



UPTOWN

a publication of the municipal association of south carolina

Layering grants *makes projects possible*



The fiscal environment that cities and towns operate within has become increasingly challenging over the years. Revenue constraints and rising costs are an unfortunate fact of life in municipal government, which is why cities often turn to grants.

Strategies for Stormwater

Throughout the Municipal Association’s 2017 Regional Advocacy Meetings, municipal officials from around the state repeatedly expressed the need for more tools to address stormwater and drainage problems. Coastal communities battle flooding from hurricanes. Inland communities suffer damage from flash flooding. And nearly every city and town in the state has wrestled with the effects of at least one residential neighborhood that struggles with inadequate drainage.

“What many officials do not know, however, is that several tools are available to help them address flooding and drainage challenges,” said Scott Slatton, legislative and public policy

advocate for the Municipal Association. “Grant funding from the S.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority is one of the most readily available tools cities can use.”

In 2017, the RIA awarded more than \$1.6 million in grant funds to four cities and towns for drainage system upgrades. Among those, the City of Conway received a \$500,000 RIA grant for drainage improvements in a residential subdivision.

Many cities and towns have also created a stormwater utility, which can provide a stable source of local revenue to use for drainage improvements. Most of those municipalities created their stormwater utilities because they were federally designated as municipal separate stormwater systems, also known as MS4s. Designation as an MS4 requires cities and towns to maintain their stormwater systems to ensure water quality (See page 14 for more about MS4s). Cities and towns charge stormwater fees to fund system improvements and their ongoing maintenance.

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Closing the Gap: Strategies for Funding Complex Projects

“While perhaps not as plentiful as they once were, grants provide opportunities for ‘new money’ to fund economic development and projects that enhance quality of life,” said Jeff Shacker, field services manager for the Municipal Association.

Three such grant programs available to cities in South Carolina to fund community and economic development projects include the S.C. Community Development Block Grant Program, administered by the S.C. Department of Commerce; the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Community Facilities Loan and Grant Program; and the competitive grants administered by the S.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority.

Cities and towns may use these grants to revitalize downtowns, stabilize neighborhoods that were in decline, upgrade public infrastructure, construct community facilities, and create and retain jobs.

“However, like most grant programs, these funding sources are competitive, have cash or in-kind matching requirements, and are rarely large enough to fully fund a major project,” said Shacker.

“As a result, many cities have become adept at implementing economic development strategies and municipal projects through creative — and sometimes complex — combinations of federal and state grants, loan programs and tax credits, as well as grants from nongovernmental entities such as nonprofit foundations and corporations.”

Cities that have made effective use of grants to accomplish major projects include the following:

- The City of Pickens used CDBG and other federal and state grants to revitalize its downtown, complete the Doodle Trail running between Pickens and Easley, and tie the trail into Pickens’ downtown.
- The City of Greenwood made extensive use of CDBG over the years, along with other state and federal grants. Other significant contributions came from the Self Family Foundation, a nonprofit that focuses on diverse needs within Greenwood County, to revitalize the city’s Uptown and other neighborhoods.
- The Town of West Pelzer used funding from CDBG, a USDA grant and loan, and other state and federal sources to upgrade its water and sewer systems, construct a new town hall and park, and plan the revitalization of its downtown.
- The City of Walterboro accessed several sources of funds, including a loan from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, a State Revolving Fund loan, and an RIA grant to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant, scheduled to be completed this year.

At the Municipal Association’s Annual Meeting, July 19 – 22, learn about these solutions, the Municipal Association’s Hometown Economic Development Grant program and others on Thursday, July 19. A second session on this topic, “Closing the Gap: Strategies for Funding Complex Projects,” will be on Friday, July 20.



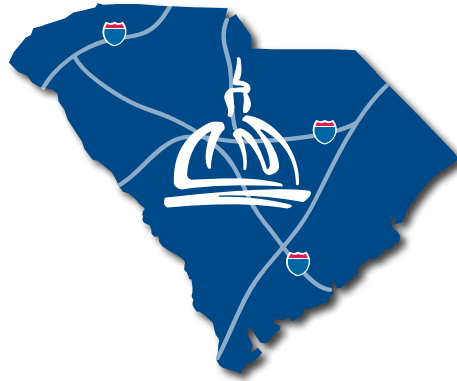
Advocacy meetings start in August

The 10 Regional Advocacy Meetings held across the state in late summer will offer municipal officials the opportunity to learn about legislative issues affecting cities and towns and to play a role in establishing the Association's legislative initiatives ahead of next year's new, two-year legislative session.

These meetings, which are for elected officials and city staff, will outline bills passed into law during the 2018 session that affect cities and towns and issues that will likely come up in the 2019 session. Time will be set aside for municipal officials to share matters of importance to their city.

"The Regional Advocacy Meetings are the starting point for the Association's work in the upcoming legislative session each year," said Reba Campbell, the Association's deputy executive director. "Discussions with local officials at these meetings determine our priorities, and it's important that elected officials and city staff attend to get their local issues heard."

The meetings will be held from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m., and lunch will be included. The locations are organized by council of governments region, but officials may attend any session that is convenient.



There is no charge for the meetings, but registration is required for an accurate head count for lunch and handouts.

- **August 14** – Arts Center, City of Greenwood
- **August 15** – Clemson Fire Department Community Room, City of Clemson
- **August 16** – Historic Spratt Building, Town of Fort Mill
- **August 21** – Victor's in Hotel Florence, City of Florence
- **August 22** – Moncks Corner Train Depot, Town of Moncks Corner
- **August 23** – Colleton Museum and Farmers Market, City of Walterboro
- **August 28** – Aiken Conference Center, City of Aiken
- **September 5** – Sumter City Centre, City of Sumter
- **September 6** – Fifth and Main, City of Conway
- **September 11** – Cayce Tennis and Fitness Center, City of Cayce

To register, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: RAM). For more information, contact Ashleigh Hair at ahair@masc.sc or 803.933.1288.

NEWS BRIEFS

The **City of Newberry Police Department** was reaccredited by the S.C. Police Accreditation Coalition which promotes professional improvement of law enforcement services to local residents. The department has maintained its accreditation for 18 consecutive years.

Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin was elected president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

The State Electronics Challenge, a program that encourages offices to "buy green, use efficiently and recycle responsibly," awarded the **City of Columbia's Information Technology Department** a 2017 Silver Green Technology Award.

In April, the S.C. Department of Public Safety recognized the police departments of **Bishopville, Camden, Lexington, Myrtle Beach** and **Port Royal** with its Agency of the Year honor, based on agency size, for their 2017 DUI enforcement efforts.

Legislative session wraps up

The second year of the 2017 – 2018 regular session of the 122nd General Assembly was gavelled to a close on May 10. Key focus areas this session were utilities, spending flexibility and construction processes.

From the V.C. Summer nuclear plant debacle to increasing the use of solar

energy in the state, legislators trained their attention on utilities throughout most of the session. Senate and House members held special ad hoc committee meetings to study what went wrong with the Fairfield nuclear project, heard from ratepayers and executives from SCANA and Santee Cooper, and debated bills that dealt with everything from electric rates to the S.C. Public Service Commission.

While this issue didn't directly impact municipal government, there were several bills related to solar energy that included language impacting municipal electric utilities. Those bills were amended to exclude electric cities and later died on the floor.

Although business licensing was a quiet issue this session for cities and towns, lawmakers carried some issues over from the 2017 session and introduced new ones. Issues for cities this

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session included ways to pay for the relocation of utilities to facilitate road projects, whether local councils should be able to ban plastic bags, the state budget and illegal immigration.

Legislators also considered building codes bills and whether to grant local governments flexibility with how they spend hospitality and accommodations tax revenue. Abandoned buildings, nuisance suits, municipal tax relief and enclave annexation also figured into legislative debates.

The Association hosted legislators at two events this session. A late January welcome reception for the Association's new executive director, Wayne George, brought many of his former legislative colleagues to the Association's building. Hometown Legislative Action Day saw a record number of legislators attend the reception.

Representatives Craig Gagnon, R – Abbeville; Todd Rutherford, D – Columbia; Mike Sottile, R – Isle of Palms; Kirkman Finlay, R – Columbia; Mike Anthony, D – Union; Jeff Bradley, R – Hilton Head Island; and Sen. John Scott, D – Columbia, shared their thoughts on municipal issues during the day at the conference.

House members and state constitutional officers are up for re-election this year, while senators do not face voters at the ballot box for another two years.

Building officials speak up

In 2017, the Building Officials Association of SC became an affiliate organization of the Municipal Association. This new relationship has brought increased attention to legislative issues regarding building codes.

During the 2018 legislative session, BOASC members advocated for safety — of life, health and property — communicating the message of municipal officials who administer and enforce building and related codes.

H3846 for efficiency

The Building Officials Association of SC worked closely with the S.C. Homebuilders Association to amend H3846 to clarify what type of work a homeowner may perform on his home without the need for a building permit. BOASC worked with other stakeholders, including the South Carolina Realtors and the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Registration.

The Engineers Practice Act

Act 138 went into effect in March. It clarifies for the construction industry and local building officials when an engineer's seal is needed on construction documents. The Building Officials Association of SC worked closely with Rep. Heather Crawford, R – Myrtle Beach, to amend the bill to ensure its effectiveness. To adhere to the new law, municipal and county building officials should return to requiring engineer stamps for nonresidential structures — just as they did before 2016.

Averting the adverse

The Building Officials Association of SC worked with a variety of interest groups to make changes to S579, which sought to create a unique state building code. BOASC worked with the S.C. Homebuilders Association, the Association of General Contractors, the S.C. Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the S.C. Office of the State Fire Marshal.

Look for a more detailed overview of legislative session in the July issue of Uptown, along with the 2018 Year End Review, which will be available at the Municipal Association's Annual Meeting in July and online.

Brush up on GASB 77

By Will Johnson, Shareholder, Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd

What is GASB 77 and why does it exist?

GASB 77 is an accounting pronouncement applicable to the financial statements of state and local governments. In order for their financial statements to be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, they must comply with GASB 77. The stated purpose of GASB 77 is to enable users of government financial statements to understand “(1) how tax abatements affect a government's future ability to raise resources and meet its financial obligations and

(2) the impact those abatements have on a government's financial position and economic condition.”

How will GASB 77 impact local and/or state governments engaged in economic development?

For the first time, state and local governments will have to report the fiscal impact of all tax incentive agreements publicly. As budgets are tighter at all levels of government, the analyses that are publicly released will undoubtedly garner attention. These analyses require a hypothetical determination of “foregone revenue” under an assumption that all projects receiving tax incentives would have made the same capital investments and paid full, unabated taxes on those investments absent the incentives.

What should local government economic professionals do to prepare?

Local government leaders should prepare in a number of ways. For purposes of compliance efforts, as a starting point, leaders should identify all tax incentive agreements for which GASB 77 requires reporting, compile the abated taxes or fees in lieu of taxes for each covered project, and obtain the property tax filings reflecting capital investments for such projects. In addition, local governments should recognize that compliance will be burdensome, in terms of staff time and/or costs. Most likely, a county's financial professionals and economic development staff will need to be involved at a minimum. More strategically, leaders should keep in mind that agreements may be more closely scrutinized in the GASB 77 area.

27 graduate from BLOA Training Institute



Twenty-seven municipal and county officials graduated from the SC Business Licensing Officials Association Training Institute at the spring meeting. The institute is designed to improve the professional and administrative skills of business licensing officials. The three sessions officials need to complete the training institute include topics on general licensing, problem areas and personal development. The spring session topics included income verification, audits, the S.C. Freedom of Information Act and developing employees' natural talents. The graduates will receive the Accreditation in Business Licensing designation, upon passing an exam.

The 27 graduates are Kara Belden, customer service representative, Charleston County; Melissa Brown, collections analyst, Municipal Association of SC; Rebeca Brunson, administrative assistant, Town of Saluda; Olga Bryant, finance/business license clerk, City of Walterboro; Maria Bush, city clerk assistant, City of New Ellenton; Melissa Cowan, municipal clerk, Town of Blythewood; Jojo Crumley, clerk of court, Town of Jackson; Jarrett Epperson, code enforcement, City of Cayce; Susan Gainey, collections analyst, Municipal Association of SC; Sherry Griggs, fire administrative assistant, City of Hartsville; Richard Hall, community development director, Orangeburg County; Doris Hamilton, clerk/treasurer, Town of Gray Court; Lindsey Haring, fee and license representative, City of Myrtle Beach; Gail Harrell, accounts receivable/administrative assistant, City of Chester; Mandy Hess, clerk/treasurer, Town of Saluda; Jennifer Hoyt, municipal clerk, Town of Gaston; LaTeal Johnson, customer service representative, City of West Columbia; Joy Krutek, business license administrator, Dorchester County; Scott Lang, business license director, City of Easley; Samantha Martin, assistant clerk, Town of St. George; Lindsey Newton, administrative assistant, City of Clemson; Carli Padgett, finance manager, City of North Augusta; Diane Quattlebaum, assistant clerk, Town of Harleyville; Vi Racine, business license official, Town of Irmo; Matthew Thomas, Open for Business program coordinator, City of Rock Hill; Susan Weil, business license official, City of Fountain Inn; Peter Wiggins, revenue collections manager – setoff debt, Charleston County.



Test yourself monthly quiz

True or False:

“Long-term borrowing is justified for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, replacing or repairing buildings and other facilities that cities and towns use to provide local government programs and services.”



Answer: True

These facilities — including parks, police and fire stations, water and sewer infrastructure, and recreation facilities — have a relatively long life. Other expenditures for relatively short-term or recurring purposes, such as operational expenses and staff salaries, are generally not funded through long-term borrowing measures.

The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government offers in-person and online courses. Elected officials who complete all of the required coursework graduate from the institute and are eligible to participate in the Advanced Institute. The next in-person courses, held September 18, will be “Municipal Economic Development” and “Forms of Municipal Government.” The next Advanced MEO Institute sessions on October 24 will be “Advanced Budgeting and Finance” and “Advanced Leadership and Governance.”

Report unclaimed property

The S.C. Uniform Unclaimed Property Act requires all holders of unclaimed property, including government entities, to review their records each year and make an effort to return unclaimed funds to the rightful owner. If an owner cannot be located, those funds must be sent to the State Treasurer's Office until the owner can be found.

"As a local government, you play a vital role in helping us collect unclaimed property that may have been generated as part of your annual operations as well as communicating with your constituents on how they can retrieve unclaimed property we may be holding for them," said S.C. Treasurer Curtis Loftis.

Unclaimed property may exist in several departments within a government entity, including:

- Water and sewer – deposits left behind when a customer ends service;
- Courts – overpaid bail bonds or undelivered child support payments;
- Jails – leftover funds in a former inmate's account;
- Parks and Recreation – deposits for facility rentals; and
- Accounts Payable – uncashed payroll checks, outstanding accounts payables and other credit balances.

What is unclaimed property?

Unclaimed property includes, but is not limited to, wages, insurance proceeds, customer deposits, outstanding checks and credit balances that have remained unclaimed by the rightful owner for a period of time. The dormancy periods vary by property type.

For example, wages and utility deposits are reportable one year after the original issue date, while most other outstanding checks are reportable five years after the original issue date. If a city misses a reporting deadline or identifies past-due property, it may request a voluntary disclosure agreement, which would allow reporting past-due property without incurring interest and penalties.

When should a city start reviewing our records for unclaimed property?

The S.C. Uniform Unclaimed Property Act requires cities and towns to file an annual report and remit unclaimed funds to the State Treasurer's Office Unclaimed Property Program by November 1 of each year. The law requires all holders to review their records each year to determine whether they have any unclaimed property, regardless of the amount, by June 30.

Does a city have to look for the owner?

Yes. If any unclaimed property — valued at \$50 or more — is discovered, the city must perform due diligence to locate the owner of the property. The city must send a written notice to the owner notifying him of the unclaimed property no more than 120 days before filing its report to the State Treasurer's Office. A sample notice is available on the State Treasurer's Office website (www.treasurer.sc.gov). The notice should state that the funds will be remitted to the state if a response is not received.

What if a city tried to find the owner in the past but were unsuccessful?

If the city has already tried to contact the owner but found the address on file was no longer valid, a due diligence notice isn't needed.

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.

What is the deadline to file the report?

The city must file its 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. A city must request an extension before October 1 with an explanation for the extension request.

Does a city have to submit a report every year, even if it does not identify any unclaimed property?

Yes. Beginning this year, even if no reportable property is identified, holders must notify the state by submitting a negative report via the State Treasurer's website. On the website, enter the contact information for the city or town, and select the option to submit a negative report. No additional action is required.

Can a city file its report on paper?

No. The reports must be submitted via the state's secure website in the format prescribed by the National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators. South Carolina no longer accepts unclaimed property reports on CDs or paper.

What if a city failed to comply with the reporting requirement?

The State Treasurer's Office is responsible for ensuring 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.

For more information, contact the Unclaimed Property staff at the State Treasurer's Office at 803.737.4771 or unclaimed@sto.sc.gov.



Four bad habits to avoid at city council meetings

By Ann G. Macfarlane, a parliamentarian who writes about Robert's Rules of Order at JurassicParliament.com.

There are a number of “urban myths” about Robert's Rules of Order that can get in the way of democratic process for your council. If your municipality, county council, or special district avoids these bad habits, congratulations! If these errors happen at your meetings, however, you might want to bring them to the attention of your colleagues to straighten them out – in a pleasant way, of course.

Misuse of ‘call the question’

Many people believe that if a member says “I call the question,” discussion on the motion being considered must stop immediately. This is a widespread misunderstanding. If you say, “I call the question,” it just means that you — as a single individual — would like to stop debate and vote now.

The chair must ask for a second and then take the vote by show of hands, because two-thirds of the members must agree for debate to stop. The reason is that stopping debate limits members' rights, and in general, a two-thirds vote is needed when members' rights are limited or extended. While it may seem odd to “vote

on whether to vote,” with time, your group will get used to this and use it properly.

Misuse of ‘friendly amendment’

If a motion has been made, seconded, and stated by the chair, it is open to discussion, debate and amendment by the members. One common mistake occurs when a member says, “May I offer a friendly amendment?” The chair sometimes then turns to the maker and the seconder to ask if they will accept this amendment. To do this denies the basic fact that a motion belongs to all the body, not just to the one who proposed it. It gives the maker a special “proprietary” right in her motion which, in fact, she doesn't have. Instead, the chair can say, “A friendly amendment is handled just like any other amendment — is there a second?” The group then proceeds with its discussion and votes on the amendment in the usual way.

Abuse of power by the chair

The chair of a meeting is charged with ensuring a fair process and following the procedures that the group has adopted. He

is not responsible for the decision that the group makes. It is the group itself that has that authority. Sometimes chairs are over-assertive in running a meeting. They refuse to recognize a legitimate motion or to acknowledge a “point of order.” The members should know how to bring them in line by using “appeal.” When running a meeting, the chair or presider is the servant of the group, and the group is the final authority.

Allowing a few members to dominate the conversation

In council, committee, commission and board meetings, it can happen that a few members get most of the air time. This is a bad habit that weakens the effectiveness of the group's discussion. The remedy is the “speak once” rule, which states that “No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.” Whether the chair keeps track of who has spoken, maintaining a little list for future speakers, or whether you use the “round robin” method of discussion, following this rule will ensure a democratic process and lessen your chances of “groupthink.”



Beyond door hangers: Boil-water alerts



Residents assume their tap water is safe to drink. But in the rare instance that it's not — due to a line break, a chemical or petroleum spill, the loss of pressure in a sizeable portion of the distribution system or some other event — municipal officials deliver boil-water alerts wherever residents happen to be and however they are likely to receive it.

From classic paper door knockers to an array of electronic communication channels to assistance from local news media, municipal officials have their pick of an assortment of tools to tell residents to temporarily suspend their use of the water or to boil it before drinking it.

'Advisory' versus 'notice'

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's guidance document on boil-water alerts says that the decision to issue a "notice" instead of an "advisory" depends on how certain they are that a water system has been contaminated. If system operators know the water is contaminated — revealed by bacteriological sampling or the occurrence of a waterborne disease outbreak — they send a "notice" because there is a threat to public health. Issuing a boil-water "advisory" is appropriate if officials only suspect that there may have been contamination.

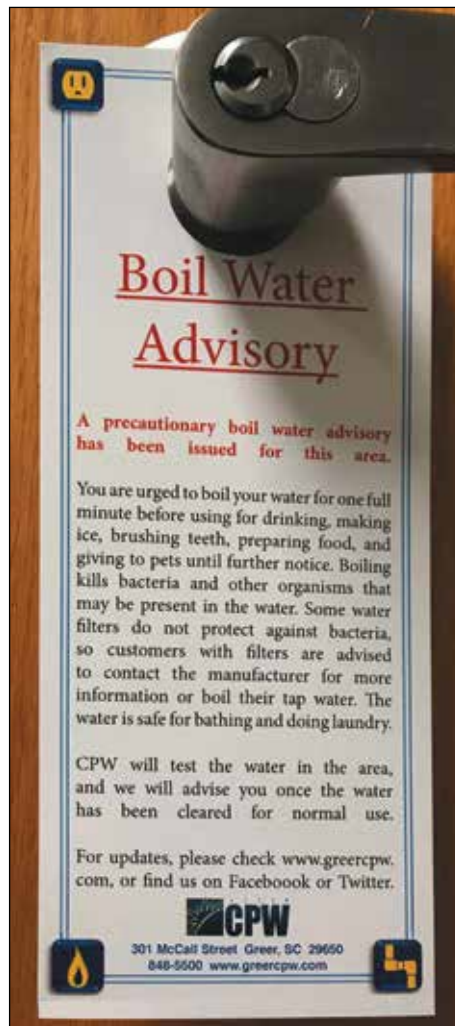
"We are working toward a implementing the app Nextdoor, where we can also send out push notifications to those who are signed up," said Mary-Wallace Riley, grants and communications manager for the City of Clinton. A push notification is a message that appears on a device's screen even when the app is not in use.

"We are in the very baby stages of using it," said Riley, who learned about Nextdoor at a recent American Public Power Conference that focused on connecting with customers.

"The neat thing about it is, we're not pushing things out," she said. "People have to sign up. They want to be informed."

Greer Commission of Public Works uses the mass notification system Everbridge to call customers, in addition to door hangers, Facebook and Twitter.

"This process has worked very well so far," said Greer CPW Public Information Officer Alison Rauch. "However, there is a constant struggle to get homeowners to update their contact number with us."



The Greer Commission of Public Works uses door hangers and other approaches to update residents on boil-water information. Photo: Greer CPW.

Like Greer CPW, the City of Columbia sends boil-water advisories through Everbridge. The service sends residents messages about road closures, evacuations, severe weather, missing persons and other news, as part of Columbia/Richland County alerts. It also lists a host of special needs that residents may identify, such as whether they have a wheelchair, oxygen tank, refrigerated medications, chemicals stored on-site, or sight, vision or speech impairments.

The messages go to all landlines in the affected area, but residents can request other ways to receive them, such as via cellphone. City officials also send press releases to local news outlets that include maps of affected areas, push alerts out to the city's social media feeds, and post advisories on Nixle, a platform similar to Everbridge, to send alerts based on subscribers' physical location.

Different avenues

"We have different avenues because everyone receives their information differently," said Jennifer Satterthwaite, utilities communications coordinator for the City of Columbia.

"Some folks rely on the social media feed, while others want personalized calls or messages sent directly to them."

The City of Batesburg-Leesville uses its website, Facebook and Twitter, CodeRED (community notification system) and direct phone calls and emails to disseminate information if officials know water will be affecting certain businesses and restaurants or organizations, such as schools.

"CodeRED is probably the most effective because we are able to target the specific area impacted," said Seth Duncan, assistant town manager. "The biggest tip I can offer is have a way to issue notices remotely. All of our tools



The Town of Lexington uses Twitter to share information about everything from town events and traffic alerts to police department announcements and boil-water advisories.



The City of Newberry maintains a separate utilities Twitter account to alert consumers to boil-water news, safety tips, photos from tours of its water treatment plant, National Linemen Appreciation Day and other relevant content.

are web based, so I can issue a notice from anywhere in the world, as long as I have an internet connection.”

The City of Newberry also uses CodeRED to notify consumers. Residents may sign up for the messages through the city’s website, using their home or business address, in order to receive emails, text messages or recorded voice messages, said Elyssa Haven, the city’s public information representative. The city uses CodeRED in addition to Facebook and Twitter for a variety of subjects, from festival reminders to boil-water alerts.

“We can select certain areas within the city to target that location,” Haven said. “It has a map feature where I can draw it or use a shape or circle to pinpoint it.”

In the Town of Pendleton, Assistant Administrator/Municipal Clerk Amber Barnes said if the affected area is small, town officials distribute door hangers at each residence, post the information to the town website and Facebook page, and email it to residents through MailChimp, an automated marketing platform that sends emails written

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- Elyssa Haven, Newberry’s public information representative

by town staff to specific audiences at scheduled times. But sometimes all residents need to be reached.

“If it’s the entire town, we do all the above plus a reverse 911 call through Anderson County to all residents inside town limits,” Barnes said. “We do this when the advisory or notice has been lifted, as well.”

Don’t forget

While protecting resident health is the immediate, primary concern, local

officials should also be aware of all regulatory reporting requirements and the city’s legal position.

Pollution, the presence of harmful substances, is not widely covered by general liability insurance. And the SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund may not include liabilities related to a particular type of pollution a city is addressing. So, depending on the causes of action in a possible lawsuit, a city may not have any coverage related to issues with contaminated water and, therefore, could be forced to defend against a lawsuit, said Heather Ricard, director of the Municipal Association’s Risk Management Services.

State regulators, too, play another role beyond taking water samples.

South Carolina’s State Primary Drinking Water Regulations require public water system operators to inform DHEC immediately if they issue a boil-water notice or advisory, along with a copy of the notice or advisory. The same goes for when a public water system issues a repeal.

A natural fit: Cities and waterbodies

Visitors to the City of Conway may stand just a block from the Waccamaw River, not knowing how close they are.

But that is going to change. City officials are working through the permitting process with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build a new 400-foot boardwalk section that will connect its river boardwalk to downtown. This is part of Conway's master plan to bring cohesiveness and public access to both areas.

Economic development plans, meanwhile, continue on a parallel track. Discussions in 2016 with the Burroughs Company, which owns land near the river, led to a public-private partnership with the city. The company agreed to donate real estate to the city. In exchange, the city will make infrastructure upgrades, including parking facilities, landscaping and utilities, to the benefit of the public and the company's remaining property and future development.

One restaurant, located in a historic building, is attached to the Conway Riverwalk, while a second building was recently sold and is expected to include a restaurant. Four new building sites near the riverwalk will include a hotel and other businesses, said Conway City Administrator Adam Emrick.

City officials used hospitality taxes to build the walkway and the park.

The city has a full-time grounds department that maintains the riverwalk and the surrounding landscaping. The city also installed wireless security cameras and has added a 100-foot transient boat dock on the riverwalk, the third dock on the promenade, he said.

The latest developments cap decades of efforts by city officials to maximize the river's benefits for residents, visitors and businesses. Three phases of construction from 1993 through 2009 brought about the Conway Riverwalk, a source of pride for

residents. Locals walk along it every day, including downtown workers who use it to grab some lunchtime exercise.

"The riverwalk is the physical tool that allows the river to be the experience," said Emrick. "When the riverwalk was constructed, the river, again, became part of who we were as a city and as a community. A renewed interest in the river as an amenity was immediate."

Conway illustrates just one way South Carolina cities are leveraging their natural water resources to enhance the quality of life, improve recreational offerings, and drive economic development and tourism. From the Conway Riverwalk to the new Pacolet River Passage Gateway Project to the Atlantic coast, municipal officials recognize the economic and quality-of-life benefits of their waterbodies.

The City of Beaufort's Waterfront Park is undergoing improvements to enhance the seaside experience of residents and visitors.

Water





The public enjoys the promenade at Waterfront Park in the City of Beaufort, which is undertaking underwater infrastructure repairs and constructing a new day dock. Photo: City of Beaufort.

“Everyone wants to be by the water,” said Linda Roper, Beaufort’s director of downtown operations and community services.

“All of our residents and tourists come down (to Beaufort’s Waterfront Park) regularly just to spend time on the water and feel the sea breeze, to sit on a swing and enjoy the salt air. Even in the summer, when you’re on the water, it feels cooler.”

Upkeep and repair

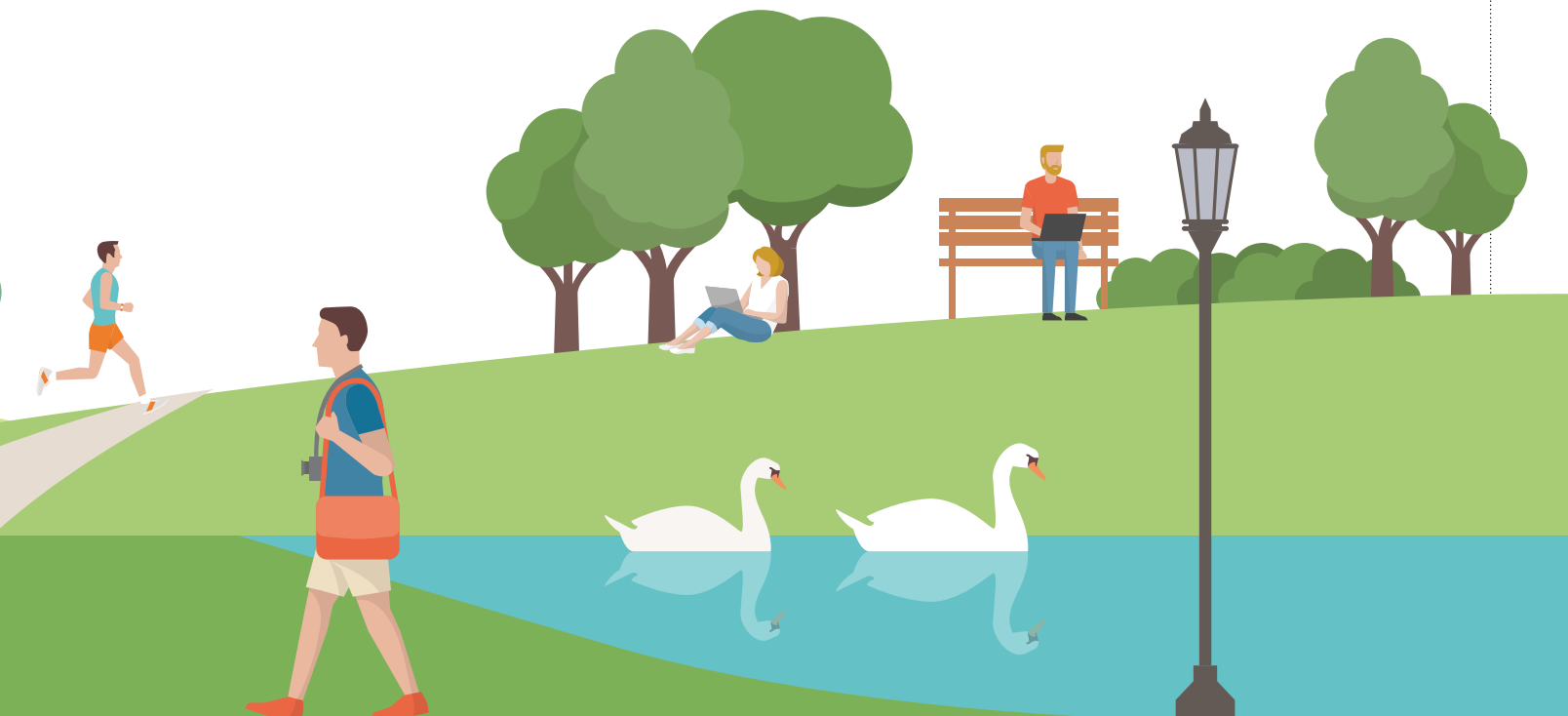
While it’s been an obvious success with locals and visitors, the Conway Riverwalk has seen its share of havoc wreaked by Mother Nature. In three of the last five years, the riverwalk was under water for at least a month as the flood of 2013, Hurricane Joaquin in 2015 and Hurricane Matthew in 2016 swamped Conway. This year, as the city begins a board replacement program of the riverwalk’s decking, city

officials are considering using rot-resistant composite board.

The City of Beaufort got an early start on waterfront revitalization, as it started leveraging its location on the Beaufort River in the late 1970s, when former Mayor Henry Chambers pushed his vision for a waterfront showplace everyone could enjoy. The city worked diligently to secure state and federal grant funding to acquire property, work with local businesses and build the park.

“It made Beaufort thrive. It took some years, but the economic impact was huge,” Roper said. “It started shifting into seeing different types of businesses along the water. And today we have restaurants with dining on Waterfront Park. They have taken advantage of being on waterfront property that’s absolutely gorgeous.”

Beaufort spends about \$300,000 each year for daily maintenance of the park. The waterfront park went through a multimillion dollar restoration and partial redesign in 2006, according to Roper. Now, the city is repairing and replacing the pilings under the promenade, which has been at the water’s edge since the 1970s. The project includes a new day dock attached to the park to allow boaters to arrive by water, tie up their boats and enjoy downtown Beaufort.



Destination ahead

In the Town of Pacolet, the Pacolet River is already a valuable asset to the community but will soon become more of a gathering spot, according to Mayor Mike Meissner. The \$1.47 million gateway project will include a park and recreation area along the south side of the river, featuring trails, walkways, river overlooks, swings and benches. The project also includes construction of a roundabout to replace the intersection near the new park.

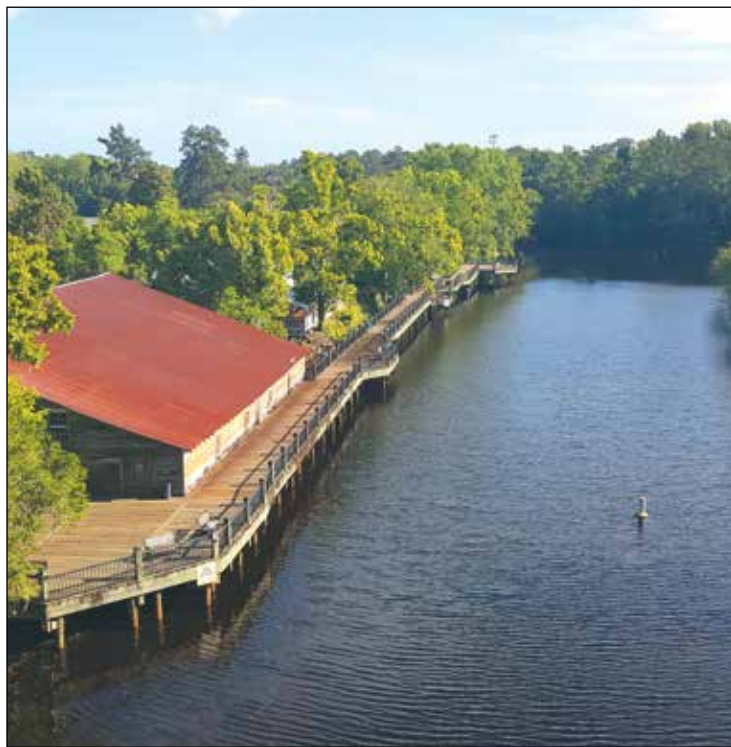
“Right now, it’s a place with some grass and parking lots. It’s not a place to hang out or sit around and enjoy,” Meissner said. “But when we bring in this greenspace and fix the road, we’re going to make this a destination.”

The town is in the process of putting the project out for bids, with the work expected to take six to nine months to complete once construction begins.

“We’re going to have a waterfront park right there for the whole community. In the long term, we want to add some trails. The idea is that it’s not only an asset to community members, but it’s also an asset to bring in tourists,” Meissner said. “It’s going to be another asset we’ll have for our community and the surrounding communities.”

The area’s connection with the river goes back centuries. Long before textile mills set up on the river, it was home to one of the largest Native American soapstone quarries in the country.

“The Pacolet River is not too far from urban areas, so if you live in the City of Spartanburg, you don’t have to drive all the way to Asheville or Columbia to do stuff along the river,” Meissner said. “It’s just 10 minutes down the road.”



The City of Conway’s three-phased riverwalk project began in the 1990s and now includes a riverfront park, arboretum and boat ramp. Photo: City of Conway.

Factor in public access, heavy usage

They’ve been there — They’ve done it. And along the way, city officials have gathered lessons about enhancing the public’s access to rivers, lakes and shorelines.

Linda Roper, Director of Downtown Operations and Community Services, City of Beaufort

Keep the public first. Roper suggests that towns looking to take advantage of their water features develop a plan that combines efforts to encourage business creation on the waterfront with steps to make sure the area stays open and accessible to the public.

“Whether people want to touch their toes in the water or not, you need to understand that if you build and allow unfettered access to the water, it brings economic development. Stay the course, don’t limit access,” Roper said.

“It all should be public. You want businesses to be able to use it, but you don’t want them to overtake it. Once you build it, they’ll come.”

Adam Emrick, City Administrator, City of Conway

The City of Conway’s 1½-mile river boardwalk invites residents and visitors alike to enjoy the beauty of the Waccamaw River.

- Plan for heavy usage and expect to replace sections of boardwalk.
- Expect your waterways to flood. Be willing to close amenities to the public when they are unsafe, and expect damaged infrastructure to surface after the waters recede.
- Include features that will make perfect stops for photographs along your waterway. In Conway, the riverfront serves as a popular backdrop for high schoolers posing for prom photos. Build features into the infrastructure that reflect the character of your city, so that people can identify where the picture was taken without the need for words.
- Make the waterway the showcase for your city, but make sure that it does not detract from your existing downtown or business district. Coordinate plans at the outset to tie the waterway amenities together with the downtown, or city officials will later spend years trying to figure out how to do it.



The Town of Mount Pleasant's Spill Response Team catches incidents — such as this one, in which someone dumped paint into a neighborhood pond — before substances enter the stormwater drain and pollute surrounding watersheds. Photo: Town of Mount Pleasant Spill Response Team.

Cities wield facts to protect water

It was oily, about two school buses large and spreading.

The sheen of motor oil was drifting across the pond's surface — the unfortunate result of a resident's decision to dump a gas-and-oil mixture down the drain in a yard.

First, the Town of Mount Pleasant fought the spill with booms — large socks filled with oil-absorbent material.

Then the town fought the spill with education.

Because the pond was part of neighborhood governed by a homeowner association, town officials sent an email to the HOA offering tips on getting rid of used oil, Environmental Protection Agency flyers on homeowner best practices, a no-dumping flyer that the

town staff created, and its local discharge advertisement to share with residents via the HOA's own communication channels.

“Our main goal was to provide the property manager with some informational tips they could share with the community,” said Stormwater Manager Hillary Repik.

Her department uses outreach flyers and products from its education partners, Clemson's Carolina Clear and Ashley Cooper Stormwater Education Consortium, along with educational products that are tailored for commercial and construction companies.

Clemson Extension's Carolina Clear program works with municipalities, counties, universities and other groups, providing workshops, resources, tools,



demonstration projects and events to raise public awareness of stormwater issues and promote behaviors that protect the state's water resources.

For instance, Carolina Clear offers cities signs that say “Please hold the bread. It's making us sick” to install around their stormwater ponds, urging the public not to feed bread to the geese. Doing so gives the birds digestive problems and prompts them to stay put instead of migrating, which ultimately causes the water to become polluted by waste.

Cities wield facts, page 14 >

Cities wield facts, from page 13 >



Educational signage on one of the City of Columbia's pet-waste bag stations explains that residents should "trash the poop" in order to prevent waste from polluting streams and rivers. Photo: City of Columbia.

Pet impacts

Geese aren't the only culprits.

More than 6,000 dogs and cats are registered with the department that serves the City of Columbia and Richland County. A single dog produces almost a pound of waste every day.

Dog waste — like herbicides, insecticides, oils and grease — is "nonpoint source" pollution because it doesn't come from a single source, such as a discharge pipe. Pet waste carries bacteria, parasites and worms that pollute waterways, potentially sickening people, pets and wildlife by transmitting diseases and releasing excess nutrients into the water, which cause toxic algal blooms.

The City of Columbia, like other municipalities, is required to offer educational outreach as part of its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit.

A municipal separate storm sewer system — known more commonly as an MS4 — must meet public education and outreach requirements to satisfy the

conditions of its NPDES stormwater permit.

"Municipalities have a great deal of flexibility in choosing exactly how to develop and implement this particular control measure to meet their NPDES permit requirement," said James Pinckney, an external affairs official in the EPA's Region 4 office in Atlanta.

"Therefore, in developing the public education and outreach program, municipalities can vary the degree and complexity of this program component to effectively address local water quality concerns."

In Columbia, as in other cities and towns, residents occupy a wide spectrum of awareness of their role in controlling water pollution.

"It's been eye opening dealing with pet owners because you've got one side that is really conscientious and another side that either assumes that it's good for the grass, like horse manure — which is not the case — or just don't want to worry about it," said Jennifer

Satterthwaite utilities communications coordinator for the city.

Neighborhood listserves chronicle a host of frustrations and misconceptions about efforts to keep pet waste and other pollutants from washing down storm drains.

"It's a flashpoint issue for sure," said Satterthwaite.

For instance, in Columbia, residents may rake their leaves and other yard trimmings into a heap at the curb to be swept up by the city. But when dog walkers drop a bag of waste on top of a curbside leaf pile, they unknowingly scuttle that entire leaf pile's pickup because the waste cannot be mulched.

Civic investment

It's difficult to categorize a typical offender, which means it can be difficult to customize stormwater education efforts for a specific audience.

"You have to remember there is a pretty large chunk of our population that's transient," said Satterthwaite. City



The Town of Mount Pleasant's Spill Response Team uses added training, targeted informational materials, an upfitted public services truck, and minimal supplies to protect groundwater, ponds, watersheds and creeks. Photo: Town of Mount Pleasant Spill Response Team.

workers have observed that college students have been some of the more careless residents when it comes to disposing of their dogs' waste. It's a tendency that could have something to do with students' status as temporary residents who may plan to move away after graduation.

But even very young schoolchildren seem to have a lot to learn about the importance of keeping pet waste out of the environment.

"When I've been to schools speaking with younger kids, very few of them knew about this," said Nell Orscheln, utilities communication coordinator for Columbia. "I was surprised by that."

In contrast, Satterthwaite and Orscheln encountered an older woman who said her husband "does his rounds." He walks through the neighborhood disposing of any pet waste he sees.

"Older generations may be more engaged in citizenship," said Satterthwaite.

Saving water

While safe, clean water is vital, so is making sure there is enough to go around. Through the month of April, Columbia officials challenged residents to pledge a change in habits in order to reduce water consumption.



The City of Columbia took to Twitter to share testimonials from residents about its water conservation campaign.

Pledge takers participating in the Wyland National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation committed to any number of actions and habits, such as fixing leaky toilets, taking shorter showers, only sprinkling the lawn before 8 a.m. to ensure the water is absorbed instead of evaporated, and using refillable water bottles instead of disposable ones.

Other measures are less obviously tied to water but still help reduce water usage or protect water quality. For instance, avoiding food waste means easing the demand on farming and livestock operations, which consume substantial amounts of water.

Mary Pat Baldauf, sustainability facilitator, said the Wyland Foundation provided all the public outreach resources for the nonprofit national community service campaign, including an informational kit with press materials.

"It's fairly turnkey," she said of the water challenge campaign.

"You can do as little or as much as you want to do. We just jumped in and embraced it a little more this year."

Prepare for drought conditions

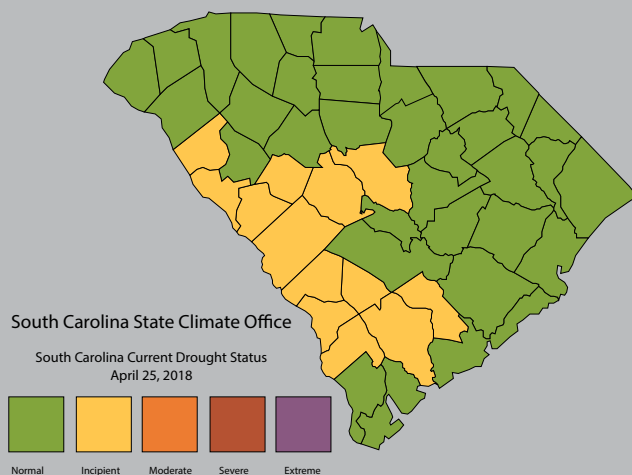
Local drought management efforts change in response to changing weather conditions, and not all plans work for each season. Keeping the public involved and informed in the decision-making process is key to implementing an effective drought management plan.

The S.C. Drought Response Act of 2000 requires that all water utility providers adopt a local drought management plan that addresses how water would be conserved during certain stages of drought — incipient, moderate, severe and extreme.

The Drought Response Committee of state and local representatives from the state's four drought management zones periodically coordinates responses to water supply shortages. The committee decides if there is any level of drought in the state by reviewing average temperatures; precipitation; crop moisture index; future weather forecasts; and river flow, lake and groundwater levels.

The S.C. Climatology Office recommends officials undertake predrought planning efforts (See article at left for creative ways to conserve water). Some preresponse measures aimed at conserving the system's source water include

- Identifying all major water users of the system (the top 10 percent heaviest users, including wholesale customers).
- Identifying water users with whom there are conservation agreements.
- Conducting a vigorous public education program. An effective public outreach program will keep the public informed about the water supply situation, what actions will mitigate drought emergency problems, and how well the public is meeting the program goals.





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Calendar

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

JUNE

5 SC Business Licensing Officials Association ABL Exam. Municipal Association of SC.

7 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Second Quarter Meeting. Columbia Conference Center. Topics include watershed plans, information on the federal 319 grant program and updates from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

7 Setoff Debt Collection Program Regional Refresher Training for Current Participants. Greenville City Hall. Refresher training for current participants who have previously attended a training session.

10 – 13 SC Association of Municipal Power Systems Annual Meeting. Hilton Head Marriott. Topics include solar energy; the effects of emerging technology on utilities; information technology security and ransomware; customer service; and business intelligence for municipal power systems.

19 Setoff Debt Collection Program Regional Refresher Training for Current Participants. Mount Pleasant Town Hall. Refresher training for current participants who have previously attended a training session.

20 – 22 Main Street South Carolina meeting. Georgetown.

20 Setoff Debt Collection Program Regional Refresher Training for Current Participants. Municipal Association of SC. Refresher training for current participants who have previously attended a training session.

26 Setoff Debt Collection Program Regional Refresher Training for Current Participants. Florence City Center.

Refresher training for current participants who have previously attended a training session.

JULY

19 – 22 Municipal Association of SC Annual Meeting. Hilton Head Marriott.

AUGUST

7 SC Business Licensing Officials Association ABL Exam. Municipal Association of SC.

7 Setoff Debt Collection Program Mandatory Training Session for Interested Participants. Municipal Association of SC. For interested participants who have never attended a training session.

9 Setoff Debt Collection Program Mandatory Training Session for New Employees of Current Participants. Municipal Association of SC. For current participants with new employees who have never attended a training session.