



UPTOWN

a publication of the municipal association of south carolina



The Conway Riverwalk most recently flooded after Hurricane Florence. Photo: City of Conway.



After Hurricane Florence, the Conway Riverwalk had its decking replaced. Photo: City of Conway.

Building Resiliency

Cities Address Long-Term Impacts of Hurricanes

Nichols Town Administrator Sandee Rogers now keeps snake boots, and even waders, ready to go in her car.

This wasn't always the case, but the repeated, devastating flooding the town has experienced — first from Hurricane Matthew in 2016, then Hurricane Florence in 2018 — has spurred significant changes in her daily life. Rogers' job often takes her outdoors to wherever the town is working on drainage systems.

The town, located near the confluence of the Little Pee Dee and Lumber rivers, experienced a failure of drainage systems after these storms, contributing to the floods. The major floods — two in three years — devastated homes, businesses and residents' lives in Nichols. Thanks to cleanup assistance that has come in from multiple corners of the state, Nichols is becoming more resilient.

Cleanup help has come from the state — from Gov. Henry McMaster, from the SC Department of Transportation and the SC Floodwater Commission, which staged quarterly meetings in Nichols. A cleanup day earlier this year brought together more

than 300 volunteers. Rogers said the town has been grateful for the help, and it also assembled enough funding for a trackhoe for an employee of the street department to operate.

"Within three weeks, he had cleaned over 6,000 linear feet of ditching, and cleaned it to the point of having the sides clear so that the bush hog and the sidearm could get in there and get it maintained. Doing a beautiful job," Rogers said.

Today, the town has a new three-bay fire station to replace the one it lost in Matthew. It's applied for grants for home elevation and demolition of damaged housing, and it has even worked with Clemson University for a study on natural resources and redevelopment.

Small towns, Rogers said, can be incredibly tenacious.

"The small town does not have a lot of backing, it doesn't have deep pockets, it doesn't have a lot of investors who are wanting to jump in," she said. "So you have to work hard, you have to look for

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Volunteers cleaned drainage infrastructure in Nichols in June. Photo: Town of Nichols.

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what's out there, and boy, have we had a crash course in that. But, through the small town, you can make these things work. It can happen, it's just not going to happen overnight."

In the City of Conway last October, the Waccamaw River swelled to flood stage for weeks after Hurricane Florence dumped a tremendous volume of rain upstream. Some irretrievably damaged waterfront structures, like the Fireman's Clubhouse, were demolished. Even so, the city has been on a path to rebuild and improve others, like the ruined Riverfront Tennis Center. The United States Tennis Association provided a design grant for the city, and it's looking to both elevate the facility and add another clay court to the new version to help with tournaments, City Administrator Adam Emrick said.

The city also replaced the deck for the Conway Riverwalk using copper-treated lumber, with many of its departments contributing to the reconstruction. The old deck was showing signs of distress and creating trip hazards after multiple inundations from the 2015 flood onward. The new deck is designed to be replaced more easily.

"Just about everybody who could be mobilized to assist was mobilized, and we nailed it. The rebuild looks better than it did originally," Emrick said.

The city is also replacing flooded playgrounds at Riverfront Park and Sherwood Park. To put the riverfront in a better position to recover from floods, Emrick said the city requires new playground equipment be more flood-resistant, with a number of removable hollow plastic parts that can be removed ahead of storms. The new park

electrical systems are also intended for disconnection when needed.

"The key takeaway that we've tried to express to our residents is that we need to expect a flood every year, and not do things the way we always have," Emrick said. "Prepare for the worst, and be ready to accept it, because we've had the worst three years out of four."

Conway city staff are also replanting destroyed landscaping at the waterfront. An Arbor Day Foundation grant has allowed for the planting of weeping willows to draw up as much water as possible, and for tree giveaways during Conway Strong Day. In celebration of the city's resilience, this year's Conway Strong Day will commemorate the one-year anniversary of the end of a four-week period of flood status.

In the Town of Cheraw, the difficulty Hurricane Florence brought was the flooding of the Cheraw Community Center, a vital facility that's home to recreation programming, weddings and family reunions. After storm drains reached their capacity, about a foot of water flooded into the building.

In describing the water creeping up and into the center that night, Town Administrator Mike Smith noted that while he had seen many storms before, "Hurricane Florence was the worst. I'll take wind anytime over water."

In the time since, the town has refurbished much of the facility including fixtures, walls and the destroyed wooden gymnasium floor. New flood prevention measures were added such as flood panels that can be rapidly installed in an emergency. In addition, Smith said the town has applied for a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant for a town-wide storm drainage study.

"Tragedies and disasters bring people closer together," Smith said, reflecting on occasions that Cheraw has sent public work crews to help with disaster recovery elsewhere, and times when help has come to Cheraw.

"I can't tell you how proud I am of my fellow municipal brothers and sisters throughout the state who would call and ask if they could do anything," he said. "That touches your heart, knowing that people would do anything to help you."

Todd Glover Named as Executive Director



Todd Glover

The board of the Municipal Association of South Carolina selected Todd Glover to be the organization's seventh executive director.

Glover has served as city administrator in North Augusta since 2012. During his tenure in North Augusta, he spearheaded the multimillion-dollar Riverside Village public-private partnership along the Savannah River. This development is a mixed-use development that also includes SRP Park, the new home to the Augusta GreenJackets, a minor league baseball team.

Glover is no stranger to the Municipal Association. He was the president of the South Carolina Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund for two years and serves on the Association's legislative committee.

"I am excited and humbled to be chosen to lead this great organization," Glover said. "Cities and towns are the backbone of our state, and it's my intention to expand the services and opportunities that the

Association already provides so our cities and towns can grow even stronger."

Glover has been a staple in local government for more than 20 years.

A graduate of the University of South Carolina Aiken, Glover also received a Master of Public Administration from Augusta State University. He began his career with the Lower Savannah Council of Governments. Before joining North Augusta as city administrator, he served as assistant county administrator in Aiken County and the management services director in Columbia County, Georgia.

The board of directors worked through a months-long search process to find a permanent executive director. Eric Budds, deputy executive director of the Association, served as the interim executive director since February.

"We are excited to have Todd leading our Association and the board looks forward to working with him and our great Association staff on moving cities and towns forward," said Dennis Raines, mayor of Mauldin and president of the Municipal Association.

Glover begins at the Association on November 11.

Be Sure to Complete the 2020 Compensation Survey

At the beginning of each year, the Municipal Association of SC asks human resources staff and city clerks to update their cities' compensation information for the Association's online compensation survey. The survey serves as an annual report of wages and salaries of South Carolina municipal employees and elected officials.

City and town leaders know that competitive wages and salaries are some of the most critical tools municipalities have to attract and retain valuable employees. Cities and towns compete for candidates from the same pool as state agencies, county governments and private-sector employees, and having current salary

information helps cities and towns recruit. Municipalities can use this online tool to make sure that their compensation scale is competitive with other municipalities with comparable populations and budgets. The Association makes the data from its compensation survey available through its website, www.masc.sc.

While participating in the survey is optional, the Association encourages all municipalities to complete the online survey every year, since strong participation makes the data more useful. The 2020 survey will be available for data entry from January 3 to February 21.

For more information, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: compensation survey).

NEWS BRIEFS

Candice Roberson, executive director of the **Downtown Orangeburg Revitalization Association**, graduated from the Institute for Organization Management, the professional development program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. The Institute for Organization Management is considered the "premier nonprofit professional development program for association and chamber professionals, fostering individual growth through interactive learning and networking opportunities."

The International Institute of Municipal Clerks awarded Lori Sondov, deputy city clerk for the **City of Greenville**, and Susan Mimmie, administrative assistant for the **City of Aiken**, with the Certified Municipal Clerk designation.

The **Municipal Association of SC** announced new staff members: John Ciesielski, loss control consultant; Elizabeth Miller, financial manager; and Kaylee Summerton, collections analyst, joined the staff in June. Fran Adcock, collections analyst, and Fay Barlow, accounts receivable coordinator, joined the staff in July; and Judy Phillips, senior claims adjuster, joined the Association in September.



The newest MCTI graduates are Brooke Plank-Buccola, town clerk, Town of Port Royal; Laura Culler, director of finance and administration support, Town of Chapin; Cynthia Wyatt, municipal clerk/human resources coordinator, City of York; and Amber Price, human resources director and city clerk, City of Abbeville.

MCTI Graduates Four Officials

The SC Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute, a three-year program providing clerks and treasurers with skills critical to their profession, gained four new graduates this September.

Graduation from the program requires participants to complete more than 120 class hours on topics such as business license management, accounting and municipal law. Completion satisfies the education requirements for the certifications offered by the International

Institute of Municipal Clerks as well as the Association of Public Treasurers of the United States and Canada. Those seeking the Certified Municipal Clerk designation also need to complete a capstone project.

The program is scheduled as six sessions, each taking place over 2 ½ days. Participants can begin the program at any point and are encouraged to attend sessions consecutively.

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

Association Highlight: SC Municipal Attorneys Association

Many municipal job positions have specific training and networking needs, and the Municipal Association of South Carolina's affiliate associations offer opportunities to meet those needs.

The SC Municipal Attorneys Association is open to attorneys who serve on the staff of a municipality as well as those who serve as outside counsel for a municipality.

The SC Municipal Attorneys Association Annual Meeting addresses topics important to all those representing a city or town government. The Supreme Court of South Carolina Commission on

Continuing Legal Education and Specialization approves this training session for continuing education credits. This year's annual meeting is taking place December 6 in Columbia. Topics include updates on federal and state law, First Amendment audits, ethics and potential legislation relating to the Federal Communications Commission.

Learn more about the SC Municipal Attorneys Association and how to register for the meeting at www.masc.sc (keyword: MAA).



2020 HLAD, MEO Institute coming in February

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

Hometown Legislative Action Day

Tuesday, February 4
Columbia Marriott

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

Wednesday, February 5
Columbia Marriott

Registration brochures mailed and available on website

Thursday, November 21

Hotel reservations deadline

Friday, January 3
Make hotel reservations at the Columbia Marriott by calling 1.800.593.6465 or 1.803.771.7000 and asking for the Municipal Association of SC HLAD rate of \$159 plus taxes.

Preregistration deadline for HLAD and MEO Institute

Thursday, January 23



Gaining Flexibility for A-Tax, H-Tax Revenue

Introduced during the 2019 legislative session, S217, would allow cities and towns to use state and local accommodations taxes and local hospitality taxes to control and repair any flooding and drainage issues in tourism-related areas.

The Senate overwhelmingly passed the bill and sent it to the House Ways and Means Committee, where it awaits a hearing. Local officials can help get S217 passed by encouraging House members to support the bill and request a subcommittee hearing so it can get signed into law before May 2020.

If the bill becomes law, it will not raise taxes. It gives local elected leaders the flexibility to use current accommodations and hospitality tax revenue to tackle public works projects that eliminate or mitigate flooding and drainage problems.

In 2017, South Carolina municipalities collected \$240 million from state and local accommodations and local hospitality taxes. Spending money to promote South Carolina's coast, lakes and parks will do no good if tourists cannot reach their destinations because of flood-damaged infrastructure. Beachgoers cannot check into hotels if the roads are overwhelmed with sand and water, and hikers cannot hit the trails if paths are impassable because of flooding.

"In June 2019, most of the south end of the Edisto Beach was under water after a 7 ½-inch rain," said Iris Hill, Edisto Beach's town manager. "We need the flexibility to use the revenue we have to ensure access to our beaches."

Follow the legislative action on S217 on the Municipal Association's Legislative Tracking System at www.masc.sc (keyword: legislative tracking).

Almost every city and town in South Carolina has stormwater and drainage issues that can come from tidal flooding or storm runoff. Even so, these communities have few resources to address the issues. For this reason, the Municipal Association of SC named funding for fixing flooding and drainage problems as one of its three Advocacy Initiatives for the 2019 – 2020 session of the SC General Assembly.



Test yourself monthly quiz

True or False: The notice for a public hearing on the budget must be published in a newspaper of wide circulation no less than 15 days prior to the hearing.

Answer: True

The notice for a public hearing on the budget must be published in a newspaper of wide circulation no less

than 15 days before the hearing. Follow the guidelines given in SC Code of Laws Section 6-1-80.

The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government offers in-person and online courses. Basic Budgeting and Municipal Finance

is offered as an on-demand course online. In-person courses will take place February 5, 2020, the day after Hometown Legislative Action Day, in Columbia. Learn more at www.masc.sc (keyword: MEOI).





Standardizing Business License Practices

For years, cities and towns across the state have worked to standardize business license processes to help make private investment in their communities easier and to demonstrate

a commitment to business-friendly practices.

Business license taxes currently make up a significant part of municipal revenues — on average from 25% to 50% of a city or town's revenue.

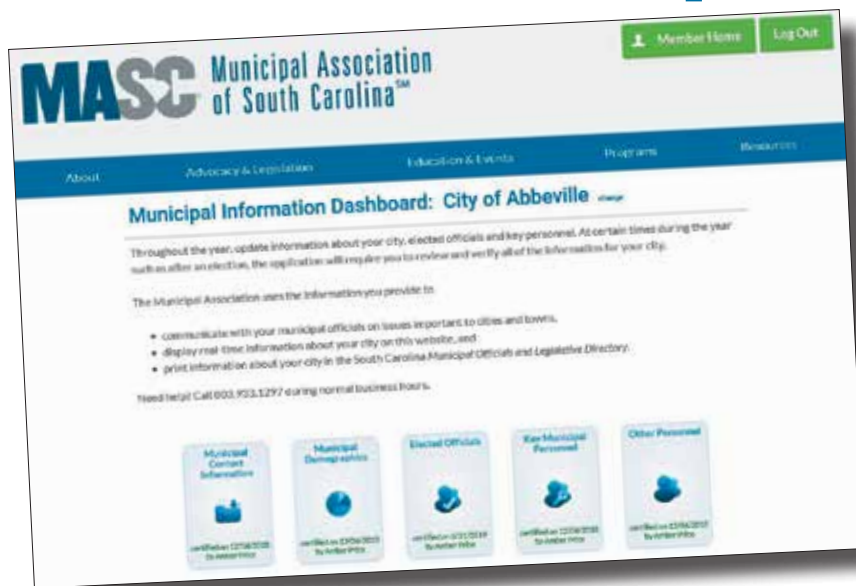
Standardizing business licensing makes it easier for businesses to do business in multiple cities and towns, and there are several practices cities and towns can adopt in order to help:

- Accept the Municipal Association's standardized business license application, rather than only the city's application. The Association's standardized application is written to meet the needs of every city and town, and more than 100 municipalities are now accepting it.

- Adopt the Association's model business license ordinance, which includes the new 2019 class schedule. The class schedule is based on the most recent IRS data, which categorizes businesses by profitability.
- Calculate business license taxes based either on a business' gross income from the previous calendar year, or a business' previous fiscal year, if applicable.
- Issue business licenses on the standard license year of May 1 – April 30.

Learn more about business license taxes and find the standardized business license application, model ordinance and Business License Handbook online at www.masc.sc (keyword: business license tax).

Time to Update Information with the Municipal Association



2019 is coming to a close, and the time to verify the municipal contact information for each city and town in South Carolina is here.

Each year, the Municipal Association of SC asks all municipalities to review, update and verify this information through the Municipal Information Dashboard. Doing so benefits cities and towns

by making sure that the Association can communicate with members effectively on several topics:

- training opportunities from the affiliate organizations and Risk Management Services;
- registration information for meetings, conferences and workshops, including the Association's Annual Meeting

and Hometown Legislative Action Day; and

- updates on legislative action and legal issues critical to local government.

The annual directory of the state's 271 municipalities includes contact information for each city and town, the specifications for each form of government, the time of council meetings and the names of elected officials and certain staff. The directory is available in print and online at www.masc.sc (keyword: municipal online directory).

Updating the information

To help maintain data integrity, the Association allows only the municipal clerk of each city or town, or the clerk's designee, to handle the update on the Municipal Information Dashboard. The deadline to update is November 20.

For assistance, or to make a new designation for the person to handle the update, contact Ashleigh Hair at ahair@masc.sc or 803.933.1288.

Arts and Economic Development

Cultural Activities Support Regional Economies

Ask Riley Johnson, Seneca's events coordinator, about the impact cultural and recreational events can have on a region's economy, and he will tell you about a conversation he had with a real estate agent in town.

Johnson was attending an accommodations tax committee board meeting, and he began talking about a 5K and half-marathon race held in Seneca. The real estate agent sitting next to him told him about a man from Indiana who came to Seneca to run the race and, while he was in town, he looked around the region. The result? The man fell in love with the area and bought a \$1.5 million house on Lake Keowee.

"That's just one story from one [real estate agent], but you can read the accommodations tax numbers. You can see that restaurant sales have increased, that hotels stays have increased," Johnson said. "We've built two new hotels in the last three years."

Johnson's point is echoed by downtown development directors, cultural



The Soda City Market operates on Main Street in Columbia every Saturday year-round and averages 150 vendors each week.

event planners and industry recruiters around the state: draw people into your town for cultural programming or recreational events, and the entire region will reap the benefits in tourism, new residents, tax dollars and economic development.



Seneca's Jazz on the Alley takes place weekly on Thursday nights from April to October. Photo: City of Seneca.



Since 2010, Seneca has gone from hosting three events each year to about 70. The result? Accommodations tax revenue has increased from about \$25,000 a month to close to \$60,000, Johnson said.

“Our job is to introduce people to the area, and it doesn’t take long for them to get out, cruise around the county and they’ll fall in love with it. We’re surrounded by water with Lake Hartwell and Lake Keowee, and we are just 30 minutes from the mountains,” Johnson said. “This is a melting pot. You go to Jazz on the Alley and you’ll see 500 to 800 people, many who are from all over the country who have moved here.”

Jazz on the Alley is Seneca’s largest cultural event, taking place downtown on Ram Cat Alley every Thursday from April to October.

In the state’s capital city, there are hundreds of events each year. The Soda City Market each Saturday on Main Street, the SC State Museum, Riverbanks Zoo and Garden and the Columbia Museum

of Art are just a few of the attractions that draw people to the Midlands.

“While we don’t curate or organize events, we certainly use existing events to heighten awareness of things to do in the destination and entice visitors

“Our job is to introduce people to the area, and it doesn’t take long for them to get out, cruise around the county and they’ll fall in love with it.”

— Riley Johnson,
events coordinator for
the City of Seneca

to come to the Columbia region for overnight stays, to visit our attractions, eat in our restaurants and experience everything that Columbia has to offer.”

said Charlene Slaughter, director of communications for Experience Columbia SC.” Numerous festivals like St. Pat’s in Five Points, Columbia Food and Wine, Hip Hop Family Day and the Main Street Latin Festival give visitors a taste of Columbia’s vibe and a chance to interact with our neighborhood districts and locals.”

One of Experience Columbia’s goals is to increase the number of visitors to the region, including overnight and multi-night stays in the area for leisure, group and convention travel, Slaughter said. In 2018, there were 14.8 million annual visitors resulting in a \$2.3 billion direct impact, \$256 million spending on lodging services and \$119 million in contributions to local and state taxes, she said.

One of the keys to attracting visitors and businesses to an area is expertly promoting and marketing what the region has to offer. Experience Columbia applies for accommodations tax grants and shares data about the groups it books, including an annual report

shared with stakeholders and community leaders.

“We also report marketing and advertising campaigns that run in travel media outlets such as *Southern Living*, *Garden and Gun*, the Food Network and Travel Channel as well as earned media to showcase examples of how we are investing accommodations tax dollars in marketing,” Slaughter said. “The fact that the number of visitors coming to the area is growing indicates that it is working, and we are doing the right things to draw visitors to the area to stay in our hotels, visit our restaurants and attractions and solidify Columbia as a destination.”

Attracting visitors and locals to downtown Lancaster restaurants and shops is the goal of Joe Timmons, the events and promotions manager for See Lancaster. The organization works to provide cultural opportunities and special events along with business incentives and assistance. Lancaster is one of the SC Arts Commission’s cultural districts, a city chosen for having walkable areas and a concentration of cultural, artistic and economic activities. Lancaster has a cultural arts center that draws people to concerts, a community playhouse and an outdoor amphitheater.

See Lancaster has worked to draw visitors to the region through everything from banners on its street lamps to its signature event, the Red Rose Festival, which draws about 20,000 people to Lancaster each May, Timmons said. It also has started its popular Finally Friday concert series.

“We moved [the Friday concert series] to Main Street this year; it had been on a side street. It has blown out of the water and brought a lot of people downtown,” Timmons said. “People come and eat downtown and go out. The businesses can’t get enough of it.”

Businesses were running out of food and beer the first Friday night, not expecting the size of the crowds. “Now they’re used to it, and they’ve asked me to do more events on the green space,” he said. “It’s good for business.”



Lancaster’s Finally Friday concerts take place the last Friday of each month from June to September. Photo: City of Lancaster.



Show cars line South Main Street in Lancaster for the Red Rose Festival. Photo: Grey Hoodie Photo.



Lancaster’s Red Rose Festival takes place each year in May. Photo: Grey Hoodie Photo.



A Day in the Life of an *Events Manager*

Cities and towns are recognizing the value of offering their residents more ways to engage with each other, as well as opportunities to show off their best assets and attract visitors from the surrounding areas who visit for a day or a weekend.

From celebrating the grand holiday traditions to offering locally grown produce and other goods at weekly farmers markets, today's events are held more frequently and require much more collaboration. Increasing safety personnel for crowds, recruiting vendors and closing streets are just several examples of collaboration and planning. Many cities are hiring coordinators dedicated at least half-time, if not full-time, to organizing and operating these events and making them special.

"We begin planning for July Fourth in mid-March," said Joey Blethen, parks and recreation director for the City of Tega Cay, which sits along Lake Wylie between Charlotte and Rock Hill. "That initial planning meeting gives us an opportunity to recap some of the things from the previous July Fourth, what went well, what didn't, and meet with all the heads of the different departments that are going to be involved ... I compile a checklist of what needs to be accomplished before the event. It seems like a never-ending list."

The city celebrates its birthday — it was incorporated in 1982 — along with the nation's birthday at the July Fourth celebration. Blethen has been involved with planning the event for six years and has been in charge the past three years.



Ashlee Tolbert serves as Fountain Inn's special events and community development manager.
Photo: City of Fountain Inn.

"I'm one of those types of people, I'd rather have my fate in my own hands versus holding volunteers accountable," Blethen said. "But it's kind of cool knowing you're the linchpin that pulls everyone onto the same page."

The event has grown over the years and is now the biggest one hosted by the city. The day typically kicks off with a breakfast for dignitaries and VIPs. There is one event every hour until 9:30 p.m., including a land parade, a boat parade, a paddleboard joust, fish fry and — of course — fireworks.

With a daylong event spread out across the town, coordination among all city workers is key, Blethen said. But no amount of planning can tackle the event's biggest challenge.

"No. 1 is the weather," Blethen said. "There is nothing worse than planning something months and months in advance and having the weather ruin it."

The weather is a constant threat for special events planners around the state.

"One of the hardest parts of planning events is coming to terms with the fact that the weather in South Carolina is incredibly unpredictable," said Megan Boisvert, special events coordinator for the Town of Summerville.

"You could work for weeks on planning and it could get canceled because of weather. Sadly that's one of those things you can do nothing about. This year, we had awful rain storms on the Fourth of July which put a halt on people coming out to the event. We powered through the

rain and set up everything as planned; about two hours before the fireworks went off, the weather cleared up and it turned into a lovely event with a huge crowd.”

A native of New Hampshire, Boisvert will celebrate one year on the job in December 2019 and says she has always been involved in parks and recreation. She majored in recreation management and policy at the University of New Hampshire.

Her job in Summerville includes smaller events, like Movies in the Park, the town’s Tree Lighting Ceremony and the Sounds on the Square Concert Series.

She also is in charge of the weekly farmers market, which runs every Saturday from April through November.

“I am always trying to come up with fun new ways to theme the market and bring more visitors through,” Boisvert said. “The best part about my job is that it gives me the opportunity to be creative and provide memories to the community.

“It warms my heart to see so many different people of all ages brought together by an event that I created and ran.”

Ashlee Tolbert, a former schoolteacher, says she had no experience planning large-scale events until it became part of her job as community development manager for the City of Fountain Inn.

The city’s largest event is a three-week holiday celebration that the city has been putting on for more than 30 years — Christmas “Inn” Our Town.

“The tradition continues because people really like it,” she said.

The carriage rides run Wednesday through Sunday for three weeks and take visitors through downtown and a nearby neighborhood where homes are decorated for the holidays.

While almost all of the city’s special events are free, the carriage rides are \$8 a person to offset some of the costs. The city contracts for the horses, carriages and drivers. Planning includes a temporary stable for the horses, as well as closing down streets and increased safety precautions at the points where horse-drawn carriages interact with modern automobile traffic.



Summerville’s Special Events Coordinator Megan Boisvert, right, is joined by Dave Burke at the town’s Fourth of July celebration. Photo: Town of Summerville.

The nearly month-long celebration culminates in the Merry Market — a weekend of arts and crafts, music, food and visits with Santa.

Tolbert’s team has made a concerted effort in recent years to get the word out beyond the city limits about the carriage rides and the festival, using hospitality tax dollars to market the event.

“People come because we have so much to offer,” she said. “It really sells itself because of the family-friendly atmosphere and events.

“It’s great, but it’s very intense when you’re seeing thousands of people over two to three weeks.”

While growing crowds are one measure of success for any event, Tolbert said she also solicits feedback at regular neighborhood roundtable meetings.

“We talk about real topics going on in the city and how we want to see the city grow,” she said. “Their feedback helps when planning future events.”

Ken Ivey, the Municipal Association of SC’s manager of member services

Every year, the Municipal Association handles logistics for more than 90 events around the state, but these conferences and training sessions differ greatly from the resident-focused events staged by cities and towns. The Association’s events range from large gatherings like the Annual Meeting and Hometown Legislative Action Day to the sessions of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute, as well as the conferences and education opportunities of affiliate associations.

Manager of Member Services Ken Ivey plays a critical role in the planning and management of these meetings. In his role with the Association, Ivey handles venue contracts, caterers, transportation and hotel rooms among other logistics, working on specific parts of the process months and even years in advance.

Event management, he said, can be “stressful, but not in an unhappy way. It’s enjoyable to be working in an environment where many things are happening all at once, and to see everything come together at the end and create a successful, effective meeting.”



From left: Lisa Rogers, Joey Blethen, parks and recreation director of the City of Tega Cay, and Dustin Overton, Tega Cay’s recreation superintendent. Photo: Cliff Nichols Photography.

Risk Management Provides Key Aspect of Event Planning



Accidents and injuries at holiday parades and special events may not be common, but they can illustrate how a city-sponsored celebration can go wrong.

A young boy who was a passenger on a float fell off and was fatally struck by a vehicle at a 2018 Labor Day parade in Windsor, Colorado. At the 2019 Memorial Day parade in Scotia, New York, a woman waiting to begin marching in the parade was fatally hit by a vehicle that unexpectedly accelerated.

Risk management is a critical consideration for all forms of city-sponsored special events, including festivals, concerts, sporting events and fireworks displays. Risk coordinators and key municipal staff should form a special events committee and start special events planning far in advance. Key stakeholders such as police, fire and public works should meet to determine the types of special events that occur within the city, identify risks, develop effective controls, and assess the potential impact on the city, residents and local businesses. Also, city officials should consider designating one staff member to serve as a coordinator of all special event activities and oversee the special events committee.

When planning events, cities need to answer several questions to determine how best to protect both residents and city assets. First, what could go wrong at the event? What preventive measures can be taken against these negative outcomes? If something does go wrong, how will the city or town pay for it?

“Drafting a special events policy and having it reviewed by the city attorney is a key way to manage the risk that a special event can create,” Heather Ricard, director of the Municipal Association of SC’s Risk Management Services, said. “Another good practice is for cities to require applications for third parties wanting to use city property for an event, so that the city can properly manage any liability aspects of the event.”

Most liability insurance policies have exclusions that can impact special events, and city officials should be familiar with the exclusions stipulated in their policies.

Activities commonly excluded by liability coverage

- Bungee jumping and similar amusement devices
- Fireworks displays
- Skateboarding
- Parachuting and hang gliding

- Airplane, helicopter or ballooning rides and shows
- Archery
- Mechanical amusement devices
- Zoos
- Traveling carnivals and circuses
- Rodeos
- Trampolines and rebounding equipment, commonly known as bounce houses
- Concerts organized and promoted by third parties

Hiring a contract event coordinator or contractor to host a special event may take the burden of planning the event off city staff. However, the municipality should vet and screen the contractor to ensure the contractor has the experience and expertise to oversee the event. The city should obtain a copy of the contractor’s insurance policy prior to the event and call to verify coverage with the issuing agent the day prior to the event. Be on the lookout for activities that aren’t covered by the city’s insurance policy and ensure that the contractor’s policy covers activities excluded by the city’s insurance. If not, the city could be held liable in the event of a claim. Be careful not to exercise too much control over the event and the contractor, this could result in the event no longer being managed independently.

Murals Illustrate

'The Art of What is Possible'

There's no question public art can be an essential tool to create a sense of community — and fun — in a city or town. And murals, where blank walls are transformed into vibrant canvasses, offer a special way to celebrate a town's history and promise.

"Art can be transformative and the impact of murals has value beyond the art on the walls. It is a form of expression that gives voice to what is important in our community. It creates a sense of place," Cayce Mayor Elise Partin said.

Throughout South Carolina, mural designs show everything from wildlife to city symbols, vistas to historic gems. In Summerville, for example, walls of downtown businesses feature murals that depict a giant Mason jar and a red, white and blue peace sign, while the image of two American redstart birds brighten the wall of a town parking garage.

"Summerville is trying to add images that are relatable to the community. We're the birthplace of sweet tea and we're a patriotic town in a large military

influenced area. I think when people come here they feel that sense of community," said Molly Willard, director of development for Summerville DREAM, the downtown revitalization organization.

In Cayce, the city is in the midst of implementing an arts district around State Street, the area that was the original downtown. Public art is seen as essential to that vision. Recently, a mural titled "Enjoy the Little Things" was created by a local artist and painted on the side of a State Street convenience store. The artist

Artists work on a mural at the intersection of Broadway Street and Fourth Avenue North in Myrtle Beach. Photo: City of Myrtle Beach.





Painters created the “Enjoy the Little Things” mural during the Soiree on State festival in Cayce. Photo: City of Cayce.

contacted the property owner, received permission for the mural and recruited local students and the general public to help paint it during the city’s art festival, Soiree on State.

Cayce is now holding a call for artists, as the city looks to add more murals to the arts district. The proposals from the artists will be reviewed by city staff, the selection committee and the participating property owners, City Manager Tracy Hegler said.

“The aim of the mural project is to bring art to public spaces by transforming empty walls into energetic and engaging spaces for the community,” Partin said.

The city is seeking artists with a “strong point of view and the ability to create complex, engaging designs,” Hegler said. Artists can use Cayce’s history, environment and signature events for inspiration, but city leaders want the final designs to be more than a literal representation of an object or event.

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The city has worked directly with the property owners where the murals will be painted, and those owners have the final say on the chosen artwork. The city has budgeted \$20,000 from hospitality tax money for the projects, Hegler said.

“We have a vision of creating an Arts District on State and Frink streets and murals are part of that vision,” Partin said. “The city has been actively engaged

in revitalizing State Street, specifically through ‘previtalization’ efforts. The ‘previtalization’ process, appropriately described as ‘the art of what’s possible,’ has already led to the redevelopment of several derelict and underutilized properties into new and thriving businesses and has led to the formation of an active artist group and increased artists offerings. The goal of the Call for Artists is to provide public art that helps to make State Street a destination location in the city and brings more foot traffic into the area which will positively impact the success of our businesses.”

In Myrtle Beach, the City Council has adopted a new master plan for the downtown area that creates an arts and innovation district. The private sector has also formed a group to push for more murals in the downtown Myrtle Beach area, with two new murals completed this summer, and four more are planned.

The city has asked its Community Appearance Board to get involved with the regulation of murals, said Carol



The "Whaling Wall" mural at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center, dating to 1993, received a refresh in 2018. Photos: City of Myrtle Beach.



Coleman, the planning director for the City of Myrtle Beach.

"It's public art, so anywhere you have a blank wall, it helps if you put something attractive on it. What's attractive is subjective, so that's where our Community Appearance Board comes in. They weigh in on things like the color, the subject, the size," Coleman said.

The city has also put money into maintaining the murals that are already there, including work being done to freshen up the whale mural at the back of the city's convention center.

"You need to maintain murals, or they could turn into visual clutter. Our goal is not to create visual clutter, it's to create something that's attractive and gives a

new view to somewhere you might not have noticed before," Coleman said.

In Summerville, downtown area murals tie into the town's history and feel, Willard said. The bird mural on the parking garage, for example, is a stop on a bird walking tour that features sculptures nestled in downtown Summerville. The Mason jar painted on the rear of the chamber of commerce building was done by a local artist and is a nod to the town's claim as the birthplace of sweet tea.

The town also has a handful of new murals including one that displays a hand displaying a peace sign with the flag wrapped around the forearm. At the other end of the building is a community-themed mural, with the work done by six local artists.

"Murals are making a resurgence," Willard said. "We've identified some additional wall spaces where we as an organization would like to see something happen."

And, once the murals are complete, they're sure to attract visitors looking for a splash of color or an eye-catching design. And they're sharing the artwork with others.

"Murals are successful if they draw people to a location and bring them joy. Successful murals create a sense of place and community and make the area walkable," Cayce's Mayor Partin said. "Already people are taking their picture in front of the first mural, as can be seen on Instagram and other social media."



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Calendar

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NOVEMBER

6 Main Street South Carolina New Director Orientation. Municipal Association of SC, Columbia.

7 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Fourth Quarter Meeting and Exhibitor Showcase. Seawell's, Columbia. Topics include information on a watershed project, a capital improvement project spotlight, an update from the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control's Adopt-A-Stream program and Clean Water Act permitting requirements.

12 Risk Management Services Annual Members Meeting. Embassy Suites, Columbia.

13 – 15 SC Municipal Human Resources Association Annual Meeting. Hyatt Regency Downtown Greenville. Topics include coping with stress, the value of a class and compensation study, updates from the SC Criminal Justice Academy, law enforcement recruitment and retention, an overview of federal and state laws regarding LGBTQIA, best practices for hiring and firing, legal updates and an exhibitor showcase.

DECEMBER

4 SCMIT and SCMIRF Public Works Risk Management Training. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Columbia.

6 SC Municipal Attorneys Association Annual Meeting and Continuing Legal Education Seminar. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Columbia. Topics include updates on federal and state law, First Amendment audits, ethics and potential legislation relating to the Federal Communications Commission.

FEBRUARY

4 Hometown Legislative Action Day. Columbia Marriott.

5 Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government Session A and B, Advanced Institute and Advanced Continuing Education. Columbia Marriott.

20 SC Association of Municipal Power Systems Associate Member Lunch. Seawell's, Columbia.

26 – 28 Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute – Year 2, Session A. Hyatt Place Columbia/Downtown/The Vista. Topics include technology in the workplace, interpersonal skills, payroll administration, risk management, time management, grants administration, notary public and roundtable sessions.

MARCH

5 SC Association of Stormwater Managers First Quarter Meeting. Seawell's, Columbia.