UPTOWN

MASC — Municipal Association of South Carolina

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Cities Battle Flooding, Search for Fixes

When Hurricane Florence brought devastating floods to the Carolinas in September, it was another reminder to South Carolinians that the threat of too much water with nowhere to go isn't so unexpected anymore.

In many South Carolina cities and towns, navigating floodwaters has become a dangerous way of life.

The thing about flooding in the City of Hanahan is that it doesn't take a major weather event anymore — Any old heavy rain will do it.

"In a matter of minutes, there's nowhere for the water to go, so the streets are flooded. We've had houses flooded," said Hanahan Councilmember Christie Rainwater, adding that local officials have become well-versed in Federal Emergency Management Agency processes.

"We've become best friends with FEMA because the problem has happened over and over," she said. "Just when we get something settled with FEMA, we've got more to work on."

In This Issue

Rainwater commonly hears something like this from residents: "I've lived here 30 years and maybe had one or two flooding problems, but now it's every year. When there's a very bad storm, I'm holding my breath."

In short, flooding is getting worse in Hanahan and beyond.

"We have to close down roads, and our concern is people can't get home or get out of their homes," said Hanahan City Administrator Johnny Cribb. "It concerns us with emergency services and response."

In Hanahan, several factors are driving the worsening flood risks. Consider the area's rapid growth: Hanahan's population increased 38 percent from 2010 to 2017. This has spurred development, which results in expanses of impermeable paved surfaces. Rather than seep into the ground, rain becomes stormwater runoff and can overwhelm stormwater infrastructure. And as a coastal state, South Carolina is among those most immediately affected by rising sea levels resulting from climate change.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began a study this year, supported through a 50-50 cost share with the city and Berkeley County, to take a deeper look at the causes of flooding in Hanahan, said Cribb. Engineers will study a host of conditions, including the role of rain fall, the tidal influence, the creeks and the tide within the creeks.

"This study will show us the contributing factors to the flooding and if there are any projects that could help with that," Cribb said. "And it may identify projects that could help, such as putting flap gates on pipes so water can only go out but can't go in or building detention ponds to catch stormwater."

Pipes from the past

The City of Lake City regularly experiences flooding in certain areas in and around town, especially after 2 or more inches of rain.

"This is largely due to the fact that our stormwater drainage system is an aging system with some drainage lines designed in the 1940s and 1950s," said Stephany Snowden, the city administrator.

"This results in some structural failures, drain collapses and infiltration into our sewer system."

She said the city has started to take a more comprehensive view of its flooding issues and is addressing these problems through the use of its county capital sales tax, as well as FEMA hazard mitigation funds.

Flooding in the City of Lake City occurs frequently and can be attributed in part to the city's aging infrastructure. Photos: City of Lake City.

Flooding in the City of Hanahan.

"Lake City is not unlike small cities or even larger ones that, due to the high price tag and resources, have consistently deferred maintenance of its system and is reaching a point where it can no longer afford to not address its aging infrastructure," said Snowden. "It really is incumbent upon communities to educate their residents, stop making excuses and figure out a way forward."

Bygone development practices affect the present

Flooding presents some issues in the City of Fountain Inn, said City Administrator Shawn Bell, but the problem is not nearly as severe as it is in Lake City, where he served for three years as the city manager.

Bell said decades ago, developers built communities with no stormwater infrastructure, whatsoever.

"It just didn't get built," he said. "Nowadays, when subdivisions are being built, that couldn't happen. That process would have to include culverts and infrastructure." The legacy of the developments with no stormwater pipes can be felt across the Pee Dee, he said.

"A lot of times, the infrastructure was put in by the state Department of Transportation, but now they don't have the money to pay for crumbling stormwater pipes," Bell said. "It's a statewide issue."

Cayce City Manager Brian Watkins also pointed to the legacy of past practices.

"The root cause of the flooding has been the increased development patterns over the past few decades and the changes that have happened in stormwater management codes over time," he said.

"As both commercial and residential properties were developed, stormwater management methods were not always required. Furthermore, lots that were historically ponds or ponding areas have been filled or paved."

Getting the parties on board

Flooding isn't as severe in the City of Forest Acres because the city is already built out to a large extent, said City Administrator Shaun Greenwood, who is also the former assistant city manager of Cayce.

"The biggest problem that I can see with flooding — this was true in Cayce as well — is that most of the drainage ditches and channels don't technically belong to anyone," said Greenwood. "This is especially true in older neighborhoods where there are no existing easements for the DOT, the county or the city to maintain existing drainage systems that are on private property."

In Cayce, which draws visitors from the area and beyond to its scenic riverwalk, some areas of the city will flood even without a heavy rain.

In 2015, the city commissioned a drainage study to identify the primary sources of the problems and receive recommendations for improvements.

"In order to address the drainage issues, the city must first improve the drainage system by increasing the capacity of ditches and replace pipes in their current locations," said Watkins.

"The largest challenge standing in our way is that the solution requires a multijurisdictional approach for funding, construction and maintenance," he said. "Without all parties on board and participating, we cannot make significant improvements to the stormwater infrastructure in Cayce."

One of those parties could be the SC Legislature.

General Assembly could offer cities flexibility

Cities have limited tools to help incentivize more flood-friendly development.

In some cities and towns, developers or property owners can earn credits that will reduce their stormwater fees if they are developing properties that will reduce the amount of impervious surfaces.

"And the use of pavers or alternative paving or bricked area, the use of pervious concrete and also efforts to include a certain percentage of green space all help to reduce the amount of runoff from those properties," said Eric Budds, deputy executive director of the Municipal Association.

But the need for a larger-scale policy solution remains — the flexibility to use other revenue to improve infrastructure.

The Municipal Association supported S917 in the last legislative session. The bill would have allowed accommodations and hospitality tax revenue to be used to control and repair flooding and drainage on tourism-related lands. The legislation did not pass, but the issue of freeing up resources to address flooding is likely to return in the upcoming session.

A city doesn't need to be a major tourism hub for flooding to discourage visitors from coming.

"The extent to which flooding indirectly affects tourism would be its effects of limiting potential tourists on our Cayce Riverwalk, if we needed to close the walkway due to flooding or high river conditions," said City Manager Brian Watkins.

"When our primary thoroughfare, Knox Abbott Drive, has flooding or high water locations, it negatively impacts businesses because the street and sidewalk are impassable by cars or pedestrians."

In the City of Hanahan, officials have noticed that flooding has grown more severe over the years. Photo: City of Hanahan.

Highlight What's Local at City Events

Public street events that focus on what's local and unique — instead of going general and themeless in an effort to increase the size of an event — can strengthen a city's sense of place.

Take the City of Seneca, where the local impacts of community groups are on display at a popular weekly festival. The Humane Society, Safe Harbor, a domestic violence assistance organization, and Our Daily Rest, a shelter for the homeless, are just a few of the organizations the city has boosted through Jazz on the Alley, its outdoor music festival, which is held weekly from April through October.

"We invite public service organizations and charities to 'hey, come down, bring your information, put your table out there, and tell me about what you're doing,'" said Riley Johnson, the city's events coordinator. "Because you can't talk about charities and nonprofits enough."

Jazz on the Alley has also helped municipal elected officials engage with a greater diversity of residents on different, more positive terms.

"It gives City Council members a chance to meet their constituents in a nonboard-room atmosphere," said Johnson. "Often when people show up to council chambers, it's for complaints about something. But here, it's 'thank you for this event.'"

The City of Greer also saw the public service value of holding a fun, outdoor event with a special local theme.

With three rail companies — CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern Railway and Amtrak — sharing railroad tracks, a growing population of young families, and heavier rail traffic due to the addition of Inland Port Greer in 2013, Greer officials knew they had to emphasize public safety. There had already been eight accidents involving trains from 2015 to 2017, including two pedestrian fatalities.

So the city partnered with Operation Lifesaver, a national organization that promotes rail safety, to create Railfest, a family fun and educational event funded

The City of Greer's RailFest emphasizes train safety for motorists and pedestrians, while featuring live music and model trains. Photo: City of Greer.

in part by the city and a grant from the SC Ports Authority. The event featured Norfolk Southern's Lawmen Band, made up of members of the railroad's police department, and safety videos and handouts about changing motorists' and pedestrians' behaviors.

"We had four to five local train clubs come out, and that was where our adult audience was really growing. … Now, not only is our event for children and for them to hear safety tips, but they also get to see adults who still love trains as much as they do and still see the importance," said Ashlyn Stone, who served as the city's events supervisor during the 2017 RailFest.

Careful branding

Several strategic elements go into the renowned Greenville Saturday Market.

"Saturday Market started small and has grown into this wonderful event for us that people look forward to. It has grown but it's a very purposeful growth that we don't just accept any vendor or just let anything happen here," said Angie Prosser, director of public information and events for the City of Greenville. "We focus on local, and we focus on quality, and that has made our market so special."

The City of Seneca's Jazz on the Alley event helps raise the profile of local public service organizations. Photo: City of Seneca.

Vendors that have applied for a spot in the market must meet specific local and uniqueness standards.

"We want a good variety, and we don't want to have a saturation of a particular product. So we are very deliberate," she said.

"What produce do they bring? Where are they? Do we need the product? Is it unique? Is it filling a niche?" Prosser added. "It has to be local, even to the point of if you're making pies, are you buying the products locally?"

She said the market makes some rare exceptions, such as products that otherwise aren't available at the market. For instance, the market allows a salmon fisherman who fishes in Alaska each year to sell his catch. The only other market he frequents besides the Greenville market is in Asheville, North Carolina.

Vendors must undergo thorough vetting before they are allowed to set up at the market.

Greenville can afford to be selective. For example, the city conducts farm visits. If a tomato grower applies for a spot at the market, staff visits the farm before accepting the farmer as a vendor. They look at the farm's practices and conditions and ensure that it is less than 100 miles away.

"If there's someone local who offers the same thing, then we definitely wouldn't accept it from someone outside the area," said Prosser. "Let's say we have a farmer

The City of Greenville's TD Saturday Market accepts vendors who meet specific standards in location and uniqueness. Photo: City of Greenville.

here in Greenville County — I'll use tomatoes — and you're applying from Spartanburg. We're going to give priority to a farmer close to Greenville."

Attracting vendors can be more difficult for smaller towns, which have significantly less foot traffic. That means rather than setting up a stand at a small-town farmers market, farmers may find it more lucrative to do business with farm-to-table restaurants and boutique grocery stores looking to stock their aisles with local produce.

But small towns may find that another aspect of the Greenville market's success is one they can replicate. Greenville pays careful attention to the market's appearance — a feature that makes the city's market visually distinct. The city creates all the branding for the market, which is sponsored by TD Bank, and ensures that each tent and banner is perfectly uniform.

"We control the look and feel of our market," said Prosser. "We do that for all our events."

Legal Steps to Playing Movies and Music

Cities and towns should be careful to avoid running afoul of copyright laws when planning events. The Town of Lexington co-hosts Movies in the Park with the Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission. The city provides the venue, the Icehouse Amphitheater, which won a Municipal Achievement Award in 2017, along with Lexington Police Department support. The county recreation commission purchases the rights of a given movie through Swank.

As for concerts that take place at the Icehouse Amphitheater, the town is permitted to play short clips of songs. But due to copyright restraints, the town cannot play video or use Facebook Live or other means to broadcast a song in its entirety.

The town's information technology department has licensing rights with AudioBlocks to use music in any of the town's video productions.

Residents enjoy movies and events at the Icehouse Amphitheater in the Town of Lexington. Photo: Town of Lexington.

Prevent Crashes with Defensive Driving

From motor vehicles to bicycles, animals, construction hazards and other roadway elements, drivers have countless potential hazards to avoid. Automobile accident-related injury claims averaged nearly 6 percent of the total number of SC Municipal Insurance Trust claims in more than the last five years. Since 2013 that percentage has ranged from 5.6 percent up to 17.7 percent.

"While minimizing the expenses and liabilities associated with collisions is important, SCMIT's primary goal in providing this type of training is to protect your most valuable asset, your employees," said Heather Ricard, director of the Municipal Association's Risk Management Services.

Injury or death from a workplace vehicle collision can have a devastating impact on the employee's family, coworkers and the city's reputation for years to come. Driving defensively increases everyone's chance of a good outcome. Motor vehicle accidents are the number one cause of fatalities in the workplace, and cities should make training a priority since many city positions require employees to drive city vehicles. In most cases, the accidents are caused by backing and rear-ending collisions, but it only takes one major injury to change the lives of the employee and residents.

RMS members recently completed defensive driver training in order to minimize collisions and the expenses and liabilities that can accompany them. The training used National Safety Council course materials, which include a variety of tips and information, including the following "Fatal Four Driving Behaviors:"

- **Speeding** – Nearly one-third of driving fatalities involve speeding, according to the 2012 edition of the National Safety Council's Injury Facts. Always reduce speed when entering work zones and schools zones. If another vehicle is tailgating, slow down and let it pass. Most fatalities occur from midnight to 6 a.m.

- **Right of way** – Violations include failure to yield, rolling through a stop sign, running a red light and other disregard for traffic signals, blocking an intersection, and failing to yield to a school bus or emergency vehicle. If stopped at an intersection and the light turns green, a driver should count for 2 seconds, scanning left, right, forward and left again, before accelerating.

- **Driving left of center** – Ask yourself before deciding to pass: "Is this absolutely necessary?" If yes, only pass when it is safe and legal and when you can do so without speeding.

- **Following too closely** – Use the 3-second rule: Watch the vehicle in front of you pass a billboard (or other fixed object). As its rear bumper passes the billboard, count "one-thousand and one; one-thousand and two; one-thousand and three." Your front bumper should not pass the billboard until after you have finished counting. If it does, you're following too closely.

Cities with membership in the SC Municipal Insurance Trust *program are eligible for a free four-hour defensive driver training offered through the National Safety Council. For more information, contact Venyke Harley, loss control manager, at 803.933.1210 or vharley@masc.sc.*

Top Causes of Distracted Driving

- ▶ **Passengers**
- ▶ **Cellphone**
- ▶ **Eating and drinking**
- ▶ **Audio/music technology**
- ▶ **GPS devices**

Don't Forget to Complete the 2019 Compensation Survey

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

It's a well-known fact that to attract and retain valuable employees, cities and towns must offer competitive wages and salaries. Depending on location, a municipality may be drawing from the same applicant pool as state agencies, counties, hospitals and private corporations. The online tool allows officials to ensure their city's compensation scale is competitive with other municipalities with comparable populations and budgets.

Participating in the survey is optional; however, the Association encourages all municipalities to complete the online survey every year. Widespread participation makes the information more useful. The 2019 survey will be available for data entry from January 7 until February 22.

Cities Share Ideas for Legislative Session

The nine Regional Advocacy Meetings held across the state from the middle of August through the middle September gave 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.

1. In the City of Clemson, attendees of a Regional Advocacy Meeting share their challenges and issues of importance with Municipal Association staff.

2. Tiger Wells, government affairs liaison for the Municipal Association, briefs attendees of a Regional Advocacy Meeting in the City of Florence on current legislative issues the SC General Assembly could address in 2019.

NEWS BRIEFS

The towns of **Allendale** and **Summerville** and cities of **Union** and **Lake City** have been added to the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government's Honor Roll. The Honor Roll recognizes annually the city councils that can count all members of their sitting council as graduates of the Municipal Association's MEO Institute.
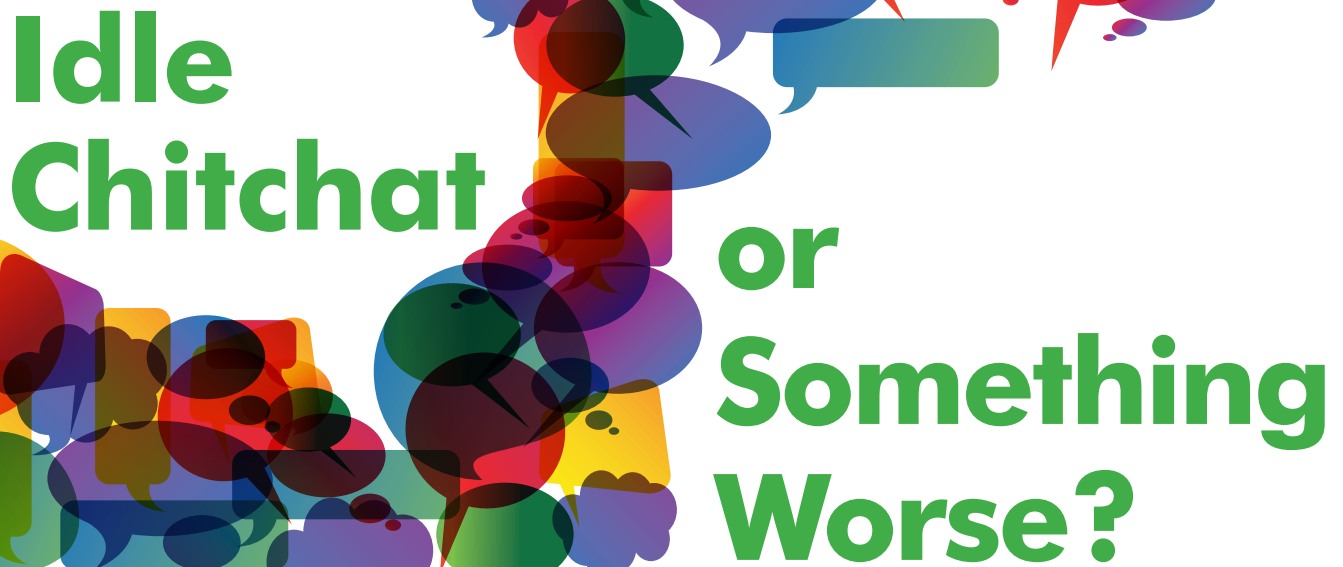
Coastal Living magazine ranked the **Town of Bluffton** at No. 5 in the 2018 list of "America's Happiest Seaside Towns."

The **City of Georgetown** won "Best Coastal Small Town" in a 10 Best Readers' Choice list published by *USA Today*.

Realtor.com named the **City of Myrtle Beach** the fifth most affordable beach town in the country.

Time magazine named **Greenville Mayor Knox White** to its list of "31 People Who Are Changing the South."

The National Weather Service has renewed the **Town of Hilton Head Island's** StormReady recognition through July 2021. The town first received the designation in July 2015. StormReady is the National Weather Service's national community preparedness program that helps communities with communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property in case of a severe weather event.

Idle Chitchat or Something Worse?

The headline was "Four Women Fired for Gossiping."

The town employees of Hooksett, New Hampshire, were dismissed, in part, "for gossiping and discussing rumors of an improper relationship between the town administrator and another employee that Hooksett residents now agree were not true," according to an ABC News report.

"Gossip, whispering and an unfriendly environment are causing poor morale and interfering with the efficient performance of town business," the Town Council concluded.

The firings led to at least two settlements for employees who sued the town. But the ordeal could have all been avoided. The lesson? Gossip in the workplace is a serious problem that can have grave consequences for local governments and municipal officials. It's not a matter of freedom of speech. It's a matter of whether an employee is undermining and disrupting a place of employment.

But everyone gossips a little, right? And what if the chatter is of a positive nature — a coworker is expecting a child, engaged to be married, won an award or will be taking on an exciting new project?

"That kind of talk is good for a team," said Nancy Grunnet, regional vice president for First Sun EAP, whose expertise includes manager/supervisor skill building, team building, stress and morale.

"The focus is on connection, on a shared positive experience. It's about putting others up, not vying for position by putting them down."

In short, the subject matter of workplace discourse is key.

"Sometimes people think that to fit in, they must edge others out," Grunnet said. "They think being top dog or leader of the pack means talking about others or putting others down so that you then appear superior."

She said this kind of gossip can actually backfire on the gossiper.

"Most people see through that, and in the end, they walk away — not with positive impressions of the person gossiping but rather with images of caution tape in their mind and that, 'I had better protect myself.'"

Grunnet also highlighted a common hesitation managers have about addressing the office social climate.

"Managers become frustrated with the subject of gossip because they are unsure of when to step in or how to step in," she said.

"They think the social realm is not really their domain."

However, Grunnet said, if gossip has risen to the level of disrupting the workplace and the business of work, managers must address the problem.

Grunnet will present a session on workplace gossip during the SC Municipal Human Resources Association's Annual Meeting November 14 – 16 on Hilton Head Island.

Effects of negative gossip include
- *Hurt feelings*
- *Disrupted work*
- *Work mistakes or unsafe choices*
- *Staff turnover*

Managers should intervene under various circumstances, including
- *If at any time any individual's performance or team performance is suffering*
- *If the gossip has disrupted the workplace and the business of work*
- *If employee motivation and morale is being negatively affected*

Ethics Tip: Disclose Private Income Sources

According to a 2017 amendment to the Ethics Act, individuals filing Statements of Economic Interests after January 1, 2017, must disclose the source (but not the actual amount) of private income received by the filer or a member of his immediate family. This does not include income received relative to court orders; interest received on a savings, checking or brokerage account with a licensed financial institution; or most mutual funds.

Don't forget — immediate family includes a child residing in the household, a spouse or an individual claimed as a dependent for tax purposes. For more information, refer to Section 8-13-1120 of the Ethics Reform Act.

The monthly Ethics Tip was provided by the SC Ethics Commission. Commission Executive Director Meghan Walker will present provisions of the State Ethics Act and how local officials must comply with them on Thursday, October 25, during the SC Business Licensing Officials Association/SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association Joint Annual Meeting.

MEO — Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

Test yourself monthly quiz

True or False: "The property tax assessment ratio for commercial and an owner-occupied residential property is the same."

Answer: False

The South Carolina Constitution sets eight classifications of property, each with a different assessment rate. The constitution establishes the different rates so owners who earn an income from their property would pay a higher tax. Manufacturing property has a 10.5 percent assessment rate. Commercial property and residential rental property have a 6 percent rate, while owner-occupied residential property is assessed at 4 percent.

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 Advanced MEO Institute sessions on October 24 will be Advanced Budgeting and Finance and Advanced Leadership and Governance.

Police Can Use Social Media, Too

Information Technology

Through the release of information, law enforcement departments have many opportunities to increase transparency, build bonds with residents, solicit the public's help in an investigation and ensure emergency information gets to the public in real time.

The Brechner Center for Freedom of Information's report, "Transparency and Media Relations in High-Profile Police Cases," offers guidelines for agencies to consider during a variety of situations, including instances when the department must explain an officer's use of force against a member of the public.

"In this environment, all law enforcement agencies should maintain and enforce 'model transparency practices' consistent not just with the disclosure requirements of state law but with best practices in the field, informed by the demands of a public accustomed to a 24/7 news cycle," reads the report.

There must be a balance, however.

"While we do want them to be proactive, if it is a situation that involves potential liability to the department or officers, then we would want them to consult with their attorney prior to releasing information to the media," said Heather Ricard, director of the Municipal Association's Risk Management Services.

In being proactive, social media can be a powerful tool.

In 2016, the Major Cities Chiefs Association and the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Executive Institute Association placed the social media program of the Denver Police Department, which livestreams press briefings via Twitter's Periscope app, in a top 10 list of social media followers among law enforcement agencies around the world.

The report says a department's social media program — working as a complement, not a substitute, for traditional interactions with the news media — can increase public trust, community engagement, resident cooperation on investigations and a better response to a police department's honest mistakes.

The report states: "As part of a comprehensive social-media strategy, agencies should review and, where necessary, modernize their freedom of information policies to incorporate 'pushing' information to the public through social channels."

The following is a summary of the Denver Police Department's tips:

- Social media posts should include positive stories of law enforcement engagement with the community in addition to breaking critical or catastrophic events in real time.

- "Breaking your own news" requires law enforcement agencies to disclose information on social media as a story unfolds and allows the agency to control the message as well as timing. These messages can not only be useful for the sake of informing, but may also serve as an early warning system to followers when critical events are taking place.

- "Play show and tell." Law enforcement personnel can see what is being done within their department, how information is being communicated to the public and responses from members of the community.

- "Don't underestimate the power of fluffy bunnies." Human interest news "may be just as important as sharing critical information in order to develop community relationships and build trust in the law enforcement agency. Such stories draw community engagement through likes, shares and comments — especially when combined with multimedia components."

- Mistakes happen but should not result in hesitancy to disclose information. The correct response, according to the department, is to always tell the truth, admit making a mistake and explain the remedy.

- Track social media posts to evaluate which channels are most effective, and allocate resources accordingly.

Source: Brechner Center for Freedom of Information

Traveling? Pack Your Cyber Smarts

Whether catching up on emails at the airport, working from a hotel café or toting your collection of devices from place to place, cybersecurity and securing all internet-enabled mobile devices should remain a top concern.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Stop.Think.Connect.™ public awareness campaign offers simple ways for government employees to stay safe while traveling. They include the following:

- **Before you go, update your software.** Keep your operating system software and apps updated, which will improve your device's ability to defend against malware.

- **Stop auto connecting.** Disable remote connectivity and Bluetooth, which enables your device to connect wirelessly with other devices, such as headphones or automobile infotainment systems. Some devices will automatically seek and connect to available wireless networks. Disable remote connectivity and Bluetooth features so that you only connect to wireless and Bluetooth networks when you want to instead of automatically.

- **Be wary of public wireless networks.** Before connecting to any public wireless hotspot — such as those available in airplanes, airports, hotels, transit stations or cafés — first be sure to confirm the name of the network and exact login procedures with appropriate staff to ensure that the network is legitimate. While certainly convenient, these networks are unsecured and can give criminals access to your internet-enabled devices.

  » Do not conduct sensitive activities, such as online shopping or banking while using a public wireless network.
  » Only use sites that begin with "https://" when online shopping or banking.
  » Remember that using your mobile network connection is generally more secure than using a public wireless network.

- **Guard all mobile devices.** To prevent theft and unauthorized access or loss of sensitive information, never leave mobile devices — including any USB or external storage devices — unattended in a public place. Remember to keep your devices secured in taxis, at airports, on airplanes and in hotel rooms. Meal times are prime times for thieves to check hotel rooms for laptops. If attending a conference or trade show, be especially wary — these venues offer thieves a wider selection of devices that are likely to contain sensitive information, and the conference sessions offer more opportunities for thieves to access guest rooms.

- **Keep it locked.** Lock your device when you are not using it and deploy strong PINs and passwords. Lock your device even if you only step away from it for a few minutes because that is enough time for someone to steal or destroy your information.

- **Avoid publicly accessible computers.** These pose risks. While hotel business centers may provide computers that anyone can use, travelers cannot trust that these computers are secure. They may not have updated anti-virus software or the latest operating systems. And cyber criminals may have infected these publicly accessible computers with malicious viruses or malicious software, such as keylogger malware which, when installed, captures the key strokes of the computer's users and sends this information to criminals via email. Through this malware, criminals are able to receive users' personal information, such as name, credit card numbers, birthdates and passwords.

For more information, visit www.dhs.gov/stopthinkconnect.

Follow Simple Tips to Reduce Cyber Risks

Public employees have even more at stake than private residents when it comes to cybercrime. A breach affects not just a single person but also scores of others, millions of dollars of assets, sensitive data, and critical infrastructure, such as water supplies and electrical grids.

For instance, if a cyberattack involves a hacker encrypting a city's files and demanding a large ransom to get a decryption key in order for the city to regain access to their files, it could be devastating to the city in multiple ways.

"The city would be given a deadline to pay up, and unfortunately, the city may not have the funds readily accessible to pay the ransom. If they miss the deadline their files are locked forever," said Krystal Dailey, information technology manager for the Municipal Association. She said it is possible the city could recover most of the data from backups, provided the IT staff had been backing up its servers and data on a routine basis.

"But this could still take days or weeks for the city to be operational again and incur cost to the city," said Dailey.

"Unfortunately, depending on the type of breach, a city could be brought to its knees. Access to a city's online services could be locked, which could force the city to revert back to pen and paper. Email communication may be down along with the phone system. Emergency systems and utility services could be affected as well as the court system."

Preventing cybercrime calls for knowing the different types, identifying risks and following safety precautions. It can include identity theft, financial fraud, stalking, online bullying, hacking and other forms.

There are plenty of ways to reduce risk, whether at work, in transit, at home while using government equipment, or simply posting to social media on your personal time and personal device.

1. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Stop.Think. Connect.™ campaign outlines these three common cybercrimes and offers ways to stay safe.

- **Identity theft** is the illegal use of someone else's personal information in order to get money or credit. How will you know if you've been a victim of identity theft? You might get bills for products or services you did not purchase. Your bank account might have withdrawals you didn't expect or unauthorized charges.
- **Phishing attacks** use email to collect personal and financial information or infect your machine with malware and viruses. Cybercriminals use legitimate-looking emails that encourage people to click on a link or open an attachment. The email they send can look like it is from an authentic financial institution, e-commerce site, government agency, or any other service or business.
- **Imposter scams** happen when you receive an email or call seemingly from a government official, family member, or friend requesting that you wire them money to pay taxes or fees, or to help someone you care about. Cybercriminals use legitimate-looking emails that encourage people to send them money or personal information.

2. Don't click suspicious links and other simple tips

- **Keep a clean machine.** Update the security software and operating system on your computer and mobile devices. Keeping the software on your devices up to date will prevent attackers from taking advantage of known vulnerabilities.
- **When in doubt, throw it out.** Stop and think before you open attachments or click links in emails. Links in email, instant message and online posts are often the way cybercriminals compromise your computer. If it looks suspicious, it's best to delete it.

- **Use stronger authentication.** Always opt to enable stronger authentication when available, especially for accounts with sensitive information including your email or bank accounts. A stronger authentication helps verify a user has authorized access to an online account. Visit www.lockdownyour-login.com for more information on stronger authentication.

3. Common cyber risks when using social media

- **Sharing sensitive information.** Sensitive information includes anything that can help a person steal your identity or find you, such as your full name, Social Security number, address, birthdate, phone number or where you were born.
- **Tracking your location.** Many social media platforms allow you to check in and broadcast your location, or automatically adds your location to photos and posts.
- **Be careful what you post and when.** Wait to post pictures from trips and events so that people do not know where to find you. Posting where you are also reminds others that your house is empty.
- **Know your apps.** Be sure to review and understand the details of an app before downloading and installing it. Be aware that apps may request access to your location and personal information. Delete any apps that you do not use regularly to increase your security.

4. Attacks on government are increasing

The number of reported cyber incidents involving federal and state, local, tribal and territorial government agencies increased by 26 percent between 2012 and 2013, from approximately 158,000 incidents to 218,000 incidents. In 2013, more than 69 percent of incidents reported to the United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team were phishing attempts.

- Protect your organization – Lock and password protect all personal and agency-owned devices including smartphones, laptops and tablets. Lock your computer when you step away from your desk. Encrypt data and use two-factor authentication where possible.
- Regularly scan your computer for viruses and spyware and keep your software up to date.
- Dispose of sensitive information properly and according to your organization's policies.
- Do not provide personal information or information about your organization, including its structure or networks, unless you are certain of a person's authority to have the information.
- Conceal your work badge and identification when outside of your office building, especially when out in public or when using public transportation.

A Day in the Life of an

IT Manager

Tommy Sunday, director of information technology for the Town of Bluffton, likes to compare a municipal information technology department to a duck on a pond.

"You see the duck swimming around the pond, and it really doesn't seem like it is doing anything. But if you can look under the water, its legs are kicking as fast as it can go," Sunday said. "We do so much of our work in the background, from installing updates on PCs and servers to monitoring our network for issues within our infrastructure."

That "work in the background" is vital to every department in a city, from pulling digital footage from in-car police cameras to making sure computers are secure from hackers. And it is work with responsibilities and techniques that change quickly, as technology continues its rapid evolution.

"With technology jobs, usually you do not have a set schedule. You have priorities for each day, but you have to be able to adjust to the needs for each day," Sunday said. "We support all departments within our town, including the police department. So most days bring different issues, from simple requests of resetting passwords or helping end users with various software support to more complex issues related to our network infrastructure or servers that house different software or programs the town utilizes."

It's a job that has changed drastically over the years, according to Jarvis Driggers, who has served as the director of IT for the City of Lancaster for 13 years.

"When I started, an IT professional needed to get a program up and running. We knew our needs, and we knew what

(From left) Steve Malphrus, network administrator; Ryan Coleman, geographic information system manager; Tommy Sunday, director of technology; Joni Graybill, software support analyst; and Robert Charles, system support analyst, maintain information technology for the Town of Bluffton. Photo: Town of Bluffton.

was needed of us to be successful. Today in the IT profession, we find ourselves doing a little of everything. If it plugs into the wall, it finds its way to IT," Driggers said.

Planning for the unpredictable

"I always tell my counterparts in the private sector that there is nothing like IT in government," said Driggers. "We're out and about and mingling. Some days I'm crawling under a police car. The goal of our job is problem solving, and there are so many things you have to have basic knowledge of."

The work can be challenging. Technology changes quickly, and municipalities, working within fiscally prudent budgets, strive to stay current.

"A lot of times it's a challenge to get council members or a mayor to see the importance of IT. It can be hard for them to throw money into something they can't see.

Jeremy Hirtle, IT technician, monitors the city's facilities. Photo: City of Lancaster.

Marcus Cureton, GIS coordinator for the City of Lancaster, tests out drone technology. Photo: City of Lancaster.

A server, a firewall, something that secures the data of our residents," Driggers said.

It also can be difficult to produce long-range plans and budgets that look five or 10 years down the road, since it's hard to anticipate what the technology needs will be in the future.

In the Town of Fort Mill, Jason Thomton started in an intern position that turned into a full-time job in 2011. He ended up taking over all of the tech responsibilities for the town. For the past year, Thomton has been heading up the technology needs of the police department, handling projects such as in-car tablets and body-worn cameras.

He said his biggest worry as the IT director in Fort Mill is security — making

Jason Thomton, the Town of Fort Mill's IT director, keeps cyber security on the top of his mind. Photo: Town of Fort Mill.

sure information is protected. Thomton said it's also a challenge to keep up with the latest technology when the department is focused on day-to-day projects.

Pro tip: Don't stop learning

So what does it take to be a strong IT professional? Technical knowledge, of course, is important, especially when dealing with security issues. IT managers say they never stop learning, both on the job and by taking classes and obtaining certifications in all sorts of areas. For example, Tommy Sunday of Bluffton said in the past two years, he has taken classes and earned certification from the University of Arkansas Criminal Justice Institute in cyberterrorism and completed a course about municipal government IT from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Government.

"Problem solving and communication are key," Thomton said. "So is the ability to talk to all sides and skill sets and make sure everyone is on the same page. You also can't be hesitant to try new things and possibly have them not go right."

IT managers cite problem solving, customer service and project management high on their list of must-have skills.

"I have always joked that with technology, we can find out how to solve a problem or deal with a technical issue, but customer service is something that can be hard to teach," Sunday said.

"You need to want to give that service. Truly, with IT you are performing this service every day. It can be to an internal end user, working with an outside vendor to complete a project or providing services or answers to residents or visitors."

To make life better

It can be easy to get so involved in the technology that the person-to-person aspect of the work becomes secondary. Yet IT directors understand the true purpose of their jobs — to make life better and easier for employees and residents.

"The main thing I love about my job is the direct impact I make on the community. There's nothing more rewarding than to have that direct impact," Driggers said. "When you make an app that could help a child who is lost at an event or help the fire department get to a call 30 seconds quicker, that's what makes it fun."

The "Day in the Life" series gives an insider's look at the professions that make South Carolina's cities and towns great places to live, work and play. Municipal employees from around the state explain their role, discuss their challenges and share stories from the unique world of municipal government service.

Jarvis Driggers, director of information technology for the City of Lancaster, says the role of an IT director has expanded to include "a little of everything." Photo: City of Lancaster.

Calendar

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

OCTOBER

9 SC Community Development Association Fall Meeting. Columbia Conference Center. Topics include updates from the SC Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee, SC Archives and History on rehabilitation of historic properties, Main Street SC and creative ways to reuse forgotten buildings. Attendees will also meet the Municipal Association's new Main Street Manager.

10 SC Utility Billing Association Fall Meeting. Columbia Conference Center. Topics include active-shooter training and engagement in customer service.

19 Fall Managers Forum. Columbia Conference Center.

23 – 26 SC Business Licensing Officials Association and SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association Joint Academy. North Charleston Marriott. Topics include spending guidance on accommodations and hospitality taxes, the effects of court rulings on business licensing, and new products for collecting and remitting local accommodations and hospitality taxes.

24 Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government Fall Session. Columbia Marriott. Courses offered: Advanced Budgeting and Finance and Advanced Leadership and Governance.

NOVEMBER

8 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Fourth Quarter Meeting. Columbia Conference Center. Topics include green stormwater infrastructure, the implications of climate change on stormwater, and an update from the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control on the next MS4 permit.

13 Risk Management Services Annual Members Meeting. Columbia Conference Center.

13 *(rescheduled due to Hurrican Florence)* **The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government: Municipal Economic Development and Forms of Municipal Government.** All regional councils of governments except for the Lower Savannah Council of Governments.

14 – 16 SC Municipal Human Resources Association Annual Meeting. The Beach House Resort, Hilton Head Island. Topics include retention strategies and succession planning, effective human resources and police relations, hiring candidates with a criminal record, preventing gossip in the workplace, social media, and the SC Pregnancy Accommodations Act.

15 *(rescheduled due to Hurricane Florence)* **The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government: Municipal Economic Development and Forms of Municipal Government.** Lower Savannah Council of Governments.