

# 2022 SCAC Awards Program

This application is for:

Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award

**Project Title**

Landfill Fire

**County/Counties**

Barnwell, Aiken, Beaufort, Dorchester & Hampton Counties

**Staff Contact**

Debbie Fickling

**Job Title**

Business Manager

**E-mail Address**

dfickling@barnwellsc.com

**Phone Number**

8032596251

**Mailing Address**

57 Wall Street - Room 223  
Barnwell, SC, 29812

**Please provide a summary of your entry (no more than 100 words) to be used in a handout for the awards competition and included in press releases/publications. You may either type the summary in the text box or upload it as an attachment below.**

The Barnwell County Landfill caught fire and we had the support and help of staff and equipment from Aiken, Beaufort, Dorchester, and Hampton Counties.

This application was hand delivered to the SCAC office.

**Presentations may include more than one speaker; however, each speaker should be aware that the 10-minute time limit is strictly enforced. Please list the name, title, and e-mail address of each speaker:**

Name	Title	Email
Roger Riley	EOC Manager	rriley@barnwellsc.com

**Please check boxes for attachments you will submit as part of your application**

2023 SCAC  
AWARDS COMPETITION  
Barrett Lawrimore Award Application

Barnwell County, SC

“Landfill Fire”

May 15, 2022

Presented by:

Debra Fickling, Barnwell County Business Manager

Frank Williams, Barnwell County Solid Waste Manager

Roger Riley, Barnwell County Emergency Operations Manager

Paul Matthews, Aiken County Emergency Operations Manager

The Barnwell County Landfill caught fire on Sunday, May 15, 2022. Six local fire departments, the City of Barnwell, Barnwell Rural, Blackville, Elko, Long Branch, Red Oak, and Williston responded and began spreading water on the fire until 10:00PM. On Monday morning at 7:00AM, the fire returns, fully involved. At 9:00AM, crews began working to cover hot spots. At Noon on Monday, May 16, 2022, responders from the Barnwell County Emergency Management, Buildings and Grounds, County Administration, State Emergency Management, DHEC, Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority and Public Works Department, Medshore EMS, Aiken County, Beaufort County, Dorchester County, Hampton County, and the SC Forestry Commission were heavily involved in working to cover hot spots. By 4:00PM Monday afternoon, the fire was completely extinguished.

Monday evening, May 16, 2022, the Aiken County Civil Air Patrol provided assistance with drones to show hotspots that needed to be covered. This was performed with FLIR technology. Two local contractors were called in to help move dirt, along with the Public Works and Solid Waste employees. Bulldozers and manpower were provided by the State Forestry Commission, as well as other counties. There was over ten (10) acres of land burning that had to be extinguished. A tent was set up for heat/sun exposure and water and Gatorade were made available. Everyone was kept hydrated; there was no heat exhaustion or burns reported; no injuries of any type. A timeline and video are attached.

Each entity worked well with all team members looking out for the safety of others and following directions as given by the leaders.

*Benefit/Importance of Project*

*1. Why was this project undertaken?*

The fire started and it had to be extinguished as quickly as possible.

*2. What is the significance of this project to your community as a whole? How does it relate in importance to the other problems in your community?*

We knew we had to reduce smoke pollution and toxic pollutions in our community from the smoke. Getting this fire out quickly vs. taking our house-hold garbage to other landfill sites saved tax dollars for the county initially, but allowed the benefit of re-opening our landfill within 48 hours.

*3. How much of the county's populations is benefited by the project? In what specific ways are different groups of citizens within the county better off than before?*

Landfill debris burning on end increased the chance of our entire community breathing in possible toxins. Having been through this fire at the landfill once, and knowing the process for a quick recovery, the expense and exposure should be minimal should this occur in the future, saving down time at the landfill and the expense of hauling garbage to other counties would save time and money to all of our citizens.

*4. What degree of success did the project attain? What major objectives were achieved? Provide data where possible.*

We had tremendous success in extinguishing the fire in two (2) days vs. months, which is typical of this type of fire. Areas of the landfill were capped in less than one (1) day, where it would have taken us over ten (10) years to move this amount of dirt in Barnwell County, if we had acted alone. Approximately 450 dump truck loads of dirt was moved for this accomplishment.

*Project Effort/Difficulty*

*1. What did your county have to do to accomplish its objectives? If your county worked with another local government or consultant, how was the work divided?*

Through Emergency Management networking relationships, we were able to secure eleven (11) bulldozers, eleven (11) dump trucks, and three (3) track hoes within three (3) hours. The other four counties were called; we knew these counties would have resources to send to us. Work was organized by Emergency Operations Center Manager Roger Riley and Landfill Manager Frank Williams (Incident Commanders). The team moved and managed from the areas where they were dumping and to the areas they were covering.

*2. What challenges occurred during the project? Were there any community concerns?*

The amount of smoke and pollution added to our local environment was a challenge, however getting personnel that helped on site quickly was quite an asset. Another challenge was the hot spots below the ground surface; the Civil Air Patrol became involved with infrared cameras to show the hot spots.

*3. What were the nature and extent of the county government's efforts to alleviate the problem(s)? How difficult was it to accomplish the project's goals and/or objectives?*

We were given unlimited resource authority by the County Administrator to get this fire out as quickly as possible. Once everyone was contacted, the difficulty was waiting on them to arrive at the scene.

*4. Was financing the project an obstacle? Were there any unusual factors inherent in financing the project?*

No, financing was not an obstacle. We were given unlimited resources to make this happen as quickly as possible, and due to the availability of other counties and agencies, State Resources, Fire Departments, and local owned companies, this project did not require the County to spend much money.

*5. Did any agencies, citizen groups, or other organizations assist your county with this project? Did their participation pose any particular challenges or offer any unique contributions or benefits?*

Counties of Aiken, Hampton, Dorchester, and Beaufort, along with a state agency and two (2) local companies brought dump trucks, backhoes, bulldozers, track hoes, and manpower. Civil Air Patrol brought in a drone with FLIR technology to detect underground burning. Initially, Emergency Manager Roger Riley, flew his drone to get a view of everything.

On Sunday, the fire was burning over approximately ten (10) acres, and flames were above the trees. The fire trucks were available to spread water to tone down the fire; the following day there was a full fire. On Monday, we began with dump trucks and 3 or 4 bulldozers attacking this fire from the bottom of the hill, pushing up to the fire. Half of the crew was at the top of the hill pushing down to the fire for approximately two (2) hours. From observations, it was decided to bring all equipment to the top of the hill and push down. The fire was out in four (4) hours. The Civil Air Patrol came in about 5:00PM and flew infrared camera drones that identified hot spots well below the dirt level that was already covered. That was the area where new dirt was dumped. In total, there was approximately four (4) feet of new dirt covering the entire burned site.

Our willingness to support other counties gave us the opportunity to be on the receiving end. These counties were able to assist, and no one charged a dime, with the exception of two local contractors. We offered to compensate for equipment and personnel, but no one charged us anything. We kept equipment fueled; this was our only expense. Based on information received from a consultant, the value of the work was in excess of \$516,000 for \$10,000 of costs, and \$200 for food and drinks. A local funeral home furnished and installed a tent at no expense to Barnwell County.

One challenge was that the Forestry Division could only allow their equipment on dirt. They could not go on any type of debris. So we moved dirt in and they would push, but never on trash or debris. The speed with which the fire was contained by these organizations was probably the largest advantage.

*6. Are there any unresolved problems or other goals left to tackle?*

None that we are aware of. On Tuesday, everyone left with the exception of one local firm, that continued to haul additional dirt; there was no smoke or fire at that time. Everything was complete at that time with no other issues.

*Project Originality/Innovation*

*1. Justify the uniqueness of this project. What makes it different from other projects designed to achieve the same objective?*

Historically, landfill fires take months to put out. Having the knowledge and ability to obtain all the resources that we received in a four (4) hour span of time, and the time frame to get the fire extinguished was very unique. The use of infrared drones to identify hot spots, at no charge, was a great advantage. Having the Forestry bulldozers at the landfill to help with the fire was very unique and was due to connections that had been made over the years.

*2. Do you know of any other similar programs in SC? If so, how is your program different?*

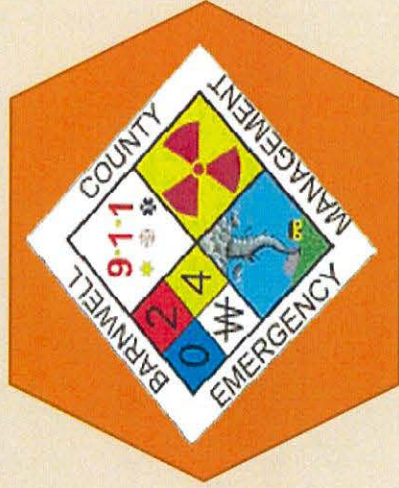
We are not aware of any other landfill fires that were managed as swift or complete as this one.

*3. What innovations were required in accomplishing your objectives?*

Drone FLIR to show hot spots and the initial drone to locate the burning fire was a big accomplishment. Years of networking allowed Roger to know who to call and what each needed to bring to the fire.

*4. Who provided the creativity and imagination in your project?*

Emergency Operations Manager Roger Riley, and Fire Coordinator Timbo Williams (retired) immediately jumped into action when they were alerted of the fire. They have worked as a team for many years for Barnwell County. If this occurred in another county, that county could use this roadmap for starters to save time.

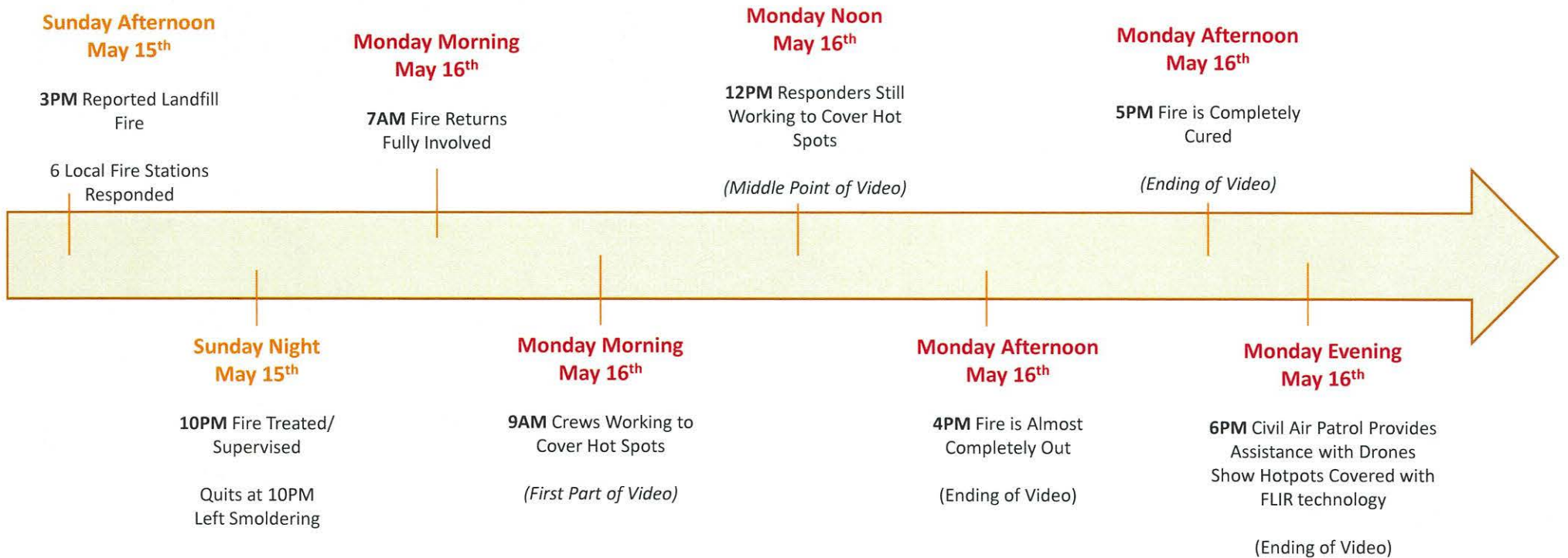


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# Barnwell County Landfill Fire



# Timeline of Landfill Fire





# Resources

## **Fire Departments:**

- Barnwell City
- Barnwell Rural
- Blackville
- Elko
- Long Branch
- Red Oak
- Williston

**Barnwell County Emergency Management, Buildings & Grounds, County Administration, State Emergency Management, DHEC, Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority, Civil Air Patrol, Barnwell County Solid Waste & Public Works Departments, Medshore EMS, Aiken County, Beaufort County, Dorchester County, Hampton County, SC Forestry**

# FLIR





Photo Courtesy: Tim Bennett / Barnwell County

Firefighters battle a fire at the Barnwell County Landfill on Sunday, May 15.

# Landfill fire still smoldering

Jonathan Vickery  
Publisher

[jvickery@thepeoplesentinel.com](mailto:jvickery@thepeoplesentinel.com)

ed to the scene as well.

"Everybody worked really well together. I appreciate the teamwork," said Barnwell County Fire Coordinator Timbo Williams.

Williams said they kept rotating firefighters because the heat from the sun was so hot. Crews worked for close to five hours battling the fire before containing it Sunday evening.

"A big thank you to Williston Fire Chief John Melton for a job well done on being in command at the landfill fire. There is always chaos at a major fire but yesterday was well organized chaos. It was a long, hot, tiring day, but no one got hurt and we all went home safely!" said firefighter Missy Cato.

Frank Williams, the county's solid waste director, discovered the fire was back Monday morning, May 16.

"Drone footage indicated the fire was spreading. There was a sense of urgency to get it knocked back as quickly as possible," said Barnwell County

Administrator Tim Bennett, who was on scene monitoring the situation along with other county officials.

Officials decided not to call the fire trucks back Monday because it would be a waste of water due to the nature of the fire.

"It's really burning from underneath, so when you put water on it, it just rolls across. It's best to put dirt on it to smother the fire," said Timbo Williams. "Heat, fuel and oxygen are needed to have fire, so we are working to take the oxygen away."

That's why the county was using bulldozers, track hoes, front end loaders, and dump trucks to transfer dirt up hill to smother the fire. They sent requests for assistance to neighboring counties, including Aiken, Beaufort and Hampton, as well as the state, for heavy equipment. They also hired a private contractor to bring two dump trucks. Three

Rivers Solid Waste Authority in Aiken County also sent their operations chief to advise on fighting the fire because he has experience with landfill fires.

"Hopefully we can simmer this fire down and get back to business tomorrow," said Bennett.

The landfill was closed to the public on Monday due to personnel helping with the fire. County officials hoped it would reopen Tuesday, May 17. In the meantime, haulers of municipal solid waste and construction demolition debris were asked to call Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority in Aiken County at (803) 827-2808.

The cause of the fire is unclear.

See FIRE, 5A  
Sat. 0 May 16 2014  
F

**RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION** 2022-06-615

**Palmetto Tool, LRB Site Prep & Hauling, Fire Departments from Barnwell City and Barnwell Rural, Blackville, Elko, Long Branch, Red Oak and Williston, Barnwell County Emergency Management, Buildings & Grounds, County Administration, Folk Funeral Home, State Emergency Management, DHEC, Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority, Civil Air Patrol, Quality Service and Septic, Barnwell County Solid Waste & Public Works Departments, Medshore EMS, Aiken County, Beaufort County, Dorchester County, Hampton County, SC Forestry, McDonald's, Subway and Country Cupboard**

**WHEREAS**, on May 15, 2022, a fire broke out on the construction/demolition hill at the Barnwell County Landfill; and

**WHEREAS**, Palmetto Tool, LRB Site Prep & Hauling, Fire Departments from Barnwell City and Barnwell Rural, Blackville, Elko, Long Branch, Red Oak and Williston, Barnwell County Emergency Management, Buildings & Grounds, County Administration, Folk Funeral Home, State Emergency Management, DHEC, Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority, Civil Air Patrol, Quality Service and Septic, Barnwell County Solid Waste & Public Works Departments, Medshore EMS, Aiken County, Beaufort County, Dorchester County, Hampton County, SC Forestry who mobilized equipment and staff to provide immediate aid and first response assistance to control and extinguish the fire and McDonald's, Subway and Country Cupboard for providing food for the workers; and

**WHEREAS**, Barnwell County would like to recognize Palmetto Tool, LRB Site Prep & Hauling, Fire Departments from Barnwell City and Barnwell Rural, Blackville, Elko, Long Branch, Red Oak and Williston, Barnwell County Emergency Management, Buildings & Grounds, County Administration, Folk Funeral Home, State Emergency Management, DHEC, Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority, Civil Air Patrol, Quality Service and Septic, Barnwell County Solid Waste & Public Works Departments, Medshore EMS, Aiken County, Beaufort County, Dorchester County, Hampton County, SC Forestry for their efforts in controlling and extinguishing the fire and McDonald's, Subway and Country Cupboard for providing food for the workers; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED** Barnwell County adopts a Resolution commending Palmetto Tool, LRB Site Prep & Hauling, Fire Departments from Barnwell City and Barnwell Rural, Blackville, Elko, Long Branch, Red Oak and Williston, Barnwell County Emergency Management, Buildings & Grounds, County Administration, Folk Funeral Home, State Emergency Management, DHEC, Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority, Civil Air Patrol, Quality Service and Septic, Barnwell County Solid Waste & Public Works Departments, Medshore EMS, Aiken County, Beaufort County, Dorchester County, Hampton County, SC Forestry not only for their community service but for providing emergency response, assistance, and aid to Barnwell County and McDonald's, Subway and Country Cupboard for providing food for the workers.

**ADOPTED by the Barnwell County Council** on June 14, 2022.

*Harold Buckmon*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman Harold Buckmon

*Jerry R. Creech*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice Chairman Jerry Creech

*Freddie Houston*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman Freddie Houston

*David Kenner*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman David Kenner

*Don Harper*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman Don Harper

*Daniel Alexander*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman Daniel Alexander

*Ben Kinlaw*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councilman Ben Kinlaw

*Timothy R. Bennett*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Timothy R. Bennett, Administrator



*Remembering the Past, Preparing for the Future*

J Clay Killian  
County Administrator

April 18, 2023

Barnwell County Government  
57 Wall Street  
Barnwell, SC 29812

To Whom It May Concern:

Barnwell County Emergency Management requested mutual aid assistance from Aiken County on May 16, 2022 in reference to a large landfill fire that began the day before. Aiken County provided assistance in the form of coordination and resource support through the county's Emergency Management Department and also by providing a bulldozer and two operators from the Public Works Department.

The Aiken County Emergency Management Director recommended to the Barnwell County Emergency Management Director that he involve the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) for aerial observation. Contact was made to CAP personnel in Aiken and a drone was sent to the fire scene. This air asset made it possible to direct bulldozer operators to cover only "hot spots" thereby saving time and resources instead of continuing to cover the entire area with dirt.

This form of coordination and support to each other is common between Aiken and Barnwell counties. During the 2014 severe winter weather, the 2015 floods, Hurricane Michael in 2018 and throughout the COVID pandemic, Aiken and Barnwell counties coordinated, collaborated, responded and recovered from these incidents because of a strong bond between our counties.

The landfill fire response was successful due to years of coordination and exercising together and became one more incident that proved our support for each other.

Please accept this letter of support for Barnwell County's 2023 Barrett Lawrimore Award application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Clay Killian".

J. Clay Killian  
County Administrator

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY  
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
BEAUFORT COUNTY GOVERNMENT ROBERT SMALLS COMPLEX  
100 RIBAUT ROAD  
POST OFFICE DRAWER 1228  
BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA 29901-1228  
TELEPHONE: (843) 255-2023  
FAX: (843) 255-9403  
[www.beaufortcountysc.gov](http://www.beaufortcountysc.gov)

CHERYL H. HARRIS  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

ERIC L. GREENWAY  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

WHITNEY RICHLAND  
DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

April 18, 2023

South Carolina Association of Counties  
Post Office Box 8207  
Columbia, SC 29202

ATTN: Barnwell County - Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Award

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to support Barnwell County's application for the 2023 Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Award of the South Carolina Association of Counties.

As the Beaufort County Administrator, I would like to commend Barnwell County for the way in which the Barnwell County landfill fire was extinguished. On Sunday, May 15, 2022, when Barnwell County called the County for assistance, I authorized the deployment County's Public Works resources that included heavy equipment and personnel to assist in fighting this landfill fire.

Over the past few years, Beaufort County has worked closely with Barnwell County on several occasions, and we are happy to provide support. Beaufort County has been on the receiving end several times with storm issues, and Barnwell has always been available and willing to help.

We hope you will look favorably at Barnwell County during the presentation of this award.

Sincerely,

  
Eric L. Greenway  
Beaufort County Administrator

ELG:ch



PUBLIC SAFETY

MARIO FORMISANO SCCEM  
Deputy County Administrator

April 14, 2023

Barnwell County Government  
57 Wall Street  
Barnwell, SC 29812

To Whom It May Concern:

On May 16, 2022, Barnwell County Emergency Management contacted Dorchester County Emergency Management requesting assistance in response to a fire at the Barnwell County landfill. The request to Dorchester County was in the form of heavy equipment and equipment operators to help mitigate the landfill fire. Dorchester County Public Works filled the request by sending a dump truck, backhoe, trailer, and one-ton truck.

This was not the first time Barnwell County and Dorchester County worked together during an emergency. In fact, the two counties have a history of supporting one another during crisis. The other noteworthy example was in response to the "1,000 Year Floods" in 2015. As Dorchester County struggled to resource barricades to block off flooded or damaged roadways, Barnwell County delivered several barricades that helped control access into hazardous areas. In the years that followed, it was commonplace for the two County emergency management directors to check on each other during tropical storms and hurricanes. Barnwell County has built a reputation throughout the state as an organization committed to assisting other local jurisdictions in their time of need, embracing what former Governor Haley often referred to as "Team South Carolina".

Undoubtably, Barnwell County's successful response mission to their landfill fire was attributed to preparations made by the County's public safety team and the strong relationships built over the years with other South Carolina counties. Please accept this letter of support for Barnwell County's 2023 Barrett Lawrimore Award application.

Sincerely,

Mario Formisano SCCEM  
Deputy County Administrator  
Dorchester County, SC

[DorchestercountySC.gov](http://DorchestercountySC.gov)

500 North Main Street • Summerville • South Carolina • 29483  
St. George 843.563.0043 • Summerville 843.832.0043



OFFICE OF  
COUNTY COUNCIL OF HAMPTON COUNTY  
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Hampton, South Carolina 29924

Tel: (803) 914-2103  
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**COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

Noah O. Alexander, Chair  
Darin Williams, Vice-Chair  
Roy Hollingsworth  
Jordan Jinks  
Camille Welch

Heather Simmons Jones  
Interim County Administrator

Aline Newton  
Clerk to Council

April 17, 2023

Ms. Susan Turkopuls  
South Carolina Association of Counties  
1919 Thurmond Mall  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Ms. Turkopuls,


The Hampton County Council unanimously and enthusiastically supports Barnwell County's entry for the Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award to recognize regional cooperation of the Counties of Aiken, Beaufort, Dorchester, and Hampton during the Barnwell County Landfill fire.

Barnwell County has worked cooperatively on a regional basis with other political subdivisions during events such as the May 2022 Barnwell County Landfill fire. On May 15, 2022, six local fire departments responded and began spreading water on to the fire until 10:00 p.m. Sunday night. On Monday morning at 7:00 a.m., the fire rekindled and quickly became fully involved. At 9:00 a.m., crews began working to cover hot spots. At noon on Monday, May 16, 2022, responders from the Barnwell County Emergency Management, Building and Grounds, County Administration, State Emergency Management, DHEC, Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority and Public Works Department, Medshore EMS, Aiken County, Beaufort County, Dorchester County, Hampton County, and the SC Forestry Commission were heavily involved in working to cover hot spots. By 4:00 p.m. Monday afternoon, the fire was almost completely cured.

Monday evening, May 16, 2022, the Aiken County Civil Air Patrol aided with drones to show hotspots that needed to be covered. This was performed with FLIR technology. Fire Departments from the City of Barnwell, Barnwell Rural, Blackville, Elko, Long Branch, Red Oak, and Williston were all on site. There were two local contractors that were called in to help move dirt along with the Public Works and Solid Waste employees. Bulldozers and manpower were provided by the State Forestry Commission, as well as all other counties.

Barnwell County and all local government agencies who responded were able to cooperatively work together to control the Barnwell County Landfill fire without illness or injury. The Hampton County Council supports Barnwell County's entry for the Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award to recognize regional cooperation of the neighboring Counties of Aiken, Beaufort, Dorchester, and Hampton. If you need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kindest regards,

  
Heather Simmons Jones  
Interim Administrator, Hampton County  
200 Jackson Street East, Hampton, S.C. 29924  
hjjones@hamptoncountysc.org  
864-356-3012

**HAMPTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT**  
200 Jackson Avenue East  
Hampton, South Carolina 29924  
Telephone: (803) 914-2100 Fax: (803) 914-2107



**Barnwell County, South Carolina**  
**County Administration Building**  
57 Wall Street, Room 126  
Barnwell, SC 29812  
Phone (803) 541-1000  
Fax (803) 541-1104



March 28, 2023

RE: 2023 SCAC Awards Competition  
Barrett Lawrimore Award

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write this letter in support of Barnwell County's nomination for the 2023 Barrett Lawrimore Award. As the County Administrator, I was very active and on-site during the fire at the Barnwell County landfill in May of 2022 and had the privilege of witnessing agencies from all over the region provide support in extinguishing the fire over a two to three-day period.

Our staff coordinated with State Emergency Management, DHEC, Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority, Aiken County, Beaufort County, Dorchester County, and Hampton County to extinguish the fire. The Aiken County Civil Air Patrol provided assistance with drones to show hotspots that needed additional attention. I encourage you to give every consideration to Barnwell County for this award.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Timothy R. Bennett  
Barnwell County Administrator