



SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

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Aug. 5, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SCAC ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE ASSOCIATION'S 2022 AWARDS COMPETITION

South Carolina Association of Counties (SCAC) awarded its 2022 J. Mitchell Graham (JMG), and Barrett Lawrimore (BL) Memorial Awards to Beaufort County on August 3 at its Annual Conference, held Aug. 1 – 4 at Wild Dunes Resort on the Isle of Palms.

SCAC also presented JMG honorable mention awards to Anderson, Pickens and Colleton counties.

The association recognized all counties that participated in the 2022 Awards Program, held at SC ETV and livestreamed on June 9 on Facebook, and posted on SCAC's website at www.SCCounties.org. Videos of the presentations, including award-winning applications, are available in SCAC's online library at www.SCCounties.org/awards/video-library.

BEAUFORT COUNTY WINS 2022 J. MITCHELL GRAHAM MEMORIAL AWARD

Beaufort County won the 2022 J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award for creating a decal system for the county's collection centers.

"Without a landfill of its own, Beaufort County implemented a decal system in the fall of 2021 that saved the county thousands of dollars," said William E. Tomes, Fellow, Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities, College of Charleston, who served as head judge. "The system regulates entrance into and usage of county collection centers. It also reduces operational costs, traffic and environmental concerns caused by the misuse of centers by businesses, contractors, and out-of-county residents."

The decals are free to residential property owners with a limit of three visits per week. Each decal is tied to a parcel of land, which must have a dwelling. Commercial properties, vacant properties, contractors and out-of-county residents are not issued decals, and cannot use the collection centers.

"We were impressed with the innovative approach to using decommissioned iPhones as scanners instead of buying dedicated handheld scanners, saving the county money," Tomes said. "County staff also did a great job in meeting the challenges faced in the initial decal registration process caused by multi-family dwellings, parcels with multiple dwellings, and defining what was a livable dwelling. Since the program was implemented, traffic has decreased at all centers, and the county has saved well over \$700,000 in disposal and hauling costs."

COLLETON, PICKENS AND ANDERSON COUNTIES RECEIVE J. MITCHELL GRAHAM MEMORIAL HONORABLE MENTION AWARDS

Each year, county entries are grouped in the following categories for SCAC's annual awards program: counties with populations under 50,000; counties with populations between 50,000 and 150,000; and counties with populations greater than 150,000. Counties compete and provide 10-minute presentations before a panel of judges during the competition. Honorable mention awards are presented when merited in each of the three population categories.

Colleton, Pickens, and Anderson counties received J. Mitchell Graham Memorial honorable mention awards.

Colleton County, in the category for counties with populations less than 50,000, won an honorable mention for its efforts to improve access to urgent trauma care in rural parts of the county.

"Colleton County's Fire-Rescue Department improved access to urgent trauma care in rural parts of the county by creating the Pre-Hospital, Whole Blood Administration pilot program that allows paramedics to administer whole blood products in ambulances," Tomes said. "This lifesaving treatment is becoming a standard of practice in South Carolina."

Pickens County, in the category for counties with populations between 50,000 to 150,000, won an honorable mention for its efforts to reduce the county's suicide rate, the highest in South Carolina.

"After collecting information from stakeholders and evaluating gaps in crisis services," Tomes said, "county leaders responded with a strategic plan to increase awareness, educate the public, reduce mental health stigma, and increase lethal means safety. The county then worked to increase awareness, educate the public, reduce mental health stigma, and increase lethal means safety in order to reduce the high suicide death rate in the county."

"While the county's efforts have focused on service members, veterans and their families," he added, "resources are available to the public at large and can potentially reach a much broader portion of the community."

Anderson County, in the category for counties with populations greater than 150,000, won an honorable mention for the county's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) unifying and reinventing itself during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

"The county reformed its EMS system into a two-tier response system by placing paramedics in Quick Response Vehicles instead of ambulances," Tomes said. "The new system doubled the county's emergency response capability, allowing paramedics to be dispatched to only life-threatening emergencies. Since starting the new system, response time goals are being met 95 percent of the time compared to 65 percent of the time under the old system."

This is the 50th year the SCAC has awarded the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award. The award, named in honor of the late J. Mitchell Graham who served as SCAC president from 1969 to 1970, recognizes counties that address community challenges, implement operational improvements, or enhance their citizens' quality of life in a unique way.

BEAUFORT COUNTY WINS 2022 BARRETT LAWRIKORE MEMORIAL REGIONAL COOPERATION AWARD

Beaufort County also won the 2022 Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award for the county's Southern Lowcountry Design Manual.

"The manual, a collaborative effort between Beaufort and Jasper counties, and four municipalities in both counties was a unified, collaborative approach to stormwater design standards," Tomes said. "Implementing better site design principles and requiring green infrastructure and low impact development practices will help the region meet the overall goal of achieving fishable, swimmable and drinkable water standards set forth by the EPA."

“Adopting regional standards,” he added, “makes it easier for the development community to work with all of the jurisdictions and discourages ‘jurisdictional shopping’ for a community with less stringent standards.”

This is the 25th year the Association has awarded the Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award. The award, named in honor of the late Barrett S. Lawrimore who served as SCAC president in 2004, highlights the critical need for regional partnerships, strategies, and solutions. Competition for this award is open to two or more political subdivisions (counties or county partnerships formed with city, town, district, or regional government organizations) that work together to complete an innovative project.

ABBEVILLE, GREENWOOD AND MCCORMICK COUNTIES RECEIVE BARRETT LAWRIMORE HONORABLE MENTION AWARDS

This year, for the first time, SCAC awarded an honorable mention for the Barrett Lawrimore (BL) Memorial Award.

Abbeville, Greenwood and McCormick counties received BL honorable mention awards for creating the McCormick Area Transit (MatTrans) system.

“Abbeville and Greenwood counties partnered with the McCormick Area Transit system (MatTrans) in 2021 to provide much needed public transportation to residents who were having difficulty getting to work, school, and medical appointments,” Tomes said. “MatTrans was already contracting with McCormick County to provide transportation services for its citizens, many of whom were being transported to Greenwood County for medical appointments. Since the partnerships were established, ridership has increased significantly, and the transit system continues to expand.”

SCAC RECOGNIZES GREENWOOD COUNTY FOR WINNING LAST YEAR’S J. MITCHELL GRAHAM MEMORIAL AWARD

SCAC presented Greenwood County a permanent trophy at the Association’s 2022 Annual Conference for winning the 2021 J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award. The county won last year’s award for developing and implementing a soil class application.

JUDGING SCAC’S 2022 AWARDS COMPETITION

Judging this year’s competition were: William E. Tomes, Fellow, Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities, College of Charleston; and J. Milton Pope, Principal, Parker Poe Consulting.

ALL COUNTIES RECOGNIZED FOR PARTICIPATING

Tomes briefly described all of the entries submitted in SCAC’s 2022 Awards Competition when announcing this year’s winners. Descriptions for the other entries not already provided for the award winners follow:

J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award Entries

Charleston County

To reduce the risk of homelessness and financial insecurity of those severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Charleston County’s Community Development Department applied for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and later opened the

application process in April 2021. The county so far issued over \$24 million in aid to provide rent and utility assistance to citizens in need.

Dorchester County

In 2009, Dorchester County completed its first Parks and Recreation Master Plan to create a world-class park system. The county purchased 83.11 acres of bank foreclosed property along the Ashley River, turning it into playgrounds, picnic shelters, a splash pond, fishing pond, walking trails, a kayak launch, dog parks, an event pavilion, and an event lawn. The park was inspired by residents and has had over 30,000 visitors since its opening on March 19, 2022.

Marion County

Marion County is developing a park in downtown Marion to memorialize the life of the late Sen. Clementa Pinckney and provide recreation opportunities for underserved populations. As South Carolinians continue to heal from the tragic loss of The Charleston Nine, Marion County hopes to offer the Senator Clementa C. Pinckney Memorial Park, named the Amazing Grace Park, as a means of remembrance and a place to enrich a community.

Richland County

To mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on housing insecurity, Richland County implemented its Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program in April of 2021. Over 2,000 households received allocations to avoid eviction or utility disconnection. Recognized from rapid program implementation and outreach efforts, Richland County remains committed to assisting its underserved populations.

York County

In response to uncontrolled growth, Councilwoman Allison Love proposed a special tax district to residents of the Bethel Lake Wylie community to preserve recreational land and slow development. This gave residents a stake in the properties purchased and has preserved over 150 acres of land since voter approval in 2020. This land provides citizens and residents a break to enjoy parks, a farmers' market, an art museum, and so on.

Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award

Charleston County

In order to improve road quality and environmental efficiency, Charleston County and municipal partners conducted a pilot program to add titanium dioxide to asphalt rejuvenator treatment. While rejuvenator prolongs the life of roads, the addition of titanium dioxide helps remove vehicular pollution from the air while decreasing urban heat island effect. Since its implementation, the project has shown such great success that the county plans to treat approximately 306 additional roads in 2022. The county has received regional and international recognition for this innovation solution.

Pickens County

In response to staffing shortages and an urgent need for employees among local businesses, Pickens County and local partners developed drive-thru job fairs to better connect job seekers with local employers. Along with improved safety protocols that have allowed these events to carry on throughout the pandemic, the project has also created a unique way for employers to be noticed and reached by attendees. Since September 2020, the program has helped 300 jobseekers connect with local employers.

Spartanburg County

Spartanburg County, with area partners, developed a unique Litter Hero Program to reduce litter, build sustainability, and serve the community. Teams of individuals experiencing homelessness were hired at a livable wage to assist with the litter program. Since implementation, a total of nine individuals were hired and six have completed the program. So far 8.56 tons of roadside litter along 244 miles of roadway has been removed. With the success of their pilot program, Spartanburg County plans to continue and expand the project.

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