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Legislators Provide Overview, Speakers Address Top Issues at SCAC's 31st Annual Mid-Year Conference

Approximately 150 county officials attended SCAC's 31st Annual Mid-Year Conference on February 21 in Columbia. They received a legislative overview of the 2018 Session of the S.C. General Assembly, and heard speakers address top issues facing the state and county governments.

SCAC President Henry H. Livingston III (Newberry County Council Chairman) presided. Following the legislative overview and the presentations, he explained SCAC's legislative policy process. SCAC's deputy general counsel then provided a brief legislative update.

From 1:30 to 5:30 p.m., county officials visited the State House to meet with legislators. From 5:30 to 7 p.m., the SCAC held its annual Legislative Reception downtown at The Palmetto Club in Columbia.

Overview of the 2018 Session of the General Assembly

Rep. Chandra E. Dillard (District 23) and Rep. Gary E. Clary (District 3) provided a legislative overview of the 2018 Session of the General Assembly.

Rep. Chandra E. Dillard

Rep. Dillard talked about offshore drilling and encouraged county officials across the state to voice their opinions on the topic whenever they have the opportunity to do so.

She also talked about the preparation of the state budget, and encouraged officials to visit SCstatehouse.gov to follow the work of the General Assembly, including its legislative committees.

Rep. Dillard said abandoned recycling sites around the state are wreaking havoc in some communities. She said she is working with the Department of Health and Environmental Control and a group of stakeholders to produce legislation to address abandoned landfills and close

(Continued on next page)

SCAC President Henry Livingston presides over SCAC's 31st Annual Mid-Year Conference.



SCAC's 31st Annual Mid-Year Conference, Embassy Suites, February 21



Rep. Chandra E. Dillard
(District 23)

He blamed the Baseload Review Act, created in 2007 under the Office of Regulatory Staff, for the mess the state finds itself in today.

"This gave the utility companies the keys to the kingdom and allowed them to just go off unbridled," Rep. Clary explained. "The public service commission didn't do its job and caved in on every rate request, and the Baseload Review Act allowed utility companies to charge money before beginning construction projects.

"This is the reason why SCANA today continues to collect about \$1.2 million from rate payers or about \$37 million per month," he added. "The Office of Regulatory Staff was sup-

posed to serve the state's interests, the utility's interests and consumers' interests. But the consumer was left out of the process."

Rep. Gary E. Clary

Recycling loopholes that currently allow materials to accumulate, which can cause severe risks to human health and the environment.

Rep. Clary focused on the SCANA/Santee Cooper VC Summer nuclear power plant issue that he said affects everyone in South Carolina and economic development across the state.

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Rep. Gary E. Clary
(District 3)

Rep. Clary explained what is being done to deal with the problem that the state now faces, including passage of H.4375, which establishes a Consumer Advocate Office, and reformation of the Public Service Authority.

"This is a monumental problem like we've never faced in South Carolina, and this issue has sucked every bit of the oxygen out of the room in the General Assembly," he added. "It has stopped bills that I

know Rep. Chandra Dillard would like to get through, and other bills—including a huge ethics bill and an independent redistricting bill that I introduced—which we haven't even had a hearing on yet. But we're running out of time, and we've got the state budget coming up next."

Rep. Clary talked briefly about Act 388 and the Local Government Fund (LGF), which he said he supports. But he said he did not know if there would be any change in the LGF this year.

Economic Forecast

Joseph C. Von Nessen, Ph.D., Research Economist, Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina, provided a detailed economic forecast.

He described the economy at the national and state levels as "slow and steady."

"We've had very steady growth throughout the expansion period, which is in its ninth year, going back to 2009," Nessen explained. "But growth has been fairly slow relative compared to previous economic expansions."

According to Nessen, the stock market is one aspect of the U.S. economy that has not been slow and steady, especially in 2017, and the stock market has steadily increased since 2013 and increased 25 percent in 2017.

Volatility in the stock market earlier this year occurred after the emergence of economic data changed incentives for investors.



Joseph C. Von Nessen, Ph.D.
Research Economist
Moore School of Business, USC



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W. Stuart Morgan III



Reports of positive growth on the jobs front and the income front at the national level indicated that the U.S. economy was doing well. But for the Federal Reserve, this indicated that the economy was heating up, and that inflation was likely.

Investors feared that interest rates could increase at a faster rate or at more frequent intervals. When the cost of borrowing money increases, this impacts the incentives of investors in the stock market. They usually consider the bond market to be a safer, competitive alternative.

Nessen said market fundamentals are “solid” as we move into 2018. Businesses and consumers are optimistic. The U.S. is at one of its highest points in recent years from the perspective of the labor market. And overall, it is a very good market for workers.

Nessen then said that the two major weak spots in the U.S. economy are private investment and productivity. In South Carolina, the employment rate has grown steadily since 2012 primarily due to a surge in advanced manufacturing and growth in professional business services. But the employment rate has declined in the construction business, and in the leisure and hospitality industry.

He said the overall employment growth in 2018 is expected to be 2 percent, comparable to what it was in 2017 because industry in the state is not expected to expand significantly. But a labor force shortage is expected to be the greatest bottleneck in the state’s economic growth.

Nessen said the centerpiece of recent tax reform is the corporate tax cut. With access to greater resources, businesses will 1) either hire new workers and expand or 2) invest in research and development, and in existing employees. Considering South Carolina’s tight labor market, he said businesses in South Carolina will probably invest in their existing workers to make workers more productive and to prevent workers from being poached by other companies hard-pressed to find workers. He also said it is likely that wage gains will beat employment gains in 2018.

There is some concern that the Federal Reserve might increase interest rates at a pace that derails economic growth, and some concern about changes in trade policy, including tariffs. Such changes could affect South Carolina, which is integrated into the global economy.

“The bottom line is that if you liked 2017, you’ll like 2018,” Nessen said. “Market fundamentals are fairly solid right now. When we look at the major economic factors that are driving our economy, most look good. The threats to the economy in 2018 are more likely to come from the policy side—a policy error.

“There are not a lot of economic threats out there right

now,” he added. “This is positive news for 2018.”

Suspension of Medicaid Benefits for Justice-Involved

South Carolina became a suspension state in 2016, which means that Medicaid benefits can be suspended as opposed to terminated when someone is incarcerated. Medicaid-eligible individuals who are incarcerated maintain their Medicaid eligibility; however, they will only be covered by Medicaid for medical services requiring an inpatient stay of at least 24 hours.

Despite the limits of Medicaid availability to the incarcerated, Medicaid can be an important tool in assisting the justice-involved in their transition back to the community. Spartanburg County is participating in a pilot project with the S.C. Department of Health and Human Services and SC Thrive to test the suspension process.

Tricia C. Richardson, Chief Executive Officer, SC Thrive, and Katherine W. White, Medical Administrator, Spartanburg County Detention Center Facility, explained that, as a cost-saving measure, county detention centers should consider assisting their populations with



(Left to right) Katherine W. White, Medical Administrator, Spartanburg County Detention Center Facility, and Tricia C. Richardson, Chief Executive Officer, SC Thrive, share the podium.

completing Medicaid applications to cover inpatient stays.

In addition, facilitating the enrollment of the justice-involved population into Medicaid and other supportive services after incarceration can decrease the likelihood of re-offending and make a difference in the health and wellbeing of the individual and the community.

To learn how suspension can save counties money, contact: Tricia Richardson, SC Thrive, at trichardson@scthrive.org or 1-800-726-8774. To learn more about Spartanburg County’s pilot project that is testing the suspension process, contact Kathy White, Spartanburg County Detention Facility, at kawhite@spartanburgcounty.org or (864) 596-2626.

Recouping Costs of Opioid Responses

William P. Walker Jr., Walker Morgan, LLC, talked about the current opioid epidemic facing the nation, including South Carolina. He also explained how—if hired by a county as legal counsel—his applicant team could help counties sue pharmaceutical companies for losses due to the opioid epidemic.

“The opioid epidemic in our country and state has ballooned over the last few years,” Walker said. “According to the centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 115 Americans die every day from opioid overdoses. There were 550 deaths in South Carolina due to this type of overdose in 2016, which surpassed the number of homicides in the state that year.



"Many of our counties have seen the surge of opioid-related costs for service from the loss of life in their communities to the costs of these responses and equipping public safety officers with antidote medicine," he added. "Opioids are having a tremendous impact on many aspects of our communities."



William P. Walker Jr.
Walker Morgan, LLC

county officials to talk with their county attorney and to determine the best course of action.)

For more information, e-mail William P. Walker Jr., Walker Morgan, LLC, at (803) 922-8411 or bw@walkermorgan.com.

Economic Impact of Dominion Energy Merger Proposal

Paul R. Briggs, State Policy Director, Dominion Energy, ex-

plained Dominion Energy's proposal to buy SCANA for \$14.6 billion and to refund SCE&G power customers.

Dominion Energy, headquartered in Richmond, Va., serves more than six million energy customers in eight states.

"We figured out early on that this wasn't going to be a normal merger, and we understood that some money in this situation had to come back to customers" Briggs said. "In a normal one, you give all the money to shareholders."

"So, we proposed about a \$1.3 billion refund to customers, roughly a \$1,000 check to every customer who has a \$150 power bill per month, and a bigger refund if they had a larger power bill than that," he added. "But it doesn't stop at residential. Industries, schools, churches and counties would also receive refunds."

Dominion Energy has also offered to forgive \$1.7 billion of the costs incurred for the VC Summer Nuclear Power Plant, freeze power rates for three years, and to commit to reducing rates for SCE&G electric customers 7 percent.

Dominion Energy is about six times larger than SCANA, according to Briggs.



Paul R. Briggs
*State Policy Director
Dominion Energy*

This, he said, would enable his company to reduce the period of time required to repay the money owed by SCANA from 50 years to 20 years and save about \$8 billion in interest.

He noted that SCANA's stock has been lowered to "junk" status, and SCE&G's stock has been lowered to a notch above junk status. Briggs explained that if SCANA and SCE&G are not allowed to collect money that they believe they are allowed to collect, then Dominion Energy's offer would not work, that the offer would be taken off the table, and the proposed merger terminated.

He said other options, including an offer from another company or even bankruptcy, might be available for SCANA and SCE&G if the Dominion Energy proposal is not successful. Briggs then said that meanwhile economic development efforts could be hampered unless Dominion Energy's offer succeeds or another solution is found.

County Officials Visit House Speaker



SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTY OFFICIALS VISIT S.C. HOUSE SPEAKER—On February 21, immediately after SCAC's 31st Annual Mid-Year Conference, county officials—including SCAC's President—visited the Speaker of the S.C. House of Representatives, Rep. James H. "Jay" Lucas (District 65). Shown (left to right) are: SCAC Treasurer Belinda Copeland, Darlington County; Kershaw County Administrator Victor J. Carpenter; Kershaw County Council Chairman Julian Burns; S.C. Rep. James H. "Jay" Lucas, Speaker of S.C. House of Representatives; Lancaster County Council Vice Chairman Charlene McGriff; SCAC President Henry H. Livingston III (Newberry County Council Chairman); and Joyce Thomas, Darlington County Council Member. This photo was subsequently published online in NACo's This Week in Photos.



SCAC Provides Legislative Update

SCAC Deputy General Counsel Timothy C. Winslow provided a brief legislative update and focused on legislative priorities, especially bills currently working their way through the General Assembly that could significantly affect county governments, including: 1) a bill asking the General Assembly to increase the Local Government Fund (LGF) \$11 million this year to \$232.3 million and to adjust the LGF each year based on the General Fund; 2) legislation that would allow county governments to have the same authority that municipalities already have to cleanup lots; 3) a Capital Project Sales Tax for Economic Development bill, designed specifically for land purchases and site development; and finally 4) legislation that would require the S.C. Department of Revenue to notify counties when taxpayers appeal property tax bills, protest tax bills, claim refunds, etc.

Winslow encouraged county officials to take advantage of the transportation that would be provided after lunch to allow them to visit members of the General Assembly at the State House.

SCAC's annual Legislative Reception was held from 5:30 to

7 p.m. at the Palmetto Club in Columbia.

On February 21, the day following SCAC's 31st Annual Mid-Year Conference, the Institute of Government for County Officials was held at Embassy Suites.



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\$25 per copy

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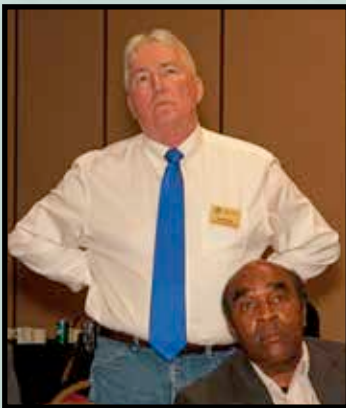
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Following Presentations, County Officials Voice Concerns and Ask Questions



When given the opportunity following presentations, county officials attending SCAC's 31st Annual Mid-Year Conference voiced their concerns and asked questions.

◀ William H. Peagler III
Berkeley County Supervisor



A county official (far-left background in this photo) steps up to one of the microphones to ask a question while other county officials listen.



Willie B. Owens
Orangeburg County
Council Member



Barbara Clark
Jasper County Council Member



Breeze Winn
Hampton County
Council Member



Gene Baten
Sumter County Council Member



Institute of Government for County Officials

The Institute of Government for County Officials was held on February 22, the day following SCAC's 31st Annual Mid-Year Conference. The following courses were offered: Strategic Planning, Public Speaking, Economic Development, The Policy Role of Council and Council Chairperson's Workshop.



▲ Teaching the Economic Development Course is J. Edwin West, SCCED, Senior Program Director, Product and Community Development, S.C. Department of Commerce.



▲ Orangeburg County Council Chairman Johnnie Wright Sr. (photo above) and Beaufort County Council Chairman D. Paul Summerville (photo at left) participate in the Council Chairperson's Workshop.



▼ Anna Berger, SCAC's Director of Research and Training



Bonnie J. Ammons
Executive Director
S.C. Rural Infrastructure
Authority



Participating in a class exercise are Lexington County Council Chairman Debra B. Summers (above) and Berkeley County Supervisor William H. Peagler III (below).



(Inset-left) Sara L. Nalley, Professor Emerita of Communications and Theatre, Columbia College, teaches a Public Speaking course (above) that required county officials to practice their public speaking skills.



Insurance Trusts Hold Annual Membership Meeting

By Robert C. Collins, CPCU, CIC
Director of Insurance Services

The South Carolina Counties Workers' Compensation Trust and the South Carolina Counties Property & Liability Trust held the annual Insurance Trusts Membership Meeting on January 24 and 25 in Myrtle Beach.

The purpose of the meeting, which was attended by 147 county officials, was to promote risk management education and brief members on the Insurance Trusts. Attendees heard from several speakers on a variety of risk management topics. The meeting included a presentation from Angela Pinson, Director of Safety and Risk Management at Berkeley County Government.

Daniel C. Plyler, Davidson and Lindemann, P.A., provided an update on employment law issues. Also presenting were Robert Benfield, John Henderson and Van Henson, South Carolina LLR. A risk management roundtable discussion was also held. This year, the roundtable session continued into the second day. Roundtable panel participants included Van Henson, Daniel Plyler, Angela Pinson and Terry Booker, Risk Manager at Spartanburg County Government.

Additional details, including photos taken at the Membership Meeting, will be published in the upcoming spring edition of *County Focus*.

2017 Risk Management Award Winners

Outstanding Safety Achievement Awards

Berkeley County
Horry County
Horry County Solid Waste Authority
Kershaw County
Lancaster County
Oconee County
Spartanburg County

Sustained Excellence in Risk Management Awards

Berkeley County
Horry County
Lancaster County
Spartanburg County

Service Award

Terry Booker



SCAC Risk Management Director John Henderson (right) recently presented two risk management awards to Greenwood County—a Third Place Property & Liability Claims Reporting award and a First Runner Up, Workers' Compensation Experience Modifier award. Accepting the awards are (left to right) Greenwood County Manager Toby Chappell and Risk Manager Anita Baylor. An in-depth article, scheduled to be published in the spring issue of *County Focus Magazine* (Vol. 29, No. 1), will include photos of all award presentations made at the 2018 S.C. Insurance Trusts Membership Meeting (Jan. 24–25).

Best Experience Modifier

Abbeville County

1st Runner Up—Chester County and Greenwood County (tie)
2nd Runner Up—Spartanburg County

Workers' Compensation Lag Time Awards for Counties

1st Place—Lancaster County
2nd Place—Marlboro County
3rd Place—Anderson County

Non-County Entities Workers' Compensation Lag Time Awards

1st Place—Berkeley County Water & Sanitation
2nd Place—Horry County Solid Waste Authority
3rd Place—Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority

Property and Liability Lag Time Awards

1st Place—Sumter County
2nd Place—Fairfield County
3rd Place—Greenwood County

County governments have long recognized that investment in risk management and safety programs is effective stewardship of tax payer dollars.





Williamsburg County Opens New Voter Registration and Election Office

Williamsburg County hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony on February 2 for its new Voter Registration and Election Office, located on 126 S. Jackson St. in Kingstree. The building previously served as the Williamsburg County Sheriff's Office.

The county renovated the 3,649 square foot, one-story brick structure to combine the county's Voter Registration and Election Commission offices at one location, using \$579,100 in loan funds and \$67,700 in grant funds provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Voter Registration Office was previously located behind the Williamsburg County Courthouse. The Election

Commission Office was previously located on North Brooks Street.



Guest speakers included: Sen. Ronnie A. Sabb (District 32), Rep. Cezar E. McKnight (District 101), Williamsburg County Supervisor Stanley Pasley and Board of Elections Chairperson Brenda Woods.

A tour of the facility was provided immediately after the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Williamsburg County Supervisor Stanley S. Pasley speaks prior to the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Williamsburg County's new Voter Registration and Election Office.



RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY—Shown cutting the ribbon to officially open Williamsburg County's new Voter Registration and Election Office are (left to right): Robert Brown; Erica Salley, U.S. Department of Agriculture; the Rev. Christopher Mathis Jr.; Rep. Cezar E. McKnight (District 101); Richard Nelson; Edith Redden, Williamsburg County Voter Registration/Elections Director; Council Member Jeanie Brown-Burrows; Brenda Woods; Williamsburg County Supervisor Stanley S. Pasley; Tammy Wilkes; Williamsburg County Council Member W.B. Wilson; and Sen. Ronnie A. Sabb (District 32).



South Carolina Delegates Meet Sen. Tim Scott at NACo's Legislative Conference



South Carolina delegates met with Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) at NACo's 2018 Legislative Conference. After the conference, NACo published this photo and many others on NACo's online Flickr site at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/naco-photos/sets/72157688586821290/>. Shown (front row, left to right) are: Charleston County Clerk of Court Julie J. Armstrong; Beaufort County Council Vice Chairman Gerald W. Stewart; Williamsburg County Clerk to Council Tammi Epps-McClary; Regina and her husband, Williamsburg County Council Vice Chairman Andy D. McKnight Sr.; Council Member Jonathan Miller; (back row, left to right) Marion County Administrator G. Timothy Harper; Beaufort County Council Member Mike Covert; Williamsburg County Council Member W.B. Wilson; SCAC President Henry "Buddy" Livingston (Newberry County Council Chairman) and his wife, Rhonda; Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.); Florence County Council Member Alphonso Bradley; Beaufort County Council Chairman Paul Sommerville; Charleston County Deputy Administrator James D. Armstrong; and Beaufort County Interim Administrator Joshua A. Gruber. (Photo courtesy of NACo)

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Need Information? Visit SCAC's Website at www.SCCounties.org

The South Carolina Association of Counties' website is the primary Internet resource for information about South Carolina's counties and issues affecting county government. The website is a dynamic tool that provides access to information about services such as education and training opportunities, research capabilities, and legal assistance.

Visitors to [SCCounties.org](http://www.SCCounties.org) will find conference schedules, legislative initiatives, and numerous Association publications. The website has information on key financial programs offered by SCAC, unique county-specific publications, legislative monitoring, and ad hoc surveys.

The site provides general information for all 46 counties—including contact information for county officials, links to county websites, and job postings. [SCCounties.org](http://www.SCCounties.org) is also a conduit to a number of other resources such as the National Association of Counties, the S.C. General Assembly, U.S. Congress, federal agencies, as well as national and state associations.

The SCAC staff remains ready to receive and assist with any special requests. To facilitate this communication, please refer to the SCAC staff list on SCAC's website to obtain respective email addresses.

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Webcasts & Webinars for 2018



Resource Considerations for Planning and Zoning Officials
9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Thursday, May 17, 2018
S.C. Bar Conference Center
950 Taylor St., Columbia, S.C. 29201

For more information, please contact Leslie Christy-Jennings, SCAC, at (803) 252-7255 or ljennings@scac.sc. Or visit SCAC's website at: <http://www.sccounties.org/education-training>

Two Clerks to Council Receive SCCCA Certifications

The S.C. Clerks to Council Association (SCCCA) recently recognized Tammi Epps-McClary, Williamsburg County Clerk to Council, and Jamie Sue Stephens, Dillon County Clerk to Council, for successfully completing the SCCCA Certification Program. Epps was recognized on Feb. 3, and Stephens was recognized on July 31. Each received a certificate and a monogrammed briefcase for completing the program.

The certification program is designed to establish minimum standards and professional goals for county clerks.



SCAC's 2018 Conference Calendar

Aug. 4-5 Aug. 5-8	Institute of Government Annual Conference Hilton Head Marriott
Aug. 16	Setoff Debt/GEAR Embassy Suites Hotel, Columbia
TBD	Continuing Education Update for Risk Managers, Etc.
Oct. 24 Oct. 25	Institute of Government County Council Coalition Embassy Suites Hotel, Columbia
Nov. 16	S.C. Local Government Attorneys' Institute DoubleTree by Hilton, Columbia
Nov. 29-Dec. 1	Legislative Conference Renaissance, Charleston
Dec. 11	Newly-Elected Council Member Orientation Embassy Suites Hotel, Columbia

You can register and pay online for SCAC conferences at www.SCCounties.org/meetings.



NACo's 2018 Conference Calendar

July 13-16

Annual Conference and Exposition
Nashville, Tenn.

The National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO) recently announced its 2018 Annual Awards of Excellence Competition. The competition is open to members and nonmembers.

The early bird application deadline is April 6. The cost for entries received by this date is \$35 per entry for NACIO members and \$50 per entry for non-NACIO members.

The final deadline is April 20. The cost for entries submitted by this date is \$50 per entry for NACIO members and \$65 per entry for non-NACIO members.

Award winners will be announced in July at the National Association of Counties annual conference in Nashville, Tenn. (July 13-16).

For more information, visit:

<http://www.nacio.org/>

