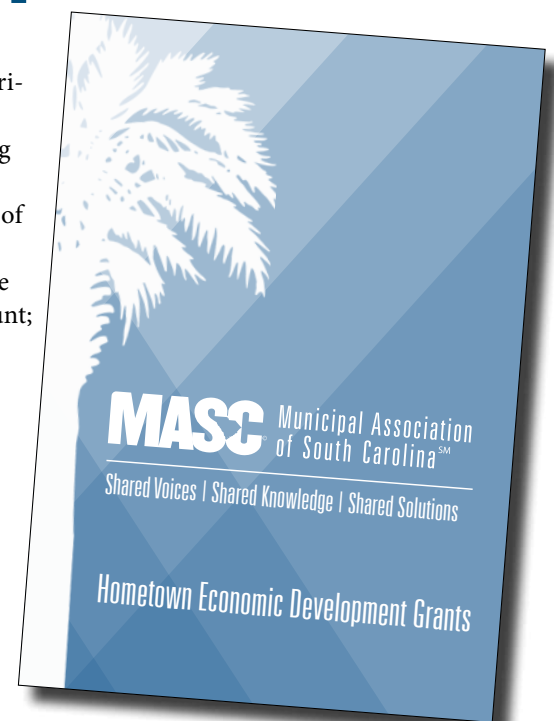
The chief evaluation criterion is the anticipated economic development impact, including the expected return on investment and the need for the proposed project. Other criteria include the proposal’s level of innovation, sustainability, replication and measurability; the city’s past record of success in completing similar projects; and the financial need of the city.

Cities must provide a grant match either in cash or through in-kind contributions. The required match is based on the applicant’s population according to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau data. For applicants with a population of 4,999 or less, the match is 5 percent of the award amount; for 5,000–9,999, the match is 10 percent of the award amount; and for those 10,000 and above, the match required is 15 percent.

Application Submission

Applications may be submitted by hand delivery to 1411 Gervais St., Columbia, SC, or emailed to sslatton@masc.sc no later than 5 p.m., September 30, 2016. Mailed applications must be postmarked by September 30, 2016, and addressed to:

Hometown Economic Development Grant
Municipal Association of SC
PO Box 12109
Columbia, SC 29201



Applications may be downloaded from www.masc.sc (keyword: hometown). Contact Scott Slatton at 803.933.1203 or sslatton@masc.sc with questions.



Public safety employees learn about defensive driving

In May, members of the South Carolina Municipal Insurance Trust and South Carolina Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund gathered to focus on defensive-driving training for public safety officials. Don McRae and Harry Roper, instructors with 911 Driving School, a company that offers driver education courses, covered topics ranging from seatbelt use to the effects of drivers' psychological states.

Employees' driving behaviors impact their careers, the safety of their coworkers and residents, and the city's reputation and bottom line. In 2015, SCMIRF incurred approximately \$3.6 million in auto liability claims, while, SCMIT had about \$970,000 in workers' compensation claims related to motor vehicle accidents. These totals continue to grow with ongoing medical, legal and other claim-related costs.

McRae warned public safety employees about "siren adrenaline," which can lead to tunnel vision, short-term memory loss and impaired decision-making. Younger, less experienced officers are particularly at risk.

He recommended taking a deep breath before activating the siren and then to breathe in cycles. He shared a breathing technique known as "combat breathing" in police training.

Breathe deeply through the nose for four seconds, hold the breath for four seconds, exhale completely through the mouth for four seconds, then hold the breath for four seconds. Finally, repeat each step. This can lower blood pressure and stress levels, minimizing the effects of adrenaline.

While pursuits make the news, a more common cause of collisions is the driver's inattention during low speed maneuvering such as in parking lots. McRae instructed attendees to turn to look while backing, instead of relying solely on mirrors. Many cities have policies on using spotters while backing, and some require two spotters for larger vehicles. This extra step can save time and money by preventing injuries or property damage.

Another common source of preventable injuries for public safety employees is entering and exiting vehicles. To avoid injury, Roper said employees should

maintain three points of contact with the ground or vehicle at all times—two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand—while entering and exiting vehicles. McRae emphasized that it is never safe to enter or exit a moving vehicle.

He also warned that consuming alcohol the night before coming to work can increase the risk of a collision and violate a city's drug-free workplace policy and state law.

For example, if an employee is intoxicated at 2 a.m. and reports to work at 7:30 a.m., the individual's blood alcohol concentration could still be .08, which is legally intoxicated. Even at 9:30 a.m. the level could be .05, which is still considered "impaired." McRae also shared a website called www.roadwiserox.com created by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, which explains the impacts of various prescription and over-the-counter medicines on a person's driving ability.

It takes a variety of proactive measures to keep public safety officials safe while driving, from calming breathing techniques to wearing seatbelts to the careful use of medications.

Cities must document steps to justify utility transfers



South Carolina cities and towns can take some lessons from the SC Supreme Court's decision in *Azar v. City of Columbia* related to utility fund transfers.

Perhaps most simply: Keep detailed records to support the rationale for transferring funds from a water and sewer system to the general fund. Utility revenue must be used for expenses with a direct nexus to the utility system or from funds surplus to the needs of the system.

In a ruling that caught the attention of local government leaders who operate water and sewer systems, the Supreme Court reversed a lower court finding and remanded *Azar* to the trial court to look at whether the city, which owns and operates the state's largest water and sewer utility, had spent its water and sewer revenues in a lawful manner.

"Municipalities are going to have to take extra steps in documenting what they

do and why they do it, particularly with regard to utility transfers," said attorney Danny Crowe of Crowe LaFave, LLC. "Or you'll be subject to perhaps the same hard look that Columbia got from the Supreme Court last fall."

Crowe presented legal analysis along with attorneys Lawrence Flynn of Pope Flynn LLC and Eric Shytle, City of Sumter's general counsel, at the Municipal Association's Annual Meeting.

Specifically, the Court questioned whether the revenue the City of Columbia transferred to its general fund could be considered surplus revenues, which may be spent on purposes unrelated to the utility system. One way cities might successfully head off a challenge is to detail how they arrived at a calculation of surplus revenue.

Shytle discussed a budget ordinance he drafted for his city detailing how

much money has been set aside within the city's utility fund for operation, maintenance, system repair, depreciation and unexpected expenses. The ordinance, through the use of policy statements, also details officials' consultations with utility subject matter experts and references the city's scheduled capital improvement plan investments.

If a city can't classify the revenue as surplus funds, the Court said a city's direct expenditures from water/sewer revenues would require "some nexus—some commonality—between the underlying purpose of the expenditure and the city's provision of water and sewer services."

Crowe stated that it will go a long way if faced with a legal challenge for cities to have spelled out in writing the reasons and purposes for transferring funds in a policy, a resolution or an ordinance.



Expert urges broader scope in recruiting officers

A former nurse may make a great new police officer, just as someone who falls outside the 21-to-25-year-old prime age group.

In short, consider nontraditional applicants from nontraditional sources. That was just one message from an Annual Meeting session about law enforcement recruiting, which highlighted innovative ways departments could attract and keep the right people.

“Maybe we need to look at people transitioning from other jobs who bring other experiences,” said Jack Ryan, a former police officer and lawyer, addressing Annual Meeting attendees. He recalled an applicant who had spent 10 years as a flight attendant.

“She had people skills like you couldn’t even believe,” he said. “Maybe there are some things that we ought to look at and broaden the way we hire.”

Police departments in South Carolina and across the country are trying to retain and recruit officers to a challenging and often underpaid profession bruised by the negative image of high profile police shootings and increased racial tension.

Ryan said police departments should look to churches, community colleges, city basketball courts and other less traditional places for future hires. He said

law enforcement Explorers programs are also helpful in fostering young adults’ interest in the profession. All avenues may help departments hire police officers who more closely reflect the demographics of their community, said Ryan.

He pointed to Dallas Police Chief David Brown’s July press conference after five of his officers were fatally shot. Brown challenged those protesting police brutality to become officers as a way to bring about change they wanted to see in their community.

“We’re hiring. Get off that protest line and put in an application,” said the chief.

Ryan offered others ways to help departments make good hires and prevent the wrong people from becoming police officers:

- **Fitness** – The highest fitness requirements are not necessary for every department and can eliminate otherwise promising officers. Pay attention to which area of the screening seems to consistently eliminate applicants.
- **Mental health** – “If they’re getting knocked out of the box on psychological health, I don’t care if they’re a Martian from Mars, don’t hire them, OK?” said Ryan.
- **Community fit** – One officer doesn’t fit all cities. The unique

characteristics of each town or city should dictate what kind of person should patrol its streets. “Who you decide to recruit in Clemson may be someone totally different from who you decide to recruit in Myrtle Beach,” said Ryan.

- **Local investment** – Don’t pass over a locally invested candidate with no advanced degree in favor of a flashier candidate who may move away after a short stint. Ryan recalled an applicant in Rhode Island who insisted during the interview process that he planned to stay in the area, only to go through law school at the department’s expense and eventually become a state senator.
- **Dishonesty** – Take polygraph results and other evidence of an officer’s dishonesty seriously, and then avoid hiring those with dishonesty in their background, said Ryan. An officer’s past record of dishonesty may complicate his role in a prosecution.
- **Misconduct** – An applicant’s background is telling. Consult the National Decertification Index to check if a job candidate was decertified by a prior department due to misconduct. South Carolina is among 40 states that make up the national registry.

Town of Mount Pleasant
adult swim program



Quidditch Tournament. Photo/
Wendy Waddle, City of Rock Hill



Public rec evolves to meet resident needs

Public recreation departments are changing. That's because the public's expectations are changing, sometimes without residents expressly saying so.

Take safety, for example. For the well-being of children and seniors, the Town of Mount Pleasant's recreation department requires a national background check for every volunteer and individual who rents a facility for more than one day.

"This is probably the most important trend," said Ken Ayoub, town recreation director, during his presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Municipal Association of South Carolina.

The town also has a feeding program, an initiative that helps provide a nutritious breakfast, lunch or both to the children who visit the community centers, especially during the summer or on Saturdays when school is not in session.

Ayoub pointed to another trend of parks and recreation departments increasingly hiring people with broader educational backgrounds. Over the years, he said, his department has benefited from several management employees who hold degrees in business management.

"Such training will become more critical, as agencies cope with expanding populations, aging infrastructure and perceived over-taxation, while

maintaining a delicate balance with affordability and program/facility growth," Ayoub said.

Pressure is increasing on departments to break even financially, which means charging a user fee to support activities instead of trying to raise taxes, he said.

Last year Mount Pleasant voters narrowly rejected a property tax increase to support recreation and parks, in part, because the increase had no sunset provision.

"The new generation coming through in recreation has to be able to deal on this level," said Ayoub. "They have to know how to talk to the public when it comes to, 'Give me more money.'"

While the skills needed to work in parks and rec are getting an update, the activities cities offer residents, too, are reflecting changing times. Off-beat team sports are figuring into Mount Pleasant's mix, including ultimate Frisbee, Frisbee golf and Quidditch, a game from the Harry Potter books.

That doesn't mean the Town of Mount Pleasant caters to all emerging fads. The town isn't experiencing enough of a surge in pickleball interest to warrant directing additional resources to it. Another wait-and-see phenomenon is the new "Pokemon Go" craze, a game described

on its website as a "location-based augmented reality mobile game."

"We're not going to design things based on 'Pokemon Go' right now," Ayoub said, adding that staff might consider it again if it is still going strong in two or three years.

Even as team sports come and go, a demographic trend that does show signs of intensifying is the prolonged number of years residents are looking for something active to do.

"The two generations behind us are going to be in much better shape than we are," said Ayoub. "They're going to continue on much longer than we are. We've already seen an increase in adult participation."

One operational trend that seems apparent across the town's initiatives is the idea of efficiency, squeezing as much benefit out of facilities as possible. Some of the changes Ayoub described include concrete slabs that are big enough to use for pickleball, basketball and tennis; allowing nonprofits to use public facilities; using public school facilities after 5 p.m.; and a "mobile rec" concept, in which a town staff member loads up a van with recreation gear and drives it into underserved pockets of the community.

"No one in recreation likes to see a facility not being used," Ayoub said.



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AUGUST

31-September 2 Municipal Court Administration Association Annual Meeting. Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston.

SEPTEMBER

8 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Third Quarter Meeting. Columbia Conference Center. Topics include stormwater plans in Beaufort County, the City of Greer and Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.

14-16 Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute: Year 1, Session B. Hyatt Place Columbia/Downtown. Topics include forms of government, meeting administration and the municipal clerk, financial management and business licensing administration.

15 Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government. Councils of Governments' offices. Courses offered: "Municipal Economic Development" and "Forms of Municipal Government." The courses are also offered on demand from the Association's website at www.masc.sc (keyword: MEO).

21-23 Municipal Technology Association of SC Annual Meeting. Hyatt Regency Greenville. Topics include emergency management, cybersecurity and how "smart cities" use technology to manage traffic, parking, water and sewer.

30 Managers/Administrators Fall Forum 2016. Columbia Conference Center.

OCTOBER

5 South Carolina Utility Billing Association Fall Meeting. South Carolina State Museum, Columbia.

6 SC Community Development Association Fall Meeting. South Carolina State Museum, Columbia. Topics include tax increment financing success stories, updates to federal housing and urban development programs, and the SC Rural Infrastructure Authority.

19 Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government Fall Session. Marriott Columbia. Topics include State House advocacy and municipal utility operations.

25-28 SC Business Licensing Officials Association/Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association Joint Academy. Marina Inn at Grande Dunes, Myrtle Beach.