UPTOWN

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MASC Municipal Association of South Carolina℠

2017 Annual Meeting

July 20-23 | Marriott Hotel | Hilton Head Island, SC

Small towns, big storms and cooperation across boundaries

Big cities and small towns can find success by using a variety of diverse strategies and tools. One approach is to enhance what a city already has instead of embarking on a drastic reinvention. Cities and towns might be wiser to do this instead of spending precious resources on remaking themselves in the hopes of becoming a different community entirely.

This approach is what Ed McMahon, senior resident fellow at the Urban Land Institute, will address as the keynote speaker for the 2017 Annual Meeting. He will illustrate how cities large and small can shine by taking a close look at what's already good or shows potential.

McMahon recently visited a 13,000-person town in rural Colorado that had two big draws: The first was baseball. Families would come from all over the Great Plains for days at a time for kids' baseball games.

"The parks and recreation director had a plan on the books for 10 years to build two more baseball fields, but he didn't have any money to do that because all the money was in the industrial recruitment budget to try to get a plant to move there," said McMahon. "We told the city council, 'build a baseball field — that's an economic development project,' and now they've done that."

The Colorado town's second big draw was rodeo events.

"We told them, 'you've got all these people bringing their horses to town. Create an equestrian trail,'" said McMahon.

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"Now they are teaching equestrian management skills at the community college, and people are coming in from Europe to this little town to learn how to manage ranches and horses. Look at what you can do, what your assets are and try to build on those things, instead of trying to compete with everyone else in the world. They weren't going to move any new plants to eastern Colorado."

Registration

The Annual Meeting registration process will mirror what's been done in the past. All attendees must use the Association's online process for reserving hotel rooms and registering for the meeting. Each city will receive an appointment time for June 2, 5 or 6, based on a drawing held on May 22.

Municipalities that want to participate in the drawing must select a representative (only one per city/town) who must register for the drawing by May 19. During the city's June appointment, Association staff will assist the municipal representative in registering all officials who will be attending from that city.

Hotel reservations must be made by June 15, and registration for the Annual Meeting must be made by July 5. For non-municipal attendees, hotel and Annual Meeting reservations must be made online from June 7 – 15.

Annual Meeting preconference choices

Municipal officials will have three preconference workshops to choose from for the 2017 Annual Meeting in Hilton Head Island. All will take place the morning of Thursday, July 20. The preconference workshops are additional educational opportunities and are not included in the Annual Meeting registration fee.

Planning for the Future through Redevelopment

Sometimes getting out into the field is a memorable way to take in the lessons of good government practices. For years, the Association has offered preconference mobile workshops for attendees to experi-
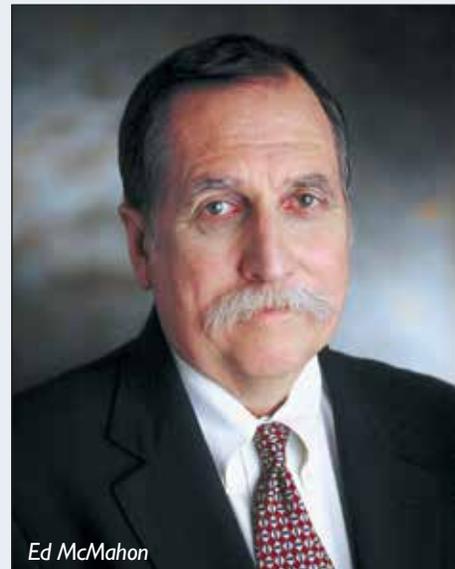
Ed McMahon

ence firsthand how their peers are attracting investment, improving quality of life and meeting the challenges of municipal government. This year's mobile workshop travels through Hilton Head Island, which is improving aging facilities and infrastructure and encouraging private development. See what the town is doing to implement redevelopment strategies that can be replicated in any city or town.

Cost: $60 (includes breakfast). This workshop involves some walking.

Speak Up with Confidence

Public speaking can be fun for some but painful for others. Even the most experienced speakers can learn new ways to perfect their message and strengthen their connection with an audience. Local officials will learn how to build audience rapport, perfect their delivery, and communicate with clarity and impact.

Cost: $90. This session is limited to 35 participants who have not registered for this workshop at previous events.

Keeping Residents Connected to the City's Vision

Resident engagement is a central part of a dynamic city. After all, a city's vision grows from residents' input and council's leadership. Carolyn Sawyer, founder and chief executive officer of the Tom Sawyer Company, will give participants new ways to nurture residents' connection to their city throughout the visioning process and beyond.

Cost: $60.

In their shoes:
Law enforcement simulator demonstrations

The scenario plays out like this: Police receive a late night call that a warehouse is being burglarized. A police officer shows up and finds a man rifling through a desk in the dark.

"Sir, let me see your hands," the officer says to the man. The man refuses and instead complains about the officer's actions.

"I can't see you at all. Get that light out of my eyes," the man says. "Is that really (expletive) necessary? I work here."

The police officer repeatedly orders the man show him his hands, which are still concealed inside a desk drawer. Suddenly the man pulls his hands out of the drawer, produces a staple gun and sends a short cascade of staples at the floor in front of the officer.

"How many of you would have shot the man in that situation?" said Todd Williams, a former state and county law enforcement officer and currently a public safety loss control consultant for the Association.

The warehouse scenario is one of many in a law enforcement simulator training system, a high-tech tool that puts the user in the moment. Williams said 80 percent of those who experience the warehouse scenario in a simulated demonstration have opted to shoot the man with their service weapon as he brandished the staple gun.

Police officers face the potential for unpredictable circumstances and emergencies like this every day. A simulator helps teach and reinforce proper use-of-force decision making.

The tool gives users a firsthand understanding of how officers train for such events and offers users a feel for what those encounters entail. The simulator can also help officers learn how to properly document a confrontation for liability purposes.

The simulator allows users to go back and review the scenario and dissect it as a training lesson. It lets officers pick the type of scenario, such as a hostage situation, suicide threat or officer ambush.

Williams said the simulator training stresses de-escalation. This will help cities and towns comply with the International Association of Chiefs of Police's new policy that emphasizes de-escalation, observation skills and making decisions between deadly force and less lethal force with OC spray, batons and stun guns, such as Tasers.

An Annual Meeting breakout session on Friday will show local officials how officers can be trained using this technology. There will also be 15-minute demonstrations of the simulator on Friday.

Some simulated situations contain language and violence that may be considered offensive to some.

NEWS
BRIEFS

Southern Living magazine named the **City of Charleston** "the South's Best City 2017" for its dining options, hotels and museums, noting that "there's always something new to discover." The magazine named the **City of Beaufort** "the South's Best Small Town 2017," due to its scenery, heritage/history, charm, cultural events, water activities, unique festivals and local seafood.

The City of Rock Hill won first place in its population category in the National League of Cities' City Cultural Diversity Awards, which recognized six cities for implementing programs that enhance and promote cultural diversity in their communities. Rock Hill won for its "Liberty and Justice for All" Freedom Walkway's Ode to Civil Rights.

Teresa Benjamin, the clerk/treasurer for the City of Lake City, earned her Certified Municipal Clerk designation through the International Institute of Municipal Clerks. The CMC certification is one of the highest levels of training a municipal clerk can attain and is recognized internationally for its extensive education and experience requirements.

What to know about taking the oath

Elected officials and municipal management staff are sometimes surprised to learn that an oath of office is required not only for elected officials and police officers but also for all "municipal officers."

The South Carolina Constitution reads, "…officers of the State and its political subdivisions, before entering upon the duties of their respective offices, shall take and subscribe the oath of office as prescribed in Section 5…" of Article VI of the constitution, which is listed below.

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I am duly qualified, according to the constitution of this state, to exercise the duties of the office to which I have been elected (appointed), and that I will, to the best of my ability, discharge the duties thereof, and preserve, protect, and defend the constitution of this state and of the United States. So help me God.

In addition to the oath prescribed by the constitution, mayors and councilmembers must take a second oath of office (Sections 5-15-150):

As mayor (councilmember) of the municipality of _____, I will equally, fairly, and impartially, to the best of my ability and skill, exercise the trust reposed in me, and I will use my best endeavors to preserve the peace and carry into effect according to law the purposes for which I have been elected. So help me God.

But administering an oath may get complicated because the language in the constitution, "take and subscribe the oath of office," fails to provide clear guidance on the procedure to administer an oath.

The Municipal Association recommends that a judge or notary public read the oath in the presence of the official taking the oath. The municipal official should verbally acknowledge acceptance of the oath and sign and date a written copy of it. The signed oath should be notarized and filed as a permanent record of the municipality.

Requiring an official to repeat the oath or conducting the swearing in at a public meeting or a ceremony may be part of an optional practice, but it is not required unless directed by local ordinance or rules of procedure.

Another point of confusion may arise from the question of who should take an oath. The term "municipal officers" includes elected officials in addition to a number of non-elected officials. South Carolina courts and attorney general opinions rely on the following criteria to determine the existence of a public office:

- the position is created by statute or ordinance;
- the position's duties involve some portion of the exercise of the state's sovereign power, including the exercise of discretionary powers; and
- the position and the duties associated with it are of an ongoing, continuing nature and not occasional or intermittent.

A public office may exist if these elements are present. If not, the position should be considered one of public employment. Positions previously determined to be public offices include

- mayor or councilmember,
- municipal police officers,
- municipal judge (full or part-time),
- municipal attorney,
- municipal treasurer,
- planning commission members,
- zoning administrator,
- city manager,
- election commission members,
- clerk,
- zoning board of adjustment members, and
- members of other municipal boards or committees authorized by state law.

This list may not be all-inclusive for all munipalities.

Newly elected officials and board or commission members should take the required oath or oaths before performing any official duties. For other municipal officers, the oath should be administered on or before their first day of employment. Failing to administer an oath to a municipal official could result in the invalidation of actions they have taken. If in doubt as to whether a position is an officer or an employee, it is always better to err on the side of caution and administer an oath.

Test yourself monthly quiz

True or False: Municipal councils are empowered by state law to adopt ordinances, which are local laws of a general and permanent nature, and to set fines and penalties for the enforcement of those ordinances.

CITY HALL

Answer: True.

Under Home Rule, South Carolina cities and towns are subordinate units of state government. They derive their power from the state constitution and laws adopted by the General Assembly.

Municipal ordinances, resolutions or regulations must be consistent with the federal and state constitutions and laws.

Every proposed ordinance must be introduced in writing in the form required for final adoption. No ordinance has the force of law until it has had at least two readings on two separate days with at least six days between each reading. *Section 5-7-270.*

Municipal ordinances must be codified; indexed; typewritten or printed; maintained in a current form; reflect all amendments or repeals; and be available for public inspection at reasonable times. *Section 5-7-290.*

State law requires that certain actions be accomplished by ordinance. For a complete list of these actions, refer to pages 32 - 33 of the *Handbook for Municipal Elected Officials in SC.*

The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government offers both in-person and online courses. Elected officials who complete all of the required coursework graduate from the institute. Register for the May 23 "Freedom of Information Act in S.C." and "Municipal Economic Development" courses at www.masc.sc (keyword: MEOI)

Seven graduate MCTI

In March, seven local officials graduated from the SC Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute, a three-year program that provides municipal clerks and treasurers with the skills critical to their profession.

The spring graduates are Krista DuBois, accountant for the Town of Kiawah Island; Beverly Julian, clerk for the Town of Eutawville; Christine Keefer, finance/HR assistant for the Town of Blythewood; Felicia Lester, clerk/treasurer for the Town of Pinewood; Robin Martin, clerk/treasurer for the Town of Elloree; Brenda Nettles, town clerk for the Town of Society Hill; and Glenda Tanner, utility billing clerk for the Town of Hemingway.

To receive their certificates, the graduates completed more than 120 class hours on topics such as basic budgeting, overview of government, business license administration and customer service. At the March session, attendees received training on basic accounting, election administra-

tion, human resources management and technology in the workplace.

The Municipal Association is offering the first in a series of online training courses designed to provide municipal clerks

with the knowledge necessary to perform their duties. For more information about MCTI and the new free, on-demand clerks training, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: MCTI; keyword: clerks training).

Grant winners make early project gains

Winners of the Municipal Association's Hometown Economic Development Grants program are putting their awards to work.

In October, the Municipal Association awarded eight cities grants of $25,000 each to implement economic development projects that will make a positive impact on the quality of life in their communities. The grant program also promotes and recognizes innovation in economic development practices.

The projects are underway and some winning cities are yielding early results.

Among them is the Town of Ridgeway's "Paint the Town Red" campaign. Ridgeway's three iconic structures — the School Arch, the World's Smallest Police Station and its famous telephone booth, which still

works for 25 cents — all attract visitors from around the world and are under restoration to ensure they last for the next generation, said Ridgeway Mayor Charlene Herring.

For two years, the Town of Ridgeway had proposed capital improvements for the sites.

"These improvements were not possible because of our limited budget," Herring said. "The Hometown Economic Development Grant provided an opportunity to secure funds to renovate these most photographed and visited iconic structures, which attract visitors from all South Carolina, the United States and world."

The School Arch is the remaining vestige of the former Ridgeway School and is the centerpiece of Ridgeway's central park. However, because the Arch was in danger

of collapse, the town had recently prohibited residents from approaching it.

The town has already used a portion of its Hometown Economic Development Grant funds to stabilize the Arch, do site grading of the park and install landscaping. The town has also received private donations in support of its work.

The police station and telephone booth have also received major repairs and upgrades from a new roof to new paint to new flooring.

"Improvements will generate more tourists and visitors who shop, dine and tour and thus a greater source of funding via the hospitality tax and use of the Arch Area for events," said Herring.

"Visitors to the Smallest Police Station/ Welcome Center will be able to log in to

Ridgeway's School Arch

Old Police Station in Ridgeway

the kiosk to learn about the town and businesses and take a photo as a memento of their visit.'"

The Ridgeway mayor added that members of the public interested in holding events at the Arch Area in the Ridgeway Park will be able to rent the space for a fee for weddings, arts celebrations and other occasions.

The other cities awarded grants are making progress with their projects. Each city's project must be completed by the end of 2018.

In the City of Gaffney, social media and traditional media coverage have

generated substantial interest in the city's Main Street Challenge program. All three local television stations ran stories on the Main Street Challenge, while local print media have also helped spread the word.

Forty entrepreneurs submitted applications seeking grant-funded assistance to open a new business in Gaffney's downtown district. A panel of local judges reviewed applications before selecting 14 semifinalists to provide a business plan to be considered for assistance.

Three Main Street Challenge winners, to be named this month, will receive start-up loan assistance, rent reimbursement and multiple in-kind professional services funded by the Hometown Economic Development Grant.

The 2017 Hometown Economic Development Grant applications will be accepted online beginning July 20. This year, there will be as many as 10 awards of $25,000 for a maximum total of $250,000. Look for application information at the 2017 Annual Meeting and in the weekly *Uptown Update* starting in August.

Buzz, beep, blink
Tell us what you think

By Reba Campbell, deputy executive director

Email. Tweets. Websites. Cell phones. Facebook. Tablets. Computers. Video streaming. All this and more means we are all more connected than ever, like it or not.

Information overload is rampant in everyone's lives, and it's really easy to discount many of the messages we receive daily because they begin to sound like white noise. City officials experience this when trying to engage residents, share information about city services or explain issues important to the people who live in your city.

The Municipal Association is no different. Our challenge is communicating with more than 4,000 municipal elected officials

and city staff about training, legislative issues, insurance services and many other programs city officials can use. Every few years, we do an exhaustive evaluation of how we are communicating with you to make sure we are providing information through the channels and in the formats most useful to you.

Starting May 1, we have an online survey available and are asking every elected official and city staff member to take about five minutes to give us feedback about our emails, publications, e-newsletters and general communication with you.

Help us understand how you use technology. Tell us if the weekly *Uptown Update* email gives you the up-to-date

information you need, or if there are other ways you would rather get reminders about deadlines and meeting dates. Let us know if you would like to get legislative "call to action" text messages sent to your mobile device or if you'd prefer to get a phone call from an Association staff member when we need help with a legislative contact.

Surveys over the past seven years have shown substantial changes in technology habits and internet access by local officials and have helped us adjust our approach to communicating with you. We hope you will help us again by taking a few minutes to share your thoughts and insights.

Go online to l.masc.sc/2017MASCsurvey, and take the anonymous survey.

Holding someone else's cash? Report it.

Your city or town may be holding unclaimed property that should be reported to the state of South Carolina.

The S.C. Uniform Unclaimed Property Act requires all entities holding unclaimed property to file an annual report and remit the associated funds to the State Treasurer's Office Unclaimed Property Program.

Unclaimed property includes, but is not limited to, wages, insurance proceeds, customer deposits and credit balances that have remained unclaimed by the rightful owner for a specified period of time. The dormancy period for wages and utility deposits is one year and five years for outstanding checks, insurance proceeds and credit balances.

The law requires all holders, including municipalities, to examine their records each year to determine whether they have any unclaimed property, regardless of the amount, as of June 30.

If any unclaimed property is discovered, the city must perform due diligence to locate the owner of the property. No more than 120 days before filing its report to the State Treasurer's Office, the city must send a written notice to the owner notifying him of the unclaimed property. The notice should state that the funds will be remitted to the state if a response is not received.

Due diligence notices are required for all unclaimed property valued at $50 or more. If the city has previously attempted to contact the owner but discovered the address on file is no longer valid, a due diligence notice is not needed. A sample notice is available on the State Treasurer's Office website.

If the city does not hear back from the owner in response to the due diligence notice, or if the owners of the property can't be located, the property must be remitted to the State Treasurer's Office along with a report that includes the names and last-known addresses of the owners. All property that is unclaimed must be reported and remitted regardless of the amount.

Holders must file their unclaimed property reports and remit the funds each year before November 1. Payment can be made by check, Automated Clearing House or bank wire. The program's staff grants extensions on a limited basis. Entities must request an extension before October 1 with an explanation for the extension request.

The reports must be submitted electronically in the format prescribed by the National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators. South Carolina no longer accepts unclaimed property reports on CDs or submitted on paper.

Throughout the year, the Unclaimed Property Program staff looks for property owners and also conduct an aggressive statewide outreach campaign that includes various forms of traditional and news media. The unclaimed property database on the State Treasurer's website is updated weekly so potential claimants can have up-to-date online access to the information.

The Unclaimed Property Program audit team routinely performs examinations, which focus on assisting entities with reporting unclaimed property and verifying compliance with the law. Entities that have never reported or have gaps in their reporting histories will be given priority when assigning compliance examinations. Interest and penalties may be assessed on unclaimed property not remitted as required by state law.

Cities and towns can avoid penalties by voluntarily reporting any past-due property. The treasurer's staff will work with local officials throughout the process to make it as easy as possible. To get in compliance with the Unclaimed Property Act and report past-due property, contact the State Treasurer's Office and request a voluntary disclosure agreement.

Unclaimed property representatives are available at 803.737.4771 or unclaimed@sto.sc.gov to help holders comply with the law.

This S.C. State Treasurer's Office provided this article.

2017 Compensation Survey results ready to view

Results from the 2017 Compensation Survey are now available on the Municipal Association's website.

Since 2006, the Municipal Association has conducted an online compensation survey. The data from participating municipalities is compiled into a searchable database available on the Association's website.

This year, 70 percent of South Carolina's 270 municipalities completed the Compensation Survey, and the final 2017 report can be downloaded in its entirety in a PDF format. Users can also generate reports based on specific search criteria including population range, specific positions or the town's annual payroll budget. The data can then be exported to an Excel spreadsheet or printed directly from the website.

Survey participation is not mandatory. However, the Association encourages all cities and towns to complete the survey so the final report is as comprehensive as possible.

For more information about the compensation survey, contact Sara Johnson at sjohnson@masc.sc or 803.933.1240.

Aid for aging pipes available

Working with a sewer system dating back to 1925, the City of Liberty found itself trying to maintain 90-year-old sewer lines that were missing the bottom portion of the pipe at a major intersection in the city's downtown area.

For residents in the Town of Jonesville, daily water line flushing was not adequately addressing the discolored, odorous and poor tasting water that was flowing from their faucets.

In the City of Bishopville's Mohawk neighborhood, customers were experiencing raw sewage spilling onto their property from 50-year-old sewer lines.

Such examples highlight how aging water and sewer infrastructure present challenges to municipalities around the state. On a daily basis, South Carolina cities and towns struggle with ruptured mains, sanitary sewer overflows, collapsed lines and low pressure. These system issues can be costly and result in disruptions in service for both residents and businesses.

It's easy to make the argument in favor of upgrades. It's much harder to pay for those upgrades. Improvements to water and sewer infrastructure can have significant economic and environmental benefits. Modern and efficient infrastructure with growth capacity can boost economic opportunities for a community. Likewise, meeting environmental standards ensures safe drinking water for all residents and provides reliability for area businesses.

Towns and cities struggle to allocate the funds to upgrade aging systems that are in constant use and often demand constant repair. According to the 2016 American Water Works Association's State of the Water Industry report, 38 percent of survey respondents, including utility workers, "think they will struggle to cover the full cost of providing services." These services include renewal and replacement in addition to the expansion of services.

The S.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority can help. RIA's grant program gives cities and towns like Bishopville, Jonesville and Liberty the chance to address their immediate needs while allowing limited local resources to be used to further invest in other parts of their water or sewer system.

"RIA grant funding helped us with an area where we had been getting a lot of calls about the water," said Jonesville Mayor Ernest Moore. "Nearly 12 months after the award, the project is already complete, residents are pleased with the improved water quality, and we can turn our attention to other parts of the system."

The RIA's Basic and Economic Infrastructure grant programs are intended to increase community sustainability, improve the quality of life and create opportunities for economic impact.

RIA accepts grant applications in March and September and holds a workshop every July to review program guidelines for the new fiscal year. To learn more, visit ria.sc.gov.

Cities tap recreation potential of water-related facilities

The Town of Port Royal restored its wetlands.

Water and wastewater facilities house an essential, but often overlooked, function in the community.

But some cities decided water facilities could be public friendly, too.

Across South Carolina, cities and towns are adding value to their treatment sites, with some completely repurposing the area and others expanding it to welcome visitors and educate the public about environmental issues.

'An entirely different purpose'

The City of Rock Hill converted its former wastewater lagoons into a state-of-the-art soccer complex.

In its early days, the city had no treatment plant. A large corporation in the 1920s needed a way to dispose of its industrial wastewater, so the company's wastewater was combined with the city's wastewater and flushed out to the Catawba River. This led to depleted oxygen levels in the water and fish kills, according to Rock Hill Deputy City Manager Jimmy Bagley.
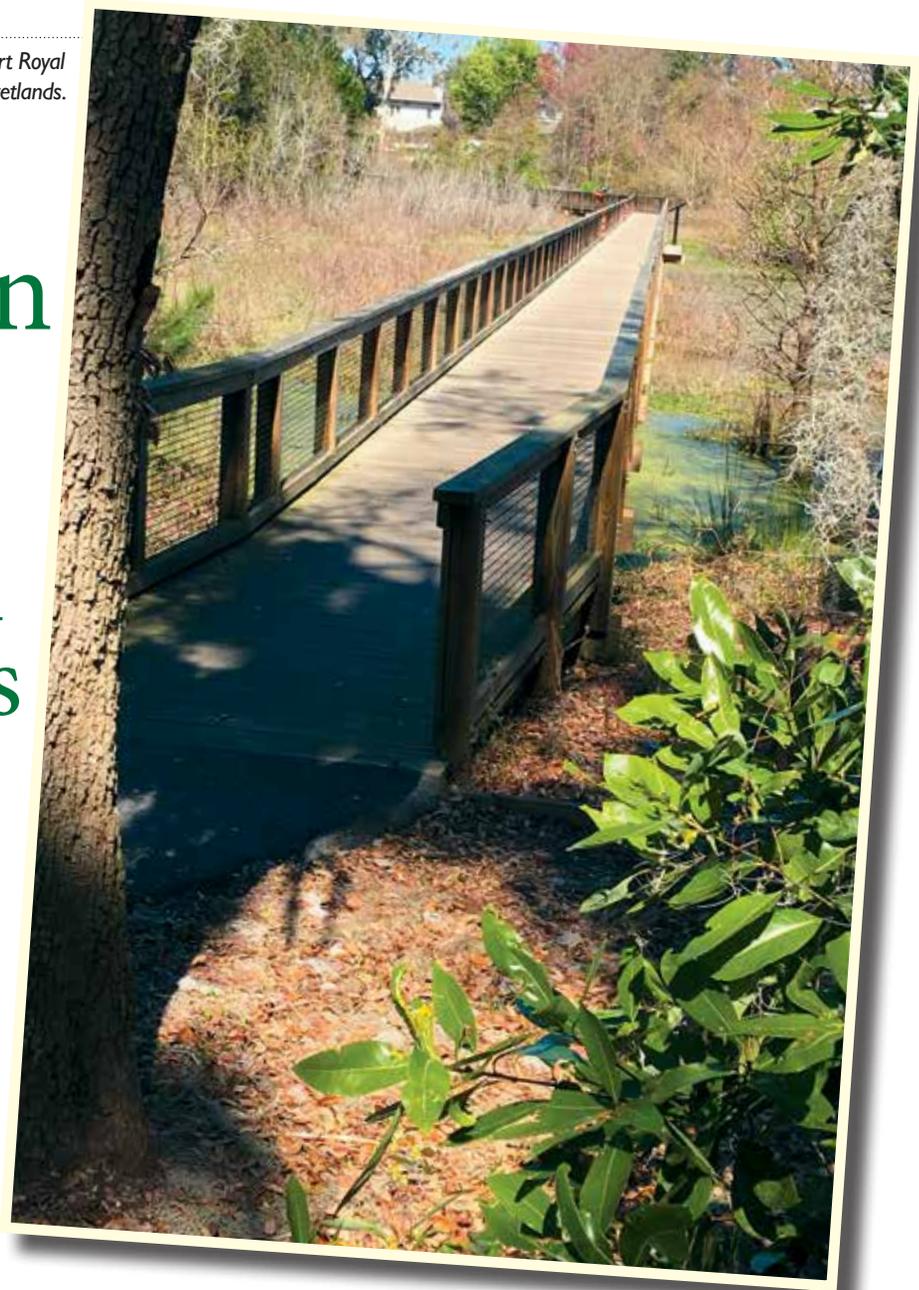
The city built a treatment plant in the 1950s, which removed solids from the wastewater but didn't treat it.

Over the next several decades, wastewater regulations and treatment processes evolved, resulting in the closure and capping of the lagoons in the 1980s. With strict regulations on how the space could be used, the site remained empty until 2000. The area was cleaned up, and DHEC said it could be turned into a green space.

The city took those 70 acres of green space and transformed them into Manchester Meadows, a regional park featuring soccer fields, trails, pavilions, and playgrounds tucked into a landscaped setting.

Manchester Meadows provides athletic programs for youth and adults. It also hosts local, regional and national soccer tournaments. Restaurants and a movie theater have sprung up around the complex.

The park has been a huge economic development draw to that area, Bagley said. Now the site that once served as a wastewater lagoon has been repurposed into a jewel for the community.

"It still serves a purpose, but now it's an entirely different purpose," Bagley said.

Meetings and wedding festivities

In the City of Seneca, the water treatment site kept its original purpose but was

Brick Pond Park, North Augusta

modernized and expanded to encompass more functions. Today the city's water treatment plant is a safe and welcoming place for residents and visitors.

Seneca's plant was built in the 1960s on Lake Keowee, and over the years a residential development grew up alongside it. Residents expressed concerns about operational and safety issues at the plant, including its use of hazardous chlorine gas in the disinfection process.

City officials held multiple meetings with neighborhood leaders and developed a partnership to address their concerns. The plant stopped using the chlorine gas and switched to a sodium hydrochloride process, according to Bob Faires, director of utilities. The city also upgraded the plant's spill containment capabilities and site security.

Seneca officials also beautified the administrative building, adding a community meeting space with scenic lake views. The space has been rented out for corporate functions, as well as public and private events such as Rotary Club and homeowners association meetings — even a wedding rehearsal party.

"We projected that a lot of people would take advantage of it because of the views and the size of the meeting space," Faires said. "We've seen those plans come to fruition."

The facility was awarded LEED certification, and Seneca also applied for Envision certification from the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure, Faires said. In 2016, Seneca won an Achievement Award from the Municipal Association for its water treatment plant.

A draw for nature lovers

Seneca is not alone in beckoning the public to its water facilities.

In 1999 – 2000, the Town of Port Royal started a project to create walkways, paths and a protected rookery around its wetlands area, said Town Manager Van Willis. Water flows through a series of wetlands, ponds and culverts to the Beaufort River and into the Port Royal Sound. To restore the watershed, the town installed pipes to connect wetlands that had been isolated by road construction, allowing more natural drainage conditions to exist.

The series of wetlands provides natural stormwater capture, retention and treatment in the course of the time it takes the water to flow through the system. This improves the quality of the water by trapping pollution, sediments and excess nutrients before it drains into the river and the Port Royal Sound.

The Cypress Wetlands area has become a centerpiece of the downtown community, attracting hikers, photographers, nature lovers, bird enthusiasts and even yoga classes to its amphitheater, Willis said.

Sometimes federal grants can help a city realize its vision.

Such is the case for the City of Camden, which has its own plans for a wetlands area, as well as a park and nature preserve, at the site of its former wastewater lagoon facility.

In recent years, the city built a modernized wastewater treatment plant adjacent to the property, because the former lagoon treatment process wasn't able to get the water clean enough to comply with regulatory standards. All structures for the former plant have been demolished and removed, according to Shawn Putnam, Camden city planner. Camden won an Achievement Award from the Municipal Association in 2015 for its new wastewater facility.

Last year, the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program awarded Camden a grant. There have been discussions about what will come next. The public has expressed interest in converting a significant portion of the site into a wetlands area to attract birds; creating a canoe or kayak launch; adding trails and designated areas to view wildlife; and building a pavilion where classes could be held on topics including environmental protection and conservation, Putnam said.

From Seneca to Camden and Rock Hill to Port Royal, local officials have shown there's plenty of recreation and enjoyment potential to be found at water, wastewater and stormwater facilities.

Infrastructure

Redirecting rainwater a statewide concern

The City of Myrtle Beach extends outfall pipes under the beach and ocean./Myrtle Beach

Stormwater runoff floods neighborhoods and downtowns and can push pollutants such as sediments, waste, oil and pesticides into the environment. Coastal and inland cities alike must consider where to direct the water and how to treat it to keep the public and the economy healthy.

Coastal communities contend with the heightened concern of protecting a tourism-based economy that depends on visitors who flock to the beaches. But keeping the state's coastal tourism industry unharmed by beach closures carries broad, statewide implications: South Carolina's gross domestic product from coastal tourism was estimated to be $3.5 billion, supporting 81,000 jobs, according to a 2009 study by the University of South Carolina's Moore School of Business.

State regulators help coastal cities ensure safe conditions for water recreation. The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control collects water samples at more than 120 locations along South Carolina's beaches. Samples are taken twice a month from May 1 to October 1. Beaches in the Myrtle Beach area are sampled weekly. If high levels of bacteria are found, DHEC issues an advisory suggesting people not swim in that particular area.

Not surprisingly, swimming advisories can turn off tourists, causing some to change plans and avoid visiting an area.

DHEC can issue a short-term or temporary swimming advisory that typically lasts one to two days. Long-term swimming advisories are issued for beach water monitoring locations that have an increased possibility of high bacteria

levels due to stormwater runoff, especially following rain events. The long-term advisories and signs typically are located where stormwater from pipes or "swashes" (small creeks) flows across the beach to the ocean, according to the department.

Deep-ocean pipes and beach swashes

The City of Myrtle Beach completed its latest deepwater ocean outfall last year. An outfall is pipe infrastructure that isn't visible to beachgoers, because it's all underground, stretching under the beach and under the ocean out to sea. The city's next project is planned as soon as officials identify funding for it.

"It's expensive to move rain around," said Mark Kruea, public information director for Myrtle Beach.

"The coast is flat, so we have to help Mother Nature move stormwater runoff in the direction we want, to encourage drainage and prevent flooding. Fortunately, we don't have any heavy industry or point-source pollution, so it really is just rainfall that we need to address."

He said the city has spent upward of $50 million in the past 20 years on stormwater management.

"That money becomes an underground drainage system or a beautiful lake or pond," said Kruea. "Along the way, we've eliminated much neighborhood flooding in low-lying areas. Our ocean water quality was good before, but it's even better now, thanks to the deepwater outfalls. Plus, the beach looks better without the drainage pipes on it."

Funding came from a variety of methods. Voters approved a stormwater referendum in the early 2000s. The city also created a stormwater utility fee, received grants, borrowed from the state's low-interest revolving loan fund and financed other projects.

The City of North Myrtle Beach has similar considerations, investing in ocean outfalls that pipe stormwater out into the ocean, away from swimming spots.

The city plans to begin construction on a new ocean outfall in the fall of 2018, said spokesman Patrick Dowling. The original stormwater drainage pipes will be removed from the beach and multiple landward storm water pipes will be directed into one larger pipe that runs under the beach and about 1,200 feet out into the ocean before discharging stormwater. This will help to significantly reduce bacteria counts in the swimming zone, Dowling said.

Since 2002, North Myrtle Beach has funded and installed five ocean outfalls at a total cost of $26.7 million, primarily using revenue from a monthly stormwater fee. The state has contributed close to $6 million toward the projects.

After the new ocean outfall has been constructed, the city is planning six more ocean outfalls over the next several decades at a total estimated cost of $80 million in today's dollars.

To date, through its ocean outfall construction program, the city has been able to remove 21 stormwater drainage pipes from the beach, while 29 pipes remain, according to Dowling.

Deep-ocean outfalls aren't the only way to address stormwater on the coast.

In the Town of Surfside Beach, there are six discharge points along the beach that carry the water across the beach into the ocean.

"The majority of the discharge enters detention ponds in order to settle out pollutants before discharge," said John Adair,

> "The coast is flat, so we have to help Mother Nature move stormwater runoff in the direction we want, to encourage drainage and prevent flooding."
>
> *– Mark Kruea,*
> *public information director*
> *for Myrtle Beach*

public works director for Surfside Beach. The discharge flows across the beach instead of being piped into the ocean.

Stormwater capital and operating costs are currently funded through a portion of the tax millage. But, said Adair, a utility fee is possible in the future as an alternative.

Working with developers

Because stormwater flows directly into waterways without being first sent to a treatment plant, it is essential to ensure that municipal, commercial and residential activities do not pollute the water, said Tanya Strickland, environmental coordinator for the City of North Augusta's Stormwater Department.

To that end, developers looking to build in North Augusta are required to acquire a city-issued permit as well as a second permit from the state, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

General Permit for Construction. Sediment is one of the top pollutants of waters. Preventing sediment and other pollutants from leaving a construction site and affecting natural resources and waters within a community is critical for their protection, Strickland said.

North Augusta also requires developers to build wet ponds with a treatment system component to them, such as wetland plants on the bottom. These ponds treat stormwater runoff through settling and biological activity.

In an additional effort to provide stormwater treatment and improve the ecosystem, North Augusta developed its Brick Pond Park, a 40-acre restored wetland and stormwater treatment system. Before the restoration began in 2006, the ponds were disconnected, with low to no oxygen, excessive nutrients, trash and industrial debris.

North Augusta and the developer of an adjacent community worked together to create the park through a public/private partnership for the Hammonds Ferry Riverfront Development. The team acquired grants to develop the ponds, and the city built a new city municipal center adjacent to the ponds. The Hammonds Ferry development is on the other side. Strickland said the city and development are both using the ponds, which provide stormwater treatment, a public park and stormwater education center. Use of stormwater treatment systems are required by city and state permits for all construction sites that are larger than a certain size.

The ponds were connected by reducing or removing berms that were left years ago. Waterfalls with pumps were installed near the constructed wetland to provide movement and aeration. Plants were added to provide stormwater treatment allowing the removal of pollutants coming into the system with runoff from roadways, yards, parking lots and garden areas.

Today, the wetlands within the park are healthy and provide habitat for a variety of wildlife. The park is used as a tool to educate the public – everyone from schoolchildren to college students to senior citizens – about stormwater and its impact on the environment, Strickland said.

Neighbor cities and towns lend hands and equipment

Cities and towns frequently save taxpayer dollars by borrowing equipment and manpower from one another.

The City of Belton loans equipment to nearby towns, which return the favor, a practice that originated with local fire departments, said City Administrator Alan Sims.

"If a neighboring town has a piece of equipment go down, or if they just need another piece to help them through a crisis, helping each other saves the taxpayers money from renting, or purchasing equipment that may not be needed on a regular basis," he said. The same goes for sharing equipment if a bad storm spared Belton but hit a nearby community.

The Town of Chesterfield, too, makes the most of neighborly cooperation.

"We have shared specialty equipment such as a trailer-mounted generator or wastewater bypass pump with neighboring municipalities in the past," said David Huntley, town administrator.

He recalled a time when the Town of Cheraw lost power to its water treatment plant because the main breaker had failed.

"Their backup generator provided temporary power until it failed after several hours. The Town of Chesterfield was able to loan them our trailer-mounted generator to power their water treatment plant until repairs could be made to return to power provide by the utility."

Before that, the Town of Chesterfield's street sweeper was not effectively removing leaves along the curb.

"The Town of Cheraw allowed us to try their trailer-mounted leaf vacuum to see how it worked for our situation," said Huntley.

The Town of Springdale and City of West Columbia, too, share certain public works equipment on occasion.

"West Columbia also allows us to use their bucket truck and a staff member to put up our banners and Christmas

lights," Jeff Stilwell, Springdale town administrator.

Sometimes these sharing agreements go a step or two further.

The towns of West Pelzer and Pelzer have combined their public works departments, a decision prompted in part by the departure of Pelzer's public works director in March.

"Consolidation of salaries, equipment, vehicles, parts and office space allow significant savings for both towns, while still receiving the service that each town's residents have grown accustomed to," West Pelzer Town Clerk/Administrator Paula Payton said. The decision to consolidate public works operations also allowed West Pelzer to hire additional maintenance staff to beautify Main Street.

"Another very important benefit is the opportunity for the two towns' officials and employees to work closely together to better the community," said Payton.

"West Pelzer Mayor Blake Sanders described the arrangement as an extension of the concept of 'two towns and one community' that both town governments have promoted in recent months."

The partnership is still in the early stages, but so far, it's been a very positive venture for both towns, Payton said.

"The most important things are communication, accountability and organization," she added. "We want to ensure every day that both towns are receiving the services they are paying for. Each town should be included and informed of all projects, expenses and plans of the joint Public Works Department."

Insurance and liability considerations

What cities and towns should do to ensure liability protection when sharing equipment or staff depends on each unique situation, according to Heather Ricard, director of the Municipal Association's Risk Management Services.

"For example, if a city is simply loaning equipment to another city, then the city that owns the equipment will schedule their equipment and cover the insurance," she said. "They may want to address in their sharing agreement who assumes the costs in the event of damage."

Otherwise, the loaning city will pay out-of-pocket costs, such as insurance deductibles, if any incident occurs. If several towns or cities pool their resources to purchase equipment together, however, they should have a more formalized agreement.

"The agreement should stipulate who will be the title owner of the equipment, and schedule that equipment on their records and purchase insurance," said Ricard. "In that case, they should also have a more formal agreement stipulating exactly how property damage and liability will be attributed in the event of an incident."

Workers' compensation raises its own considerations.

For example, if Town A uses Town B's employee to hang Christmas decorations, and Town B is paying that employee, then Town B would be responsible for reporting workers comp injuries to its insurance carrier. The towns should consider addressing who is responsible for workers' compensation injuries prior to any activities in order to avoid confusion over which entity is considered the statutory employer of the injured employee.

SCDOT offers interactive road construction map

Each day in South Carolina, three people are killed and nine people are severely injured in vehicle crashes, amounting to one of the highest roadway death rates of any state.

Repaving, widening and rebuilding the state's roadway infrastructure is a critical priority in reducing crashes. However, state construction projects on roadways and bridges can sometimes disrupt city projects and development plans. Construction projects in heavily trafficked areas certainly affect residential and business traffic.

Knowing when and where and for how long a disruption may be present can be helpful to plan for the future and address residents' questions.

In January, the S.C. Department of Transportation announced its new application for elected officials, municipal staff and the general public to keep up with a project's progress. Projects Viewer is available from the department's website and allows users to search by county for projects, including emergency repairs, bridges, widenings and operation and safety projects.
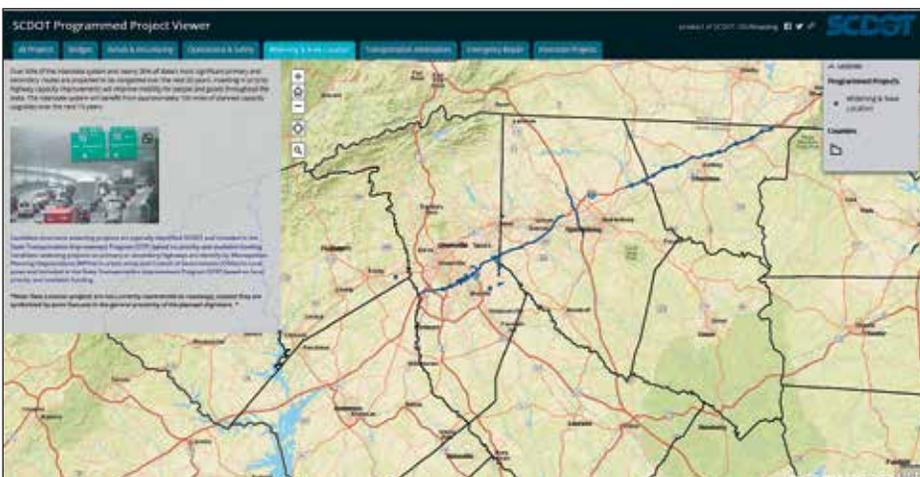
"The reviews we've had from elected officials at S.C. State House and others is that they really like it," said Ron Patton, deputy secretary for intermodal planning at the state transportation department.

"It's a lot of info at your fingertips, especially for those comfortable using the computer, but still pretty simple even for those who are not. Point and click and follow the legends."

The department routinely updates project status information, but the Project Viewer provides contact information for each project to direct the public to the right agency staff to get the latest status and to answer any questions.

Patton said in addition to boosting agency transparency and helping to keep residents and city elected officials and staff in the loop, Project Viewer may offer advantages to economic development.

"For potential businesses, this gives you some idea of what may be going on, in or around a site," he said.

"Particularly with a widening, if you're not in a local office dealing with us on a regular basis but in a different section, this gives you an easy way to see what's happening."

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Calendar

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

MAY

5 Spring Managers Forum. S.C. Criminal Justice Academy.

7 - 10 Building Officials Association of South Carolina Annual Meeting. Ocean Drive Beach and Golf Resort, North Myrtle Beach. Topics include the impact of flood design on insurance rates, design opportunities with model building codes, and the durability of wood products.

17 - 19 SC Community Development Association Annual Meeting. Inn on the Square, Greenwood. Walking tours in Greenwood and Anderson. Topics include tax increment financing and an update from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

23 Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government. Councils of Governments' offices. Courses offered: "Municipal Governance and Policy" and "Freedom of Information Act in S.C."

JUNE

6 SC Business Licensing Officials Association Accreditation in Business Licensing Exam. Municipal Association of SC.

8 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Second Quarter Meeting. Columbia Conference Center. Topics include S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control enforcement practices and MS4s, with a focus on construction and post-construction best management practices.

11 - 13 SC Association of Municipal Power Systems Annual Meeting. Sonesta Resort, Hilton Head Island. Topics include the growth of small cell antennas, cloud computing and the use of unmanned aircraft systems/drones for utility inspections.

JULY

20 - 23 Municipal Association of South Carolina's Annual Meeting. Marriott Hilton, Hilton Head Island. (See story page 1)

AUGUST

1 SC Business Licensing Officials Association Accreditation in Business Licensing Exam. Municipal Association of SC.

SEPTEMBER

7 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Third Quarter Meeting and Exhibitor Showcase. Columbia Conference Center. Topics include MS4 basics, delineating impervious areas using LiDAR, source tracking and DNA testing.

13 - 15 Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute Fall Session - Year 2, Session B. Hyatt Place Columbia. Topics include technology in the workplace, interpersonal skills, payroll administration, risk management, time management, grants administration and notaries public.