



# South Carolina Association of Counties

Diane B. Anderson, President  
*Laurens County*

Michael B. Cone  
*Executive Director*

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**CONTACT: STUART MORGAN  
PUBLIC INFORMATION DIRECTOR**

## **GEORGETOWN COUNTY WINS SCAC's 2009 J. MITCHELL GRAHAM MEMORIAL AWARD**

**Georgetown County** won the 2009 J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award at the 42nd Annual Conference of the South Carolina Association of Counties (SCAC) for developing an innovative program to find, hire and retain qualified firefighters, and at the same time create opportunities for citizens to work and contribute to their community. The J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award Competition was held on Thursday, July 30, at SCAC's Annual Conference (July 30 - Aug. 2).

"Building on a program created by the Boy Scouts of America Explorer Program, and with the strong cooperation from the county's schools, Georgetown County developed a project to grow their own," said SCAC President L. Gregory Pearce, Jr. (Richland County Council Member) when he presented the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award on Saturday evening, Aug. 1 "This entailed training to fill the need for firefighters and EMTs by working with students while still in high school. Because the program builds on the Explorer Program, it operates its Explorer post under the county's emergency services department. The link to the high school involved modifications to the curriculum to focus on the content needed for qualification as a firefighter or EMT."

Graduates of the initial program included three females and nine males. Georgetown County Council members, county emergency services department officials and participating students describe the program as extremely successful.

"The quality of the activity, and the exceptionally well-presented program during the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award Competition made this example of county collaboration a real winner," Pearce said.

Each year during the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award Competition, county entries are grouped in the following categories: Counties with populations under 50,000; counties with populations between 50,000 and 125,000; and counties with populations greater than 125,000. Counties in all categories compete equally for the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award by making 10-minute presentations before a panel of judges during the competition. Counties also submit written entries that are reviewed by the panel of judges.

## **HONORABLE MENTIONS AWARDED TO CHARLESTON COUNTY (OVER 125,000 POP.), PICKENS COUNTY (50,000 TO 125,000 POP.) AND JASPER COUNTY (UNDER 50,000 POP.)**

**Charleston, Pickens and Jasper counties** won Honorable Mentions.

In the largest category for counties with populations over 125,000, **Charleston County** won an Honorable Mention for revising its procurement ordinance to incorporate a first-of-its kind small business enterprise program.

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“Charleston County’s program works with small businesses to enhance the participation of contractors and subcontractors for county projects,” Pearce said. “In addition to simplifying application procedures, the program engages in training activities. It has the added benefit of increasing participation by women and minority-owned businesses to county projects.

“The business community has applauded the program,” he added. “Large contractors have a wider pool of potential subcontractors to include in job bids, while small business owners who were unaware of county business opportunities now have expanded involvement. This is a ‘win’ for the business community, and the county’s citizens, because increased participation has produced increased project income to local operators and has enhanced competitive pricing.”

In the category for counties with populations ranging from 50,000 to 125,000, **Pickens County** won an Honorable Mention for its innovative, first-of-its kind biodiesel “green” program that converts waste cooking oil to fuel.

“With highly fluctuating diesel fuel prices and with a growing awareness for the need to develop sustainable energy systems, this county developed an innovative biodiesel program that includes a unique custom fuel production unit, an education awareness vehicle and the infrastructure to collect waste cooking oil and convert it to fuel,” Pearce said. “The biodiesel has reduced fleet on- and off-road energy costs and has the added advantage of improving air quality. The savings have been sufficient to begin offering 15 cents per gallon for waste vegetable oil.

“When fully operational,” he added, “the system will also provide some income by turning waste cooking oil into fuel for business and institutional oil providers.”

In the category for counties with populations under 50,000, **Jasper County** won an Honorable Mention for its innovative use of financing to make energy efficient renovations while reducing energy consumption.

“Faced with the need to renovate its historic courthouse, and with the direction from county council to avoid general revenue bonds while also confronting one of the tightest credit periods in history,” Pearce said, “Jasper County undertook a novel and innovative approach. In June, this county delivered South Carolina’s first issue of energy savings lease revenue bond anticipation notes.

“With the creation of a wholly held 503c(3) corporation,” he added, “the county established a vehicle to hold property and act as a lessor of the facility with the county government acting as the lessee. The county presented its unique funding model for review to Standard & Poor’s and was subsequently received the highest rating assigned to municipal notes.”

## **GREENWOOD COUNTY AND GLEAMNS HUMAN RESOURCES COMMISSION WIN BARRETT LAWRIKORE MEMORIAL REGIONAL COOPERATION AWARD**

Greenwood County and the GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission won this year’s Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award.

“Greenwood County and GLEAMNS demonstrated that when we’re sensitive to cultural and historic elements that define our communities, benefits accrue to everyone,” said SCAC President L. Gregory Pearce, Jr. (Richland County Council Member) when he presented the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award on Saturday evening, Aug. 1.

The historic preservation project improved and expanded resources for low-income citizens by creating a service campus comprised of an old high school, a significant African-American landmark and several other buildings on the Heritage Corridor Registry.

“This project is an excellent example of the power of collaboration,” Pearce said. “A community service action agency had an increasing demand for services, but was highly constrained by space. But working with the school

district as well as public and private partners, one historic property was stabilized and moved to the campus proximity of the old buildings.

“The school district deeded the old school to the project, and federal, local and private funds were secured for the adaptive reuse of the facilities,” he added. “The fully operational campus can now respond to the community’s needs. The service network and historic structures that were part of the fabric of the county have moved from hazards and liabilities to important community assets.”

**ENTRIES RECOGNIZED FOR COMPETING IN THE  
J. MITCHELL GRAHAM MEMORIAL AWARD COMPETITION**

Dr. Bob Becker, Ph.D., Director of the Strom Thurmond Institute, Clemson University, was the lead judge for this year’s entries. On Saturday morning, Aug. 2, during SCAC’s Annual Conference, he recognized the counties that participated in this year’s J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Competition.

He also briefly described the entries as representatives of each received plaques.

However, the following descriptions are provided only for those counties that did not win:

**Aiken County** — Aiken County leveraged resources from the Center for Hydrogen Research (CHR) by constructing a new hydrogen fueling station, developing an education and training laboratory, and adding a solar energy array that provides electricity to the CHR.

**Anderson County** — Anderson County’s website has been lauded by Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom and the Sunshine Review as the most open in South Carolina. Items posted to the website include the county check register, budget, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), council meeting minutes, bid activities, and Twitter and Facebook updates.

**Fairfield County** — The Fairfield County Collection and Recycling Centers were improved with an ergonomic design based on features typically found at larger facilities, industries and transfer stations. The innovative use of these features on a smaller scale resulted in safer and more environmentally sound facilities.

**Florence County** — The Florence County Library System initiated the “Job Resources @ Your Library” project to alleviate the demand for services at local area One Stop Workforce Centers. Job resource centers are housed in each of the county’s six libraries, offering alternative locations for residents living far from local One Stops.

**Horry County** — The Economic Development Strategic Plan for Horry County was initiated through the collaborative efforts of Horry County, Clemson University and Coastal Carolina University. The plan details long-term programs and policies that will enhance conditions needed for economic growth in the county.

**Lancaster County** — When the Lancaster County’s courthouse caught fire, the Register of Deeds/Records Management Department prevented the loss of irreplaceable records by having a record preservation disaster plan in place. Loss of the county’s historical records would have crippled the operations of several departments.

**Orangeburg County** — A three-point strategy for economic development became a top priority for Orangeburg County and resulted in multiple project locations and expansions. Despite the present downturn in the nation’s economy, new jobs and economic opportunity were created for county citizens.

**Richland County** — Richland County hosted the “America Recycles Day” event to teach citizens about the importance of recycling and the environment. During the one-day event, residents were able to recycle items not normally accepted during curbside pickup, including computers, tires and household hazardous products.

**ENTRIES RECOGNIZED FOR COMPETING IN THE  
BARRETT LAWRIMORE MEMORIAL REGIONAL COOPERATION AWARD**

Again, the following descriptions are provided only for the entries that did not win:

**Lancaster County Regional Cooperation** — Lancaster County and the City of Lancaster worked together to transform an old pistol range with static targets and no safety measures into a state-of-the-art weapons training facility for local law enforcement agencies. The new facility allows for close quarter combat training, ground fighting techniques training, and moving target training using reactive and pneumatic remote control targets.

**Orangeburg County Regional Cooperation** — The Orangeburg County Council on Aging, the S.C. Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, and the Orangeburg County Grants Administration collaborated to improve the Senior Citizens Program in Orangeburg County. Donated space was remodeled with grant funding from the county to provide a more appropriate place for seniors to participate in the program.

**Richland County Regional Cooperation** — A day-long workshop was developed by Richland County's Business Service Center and S.C. Business One Stop to assist businesses seeking hard-to-find information about the requirements of setting up shop in South Carolina. The Business Rules & Online Tools Workshop provided hundreds of attendees with clear information on federal, state and local government business regulations in one convenient location.

The J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award, first presented in 1973, is named in honor of the late J. Mitchell Graham who served as a Charleston County council member for 18 years, including 10 years as chairman. He also served as 1969-70 SCAC President.

The Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award is named in honor of the late Barrett Lawrimore, who was elected SCAC President in 2004 but died shortly afterward. First elected to Charleston County Council in 1992, Mr. Lawrimore was serving his third consecutive term on county council. He was elected council chairman in 1996 and reelected council chairman from 1997 to 2001 and in 2004.

The SCAC, chartered on June 22, 1967, is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization whose membership includes all 46 counties in South Carolina. Governed by a 29-member board of directors selected each year by county officials at the association's annual conference, the SCAC is the only state organization representing county governments in the state.

The association provides a number of services, programs and activities to county governments and their officials, including: research and technical assistance; education and training; legal assistance; policy development, advocacy and legislative information; publications, including a magazine and newsletter; meetings and conferences; public information, including an annual directory and website; and financial services, including a self-funded workers' compensation pool and a property and liability pool.

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