



SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOTE: Upon request, photos will be provided by e-mail.

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Fourteen South Carolina Counties Compete in SCAC's 2018 J. Mitchell Graham/Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Awards Competition

Fourteen South Carolina counties competed in SCAC's 2018 J. Mitchell Graham/Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Awards Competition on August 5 at the Association's 51st Annual Conference (August 5–7). Charleston County won this year's J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award, and Georgetown, Horry and Marlboro counties received Honorable Mention awards.

Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg counties won this year's Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award.

CHARLESTON COUNTY WINS SCAC'S 2018 J. MITCHELL GRAHAM MEMORIAL AWARD

Charleston County won the 2018 J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award for its EMS Mobile Crisis Telehealth Project, which responds to the increasing number of psychiatric and mental health patients encountered by EMS staff.

"The county's EMS Mobile Crisis Telehealth Project allows mental health patients to get the appropriate level of care and avoid lengthy housing in emergency rooms or detention facilities," said William E. Tomes, Fellow, Joseph P. Riley Jr., Center for Livable Communities, College of Charleston, one of three judges evaluating this year's competition. "Using telehealth technology, mental health evaluations are performed in the field using a digital connection between the patient and a medical health professional once a paramedic completes an initial assessment.

"So far, the project has resulted in an average of 60 diversions from unnecessary emergency room transports per month, and has saved patients thousands of dollars in fees for ambulance transports and emergency room visits," Tomes added. "This innovative, patient-centered solution—one of the first of its type in the nation—is one that the South Carolina Department of Mental Health is hoping to expand to other counties across the state."

**HONORABLE MENTION AWARDS PRESENTED TO
Horry County (Over 150,000 Pop.), Georgetown County (50,000 to 150,000 Pop.)
AND MARLBORO COUNTY (Under 50,000 Pop.)**

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 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.

Horry County, Georgetown and Marlboro counties won Honorable Mention awards.

In the category for counties with populations over 150,000, **Horry County** won an Honorable Mention for its unique approach to create a wetlands mitigation bank—The Independent Republic Heritage Preserve.

“In 2018, Horry County purchased approximately 3,700 acres of biologically and historically significant land to create a wetlands mitigation bank,” Tomes said. “When established, the bank will be the first created and operated solely by a county in South Carolina.

“This bank will allow the county to use wetlands credits to move forward with critical infrastructure and road improvement projects needed to address growth in the county,” he added. “The purchase of the land also protects a local ecosystem, provides conservation and environmental education, and might provide passive recreational opportunities for local residents.”

In the category for counties with populations between 50,000 and 150,000, **Georgetown County** won an Honorable Mention for taking a proactive approach to reduce recidivism among inmates at its detention center.

“The Georgetown County Sheriff’s Department’s Re-Entry Program trains inmates nearing the end of their sentences to obtain journeyman certifications in 12 different trades,” Tomes said. “The program also offers job search workshops and life skills classes that encourage inmates to avoid behaviors that placed them in the system.

“The county’s public works department provides on-the-job training and experience opportunities for program participants,” he added. “So far, Georgetown County has saved approximately \$300,000 each year in labor costs. One hundred percent of inmates who have completed the program have jobs, and several former inmates have started their own businesses.”

In the category for counties with populations under 50,000, **Marlboro County** won an Honorable Mention for addressing a critical need of its residents by improving fire service in the county.

“Marlboro County hired a fire services coordinator and added a staff of full-time paid fire personnel,” Tomes said. “Through the construction of new fire stations, the purchase of new equipment, and a significant improvement in the number of volunteers responding to fire calls, the county has been successful in reducing fire insurance premiums and improving the safety of its citizens.”

**BAMBERG, BARNWELL, CALHOUN AND ORANGEBURG COUNTIES WIN
2018 BARRETT LAWRIK MEMORIAL REGIONAL COOPERATION AWARD**

Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg counties won SCAC’s 2018 Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award for collaborating to address the needs of citizens in the Greater Salkehatchie Region and creating the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center.

“This freestanding, 24-hour emergency center is the result of a partnership of the Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun counties, Bamberg and Barnwell counties, state legislators in the region and other organizations,” Tomes said. “Within the past six years, the region has become a ‘healthcare desert’ after county hospitals closed in both Bamberg and Barnwell counties. Residents of these two counties have had to make long trips to hospitals in Orangeburg, Aiken or Allendale for emergency medical care.

“The new Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Center, located on highway 70 between Bamberg and Denmark, is approximately 15 minutes from the county seat of each of the four participating counties and Allendale,” he added. “This provides faster treatment by emergency room doctors, who can use communication infrastructure installed at the new facility to communicate with specialists at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston. Installation of this communication infrastructure and other utility infrastructure also makes it possible for industry to come to an area that previously was not viable for growth, thereby enhancing economic development opportunities.”

The Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center is scheduled to officially open later this year. Future plans include locating other services such as mental health counseling, a pharmacy and primary care services at the facility.

JUDGES

This year marks the forty-sixth year that the SCAC has held its annual J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award competition, and the twenty-first year that the Association has held its annual Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation competition.

Serving as judges for this year’s competition were: Head Judge—William E. Tomes, Fellow, Joseph P. Riley Jr., Center for Livable Communities, College of Charleston; Dr. Bruce Ransom, Professor and Chair of the Policy Studies Program, Strom Thurmond Institute of Government and Public Affairs, Clemson University; and Paula E. Sanford, Ph.D., Public Service and Outreach Faculty Member, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia.

On August 7 at the General Session for SCAC’s Annual Conference, Tomes briefly described the 14 entries that were submitted in this J. Mitchell Graham/Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Awards Competition. As SCAC President Henry H. “Buddy” Livingston III presented plaques to each county that participated, Tomes thanked and congratulated representatives who accepted the plaques on behalf of their counties.

The following descriptions are provided only for those entities that did not win:

OTHER ENTRIES SUBMITTED IN THE J. MITCHELL GRAHAM MEMORIAL AWARD COMPETITION

Barnwell County

Barnwell County implemented the “Emergency Millennial” program to enhance the safety of county residents during disasters and emergencies. Due to its limited staff size, the Barnwell County Emergency Operations Center found it difficult to handle all facets of an emergency without assistance from volunteers. The county teamed with local high schools to recruit students as volunteers in the emergency operations center. The program not only helps the county, but also offers students a chance to fulfill community service requirements for various clubs and interests.

Berkeley County

Across Berkeley County, real solutions for infrastructure, public safety, and quality of life needs are taking shape every day. The county developed the user-friendly “Building Berkeley” website to show residents how growth is being managed, challenges are being met, and prosperity is abounding. An interactive map allows residents to check on the status of projects in their neighborhoods, while a feedback interface facilitates easy, two-way communication with county staff.

Lancaster County

Every year, the nation celebrates National Read Across America day on Dr. Seuss' birthday. In an effort to promote reading and showcase the beauty and history of Lancaster County, the county and the school district partnered to create a children's book and produced a video of local leaders reading the book in various areas of the county. Students watched the video on National Read Across America day, and all of the 4th and 5th grade classes in the county will have copies of the book by the start of the 2018-2019 school year. The project's video and book is a source of pride for Lancaster County residents.

Richland County

Richland County partnered with its health insurance vendor to conduct an onsite Diabetes Prevention Program. The county utilized an onsite certified dietician and diabetes coach to conduct the pilot program. Lifestyle change interventions are cost effective and, in some cases, result in reduced health care spending for the employee and the county. Over the 11-month pilot project period, the county conducted 26 sessions and county employees lost a total combined weight of 170 pounds.

**OTHER ENTRIES SUBMITTED IN THE
BARRETT LAWRIE MEMORIAL REGIONAL COOPERATION AWARD COMPETITION**

Florence County

Florence County and Lake City transformed a blighted area into a 25 acre recreational park with a 7.5 acre lake. The blighted area was the site of a former wastewater treatment facility and an old landfill. Both were abandoned years prior, and a portion of the property was being used by the city and county for a public works and a waste collection facility. Remediation of the site resulted in a community gathering place that enhances the community's eco-system and the quality of life for citizens.

Greenwood and Laurens Counties

The Lake Greenwood Master Plan was a cooperative effort involving Greenwood and Laurens counties that led to a long range, unified vision for the growth of the region's hidden gem—Lake Greenwood. After a year-long study and the collaboration of citizens, planners, and government officials, a master plan was created that establishes goals, objectives, and strategies for the use, development, and protection of the lake area through 2035. The master plan serves as a guidebook for the future plans of both counties.

Lancaster County

Lancaster County had continuous road flooding around the Gills Creek basin. During flooding events, some roadways were impassable for residents and emergency vehicles, with no alternative routes. Permanent solutions were complicated by the designation of Gills Creek as a critical habitat for the Carolina Heelsplitter—an endangered species since 1993. The county worked cooperatively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife to install bottomless culverts, which eliminated the flooding while also opening up over three miles of critical habitat for the Heelsplitter.

Laurens County

On behalf of Laurens County, the Laurens County Development Corporation partnered with local industries, Piedmont Technical College, and two local school districts to form the Business and Education Partnership to create a more robust talent pipeline for local employers. A new dual-enrollment program for area high schools and the technical college has been created as a result of this partnership. The Laurens County Development Corporation also launched a year-long campaign to increase awareness of local employment opportunities.

Pickens County

In preparation for the county's 150th anniversary, Pickens County employees led a countywide anti-litter initiative to "Team Up and Clean Up". County offices closed for a day so employees, community leaders, and citizens could collect trash from the roadways. County council members, the legislative delegation, the S.C. Department of Transportation, local municipalities, various community groups, and businesses participated. As a result, more than 17 tons of trash was collected and the "Five on Friday" initiative emerged. This litter initiative encourages each county resident to pick up five pieces of trash on Fridays, thereby eliminating nearly half a ton of trash each week.

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 elected each year by county officials at the Association's annual conference, the SCAC is the only 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 the S.C. Counties Workers' Compensation Trust and S.C. Counties Property & Liability Trust.

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