

2025

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**SOUTH CAROLINA
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**



ALLENDALE COUNTY IN FOCUS

Clockwise from top left:

The **Allendale County Courthouse** was originally built in 1922, just after the founding of the county (1919). After a fire in 1998, the courthouse was restored with an addition in 2005.

The **Burton's Ferry Turnstile Bridge** was built in 1938 as a rotating bridge that provided access across the Savannah River to Georgia while also allowing barge and ship traffic to pass on the river. In 1965 a new bridge was built and the old bridge left in the open position. It is now part of a greenway trail for walking/running ending in great views of the Savannah River.

The **Carolina Theater** was a popular cinema in downtown Allendale from the 1920s to the 1960s. In 1983, the University of South Carolina–Salkehatchie acquired the theater building. With money from grants and support from local businesses, the school officially reopened the theater in 2013. It is used by the community as well as the school for arts and cultural events.

The **"All for Allendale County" mural**, painted in 2021 on the Fleetwood Building on US Highway 301, features Swallowtail Kite birds, which converge on the area during hot summer months to feed after nesting nearby. The All for Allendale County campaign is a community effort bringing together residents, leaders and businesses to attract economic development.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear County Officials,

This year represents an important milestone for county government in South Carolina. Did you know this summer marks 50 years of the Home Rule Act?

Signed by Gov. James Edwards on June 25, 1975, the Home Rule Act signals the beginning of modern county government as we know it today. Our Association was founded to advocate for Home Rule, and half a century later our collective voices continue making a difference at the state level and in our 46 counties.

It is therefore fitting that this landmark year has been another successful one at SCAC. It is my honor to share the 2025 President's Report showcasing accomplishments under our three main pillars of advocacy, education and collaboration.

Advocate

The SCAC team, along with county officials, continued to advocate on behalf of county government at the General Assembly and shape statewide legislation to benefit all South Carolina counties.

Thank you for working with your local delegation members and voicing your support of SCAC policy positions. Your calls, messages and visits to testify at

hearings in Columbia are greatly appreciated and truly make a difference.

A highlight of the 2025 legislative session includes full funding to the Local Government Fund, which will increase by more than \$14.5 million in FY 2025-26.

Another key policy position enacted in May was legislation that addresses the financial challenges counties face regarding waste tire management and processing. The new law includes an increase to \$400 from the \$150-per-ton cap on tipping fees a county may charge for recycling and disposal of undocumented waste tires. The successful adoption of the bill represents collaborative efforts from SCAC, the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance and several other entities over the past several years.

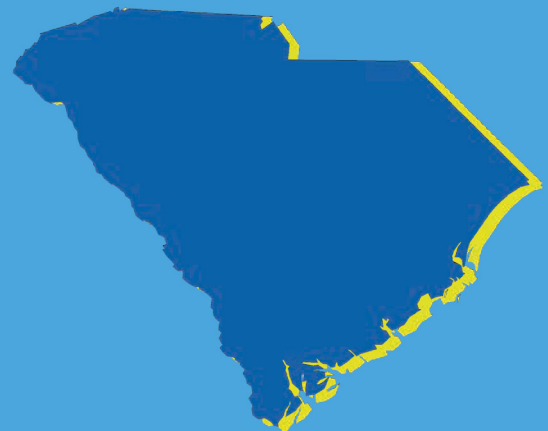
Thank you to the more than 160 county officials who attended our Counties Connect: A Legislative Action Day in February at the State House. In addition, numerous county officials testified at subcommittee hearings throughout the session explaining the impact of legislation on our counties.

Educate

In addition, county officials took part in our Institute of Government sessions, orientation courses for newly

General Membership

100%
of South Carolina counties
are members of SCAC



elected officials and workshops in the summer, fall and winter. These events offered a chance to learn about the latest trends affecting local government and provided an opportunity to connect with colleagues across the state.

Collaborate

In this report, you will read more about the SC Counties Insurance Trusts including proactive risk management and safety training and support for counties.

This year we expanded our Board of Directors Scholarship Program. Over the course of four years, on a rotating basis, the program will award a \$5,000 scholarship to one graduating senior from each of our 46 counties.

We celebrated innovative solutions to common county government challenges during our inaugural SCAC Awards Luncheon in the fall when we recognized the J. Mitchell Graham and Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Awards participants and honorees.

It has truly been a privilege to serve with you during this period of growth at SCAC. We can all be proud of how far our Association and county government have evolved in the last five decades.



William Robinson

SCAC President

Allendale County Council Chairman

504
county officials registered for
at least one SCAC event in
2024-2025



ADVOCATE FOR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The Association has a rich history of working with county and state leaders to safeguard Home Rule, which this year celebrates its golden anniversary.

By partnering with county officials who work with local delegation members throughout the year, SCAC successfully amplifies the voices of county government at the state and federal levels.

Thanks to our Legislative Committee, Policy Steering Committee members and all county officials who offered input, recommendations and ideas for SCAC's 2025 Policy Positions. SCAC's legislative program success is due to the relentless efforts of the Governmental Affairs team and hundreds of county officials actively engaging throughout the policy development process, staying informed and making timely contact with General Assembly members.

2025 Legislative Session Wrap-Up

Highlights of the 2025* session include the following bills that address SCAC policy positions and issues of concern to county government.



State Budget — Act No. 69, R. 97, H. 4025

SCAC continues to work with legislative leaders to ensure full funding of the Local Government Fund (LGF) and Rural County Stabilization Fund. In FY 2025-26, the LGF will increase by over \$14.5 million. This represents full funding to the LGF under the statutory formula.



Waste Tire Disposal — Act No. 33, R. 51, S. 171

This legislation represents the efforts of SCAC, the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance, and several other entities to address the financial challenges that counties across the state face regarding the management and processing of waste tires. One of the most important aspects of the bill includes an increase of the \$150-per-ton cap on tipping fees that a county may charge for recycling and disposal of undocumented waste tires to \$400 per ton.

(Continued on page 6)

2025 Legislative Session

699
bills tracked



32+ subcommittee hearings
where SCAC staff testified



169 county officials attended
Counties Connect: A
Legislative Action Day



2,100+ people received the
weekly Friday Report
legislative update



52% average open rate for
the Friday Report in 2025

Industry average is 42%





Law Enforcement/Judicial Privacy Protection — Act No. 4, R. 11, S. 126

Requires that any personal contact information of an active or former law enforcement officer or an active or former member of the judiciary accessible by a state or local government database or website be restricted and not be disclosed to the public if the eligible party has filed a formal request with the agency. The requester must specify which documents contain their personal information.



Litter Officers — Act No. 67, R. 95, H. 4247

Updates the number of litter control officers that a county may have based on the most recent census data.



Small Estates in Probate — Act No. 26, R. 44, H. 3472

Increases the limit of a small personal estate from \$25,000 to \$45,000 to allow more estates to go through summary administration in probate.

**This is the first year of a two-year legislative session meaning bills that did not pass may be considered in 2026. Some bills of interest to counties that may be picked up in January 2026 include:*



Manufacturing Property Tax Reimbursements — S. 439

Increases the reimbursement cap for the 42.8571% manufacturing property tax exemption from \$170 million to \$300 million. This bill is in response to the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs projecting that the current cap would be exceeded by more than \$30 million in FY 2025-26. The reimbursements will continue to come from the Trust Fund for Tax Relief, and the increase in reimbursements will come from the General Fund.

Status: S. 439 has been referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.



Coroner Qualifications — H. 3048

Amends the qualification requirements for a candidate running for coroner. It removes the provision allowing a candidate to simply be enrolled in a recognized forensic science degree or certification program to be completed within one year of being elected to the office of coroner. There is currently no requirement to verify that, upon election, the coroner previously obtained a forensic degree or completed the certification program. The bill also requires the candidate to, at the time of filing, submit an affidavit along with supporting documents verifying that they meet the qualifications.

Status: H. 3048 has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Assault & Battery — S. 346

Amends the statute on assault and battery to state that unlawfully injuring a health care professional during their duties, or injuring someone in a health care facility, constitutes high-and-aggravated assault and battery, with specified penalties. The Senate Judiciary Committee adopted a subcommittee amendment to include correctional facility employees, including local detention center employees.

Status: S. 346 is pending second reading on the Senate calendar.



State Auditor — H. 3222

Authorizes the governor to appoint or remove the state auditor, with advice and consent of the Senate. It also creates the Department of Governmental Auditing, headed by the state auditor. Independent annual audits of all county financial records must be filed with the Department of Governmental Auditing instead of the State Treasurer's Office.

It also establishes a Division of Local Government Services (Division) under the state auditor to be headed by a deputy auditor. The Division would perform periodic audits of financial records of county treasurers, clerks of court, and magistrates that were previously performed by the state auditor. Any request by a county for an extension to file their annual audit report must be made with the Division.

Status: H. 3222 is pending in the House to concur or nonconcur with Senate amendments.



Legal Assistance and Research

SCAC's legal staff works with county attorneys to provide informal opinions and in-depth research on legal issues important to county officials.



21+

hours of customized in-person training programs to elected and appointed officials in Beaufort, Georgetown, Laurens and Union counties

- Participated in county council retreats in Beaufort and Pickens counties
- Presented legal issues at SCAC's annual continuing education program for planning & zoning officials and staff
- Presented a new module covering county employee and officials' ethical and criminal liability issues as part of SCAC's Risk Management Principles course
- Conducted research for county officials on a diverse range of legal issues including ethics, procurement, property taxes, capital project sales taxes, FOIA and public meetings, zoning, special elections and vacancies in elected offices, impact fees and growth management issues
- Provided a continuing education update on statutory requirements, and legal and ethical issues to the S.C. Clerks to Council Association at their annual conference

EDUCATE AND BUILD KNOWLEDGE AMONG COUNTY OFFICIALS

The Association offers a variety of in-person and online educational opportunities to equip county officials with the latest tools and information to meet the needs of their communities.

Institute of Government

- 67** Level I graduates
- 47** Level II graduates
- 287** County officials attended an Institute course, representing **46** counties
- 42** County Councils with at least one Institute graduate



Newly Elected Orientations

- 58** County Council members
- 55** Countywide officials

Council Chairperson's Workshop

- 40** Attendees

Planning and Zoning



- 317** New planning and zoning officials completed six hours of orientation training
- 257** Planning and zoning officials completed continuing education training via SCAC's learning portal or webinars

Local Government Attorneys' Institute

- 184** Attorneys attended SCAC's Local Government Attorneys' Institute in November

NACo High Performance Leadership Academy



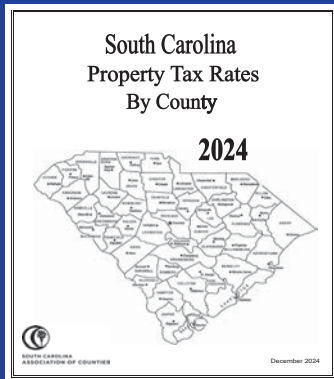
- 39** S.C. county officials and staff completed one or more leadership courses

100

100% of **Darlington County Council Members** are Level I and Level II graduates

100% of **Dorchester** and **Orangeburg** county councils are Level I graduates

Resources, Technical Assistance, Research and Surveys



2024 Property Tax Rates by County

The annual report, published digitally in December, details millage rates for every jurisdiction that levies property taxes in the state.

SCAC staff conducts statewide surveys and gathers information on counties' policies and practices to further inform policymakers and practitioners.

5 topical surveys were conducted on:

- boat tax revenue
- community centers
- firework ordinances
- paid parental leave policies
- South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank



The biennial County Wage and Salary survey is currently underway.

Debut Program Brings Together Newly Elected Countywide Leaders

SCAC's inaugural Newly Elected Countywide Officials Orientation aimed to empower recently elected county officials as they step into their new roles.

The training was held in March for those who were recently elected to serve as county auditor, treasurer, clerk of court, coroner, probate judge, register of deeds or sheriff.

Similar to the Association's orientation program for newly elected county council members, the daylong event included introductions from SCAC leaders, an ethics overview from the State Ethics Commission and a crash course in county budgets.

SCAC Executive Director Tim Winslow explained how the Association can be of service to county officials, highlighting the organization's three pillars: advocacy, education and collaboration.

"Advocacy is why we started, but the education is equally important," he said.

The event also featured a panel of county officials including a sheriff, treasurer, coroner, county council members and an administrator from Anderson and Lancaster counties who addressed building effective working relationships in county government.

"We come together in the spirit of professionalism," Lancaster County Administrator Dennis Marstall told attendees about working closely with his colleagues in county government. "Our unifying thing, especially in Lancaster County, is growth."



CELEBRATE



Awards Spotlight

SCAC held its first Awards Luncheon in October to celebrate participants in the annual J. Mitchell Graham Memorial and Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Awards.

These awards recognize innovative projects completed by South Carolina's counties during the past two fiscal years. Winners represent the best qualities of local governance—attention to details, service to citizens, efficient use of tax dollars, and improvement in the quality of life.

- **8** counties competed in the J Mitchell Graham Memorial Award category.
- **7** counties representing five regional cooperation projects competed in the Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation category.

See more photos from the celebration at <https://sccounties.smugmug.com/2024-JMGBL-Awards-Presentation>.

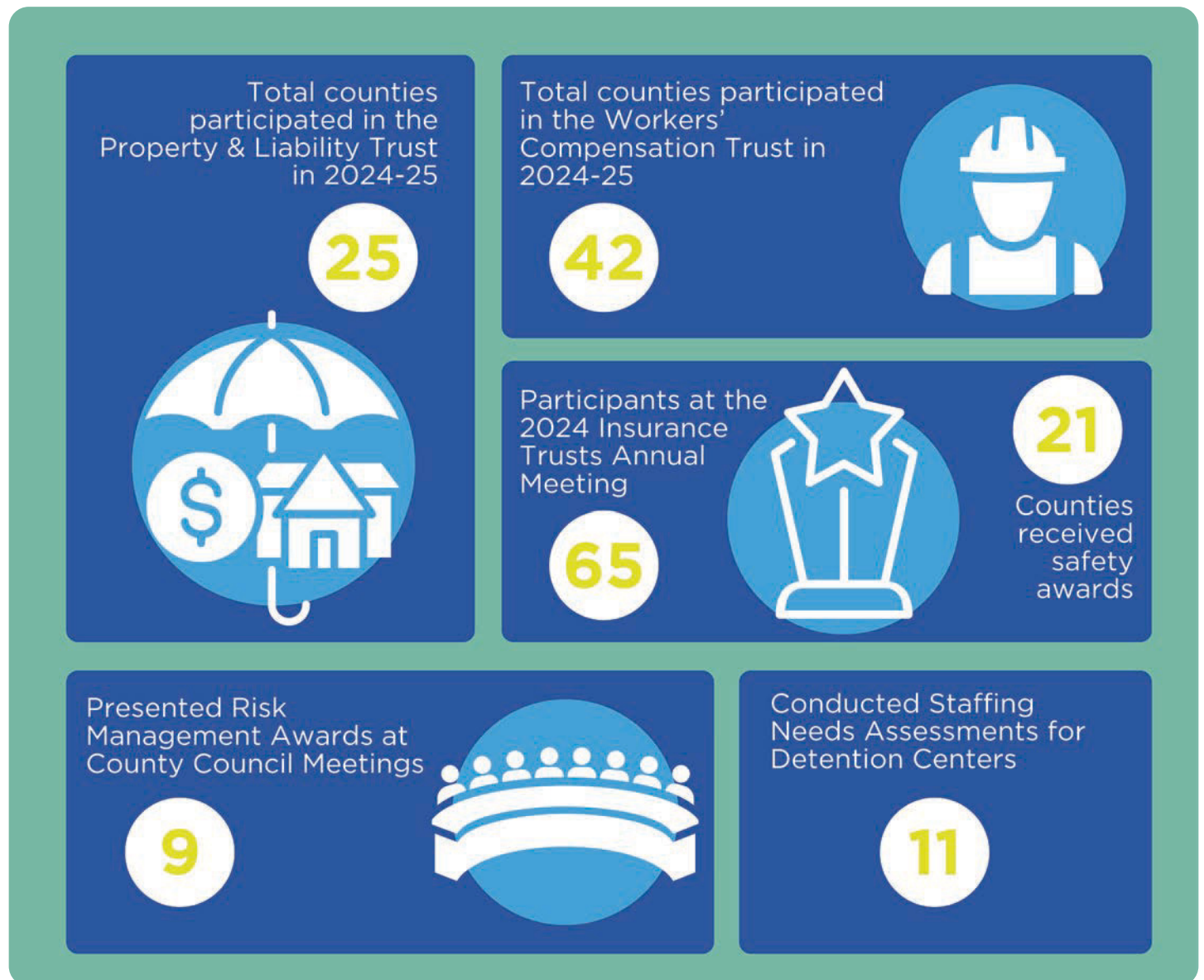


COLLABORATE TO MAXIMIZE RESOURCES

South Carolina Counties Insurance Trusts

The SC Counties Property & Liability Trust and SC Counties Workers' Compensation Trust are run by members to meet the unique challenges facing county government operations. A Board of Trustees consisting of seven county officials oversees the trusts. It meets several times a year to review claim trends, financials and discuss mitigation strategies.

Strong risk management programs by participating counties plus SCAC's customized solutions and services make the programs a success.





Risk Management Classes

TOPICS	CLASSES	EMPLOYEES REACHED
Anti-harassment	12	226
Culture of Respect	12	316
De-escalation	14	347
Defensive Driving	30	521
Detention Center Risk Management	31	426
Heat Stress	1	42
Inmate Supervision	13	404
Leadership	25	380
Lock Out Tag Out	3	156
OSHA Record Keeping	1	24

Communicate and Engage



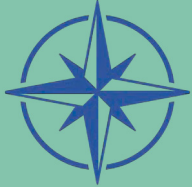
71

targeted messages in
2024-25



53%

average open rate



County COMPASS

A monthly digital newsletter
covering timely topics, event
notices and county spotlights

43% average open rate

Average distribution **2,119**
readers

Social Media



1,949 followers
up 516 since 2023-24



1,307 fans
up 251 since 2023-24



543 followers
up 35 since 2023-24



Launched
Instagram
2024



Text Alerts

Debuted SMS text alerts for
legislative issues in 2024-25

108 subscribers

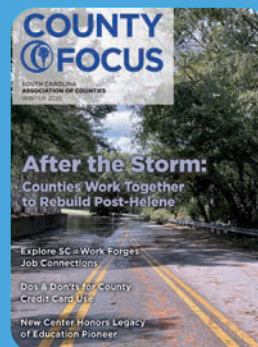
3 alerts sent

County Focus

The feature publication includes information about best practices, timely topics and spotlight articles on how county governments address challenges in today's environment.

1,500 Printed copies mailed to county officials and stakeholders per quarter in 2024-25

519 Total monthly active users on digital editions in 2024-25



Debt Collection Programs

SCAC assists county entities in two debt collection programs administered by the SC Department of Revenue. The Setoff Debt Collection Program and the Government Enterprise Accounts Receivable (GEAR) Program help counties recover unpaid liabilities which would otherwise go uncollected.



253

Participants in the Setoff Debt Program

42

Participants in the GEAR Program

~\$67 million

Returned through Setoff Debt

~\$14 million

Returned through GEAR

Scholarships

The SCAC Board of Directors annually awards scholarships to graduating high school seniors who plan to attend a South Carolina college or university. Recipients are selected based on an essay, grades, school activities and community involvement.



148

Applicants

\$5,000

One President's Scholarship, a one-time award given to a student from Allendale County, the SCAC President's home county

\$60,000

Twelve Board of Directors Scholarships, one-time awards given to students in Aiken, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Charleston, Chester, Edgefield, Hampton, Lee, Sumter, Union and York counties

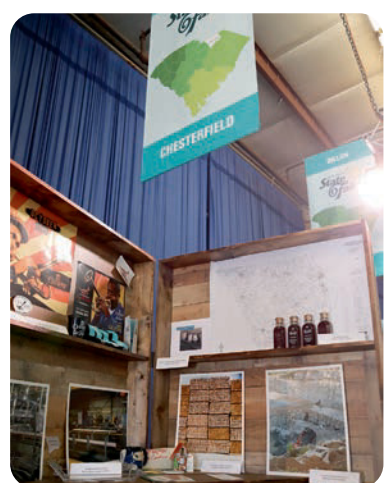
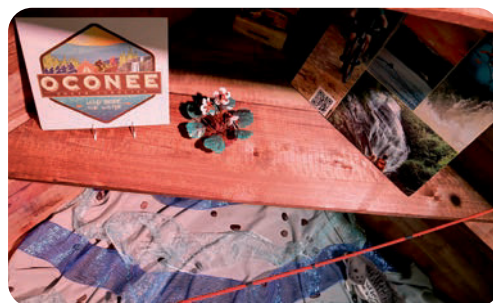
\$65,000 total in scholarships

Awarded to students in 13 counties

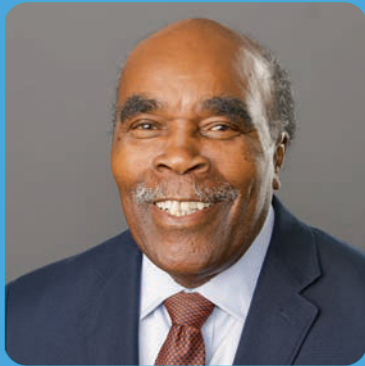
46 Reasons to Celebrate South Carolina



The 2024 South Carolina State Fair shined a spotlight on what we consider the best part of the state—our counties! The theme “46 Reasons to Celebrate” included an exhibit hall highlighting what makes each county special in terms of history, economics and other contributions to the Palmetto State. SCAC and the State Fair partnered to bring the hall to life and share information about counties throughout the fall. County officials were invited to attend the fair for free following the 2024 Fall Advocacy Meeting on SCAC Day at the Fair.



2024-25 OFFICERS



President
William E. Robinson
Allendale County
Council Chairman

First Vice President



Mary D. Anderson
Chesterfield County
Council Chairwoman

Second Vice President



C. David Chinnis
Dorchester County
Council Chairman

Third Vice President



Cecil M. Thornton Jr.
Calhoun County
Council Vice Chairman

Secretary



Charles T. Edens
Sumter County
Council Member

Treasurer



Julie J. Armstrong
Charleston County
Clerk of Court

Immediate Past President



Johnnie Wright Sr.
Orangeburg County
Council Chairman

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Terms Expire 2028

John Q. Atkinson Jr.
Marion County
Council Vice Chairman

Alphonso Bradley
Florence County
Council Member

Joseph F. Passiment
Beaufort County
Council Member

Timothy F. Spencer
Cherokee County
Council Chairman

Johnnie Wright Sr.
Orangeburg County
Council Chairman

Terms Expire 2027

Cam Crawford
Horry County
Council Member

Tim Harper
Dillon County
Administrator

Brown Patterson
Laurens County
Council Member

Phillip M. Taylor Sr.
Colleton County
Council Member

Terms Expire 2026

Daniel Alexander
Barnwell County
Council Member

Charles T. Jennings
McCormick County
Council Vice Chairman

Sammie Tucker Jr.
Kershaw County
Council Member

Terms Expire 2025

W. Brian Carnes
Lancaster County
Council Chairman

Larry Haynes
Bamberg County
Council Vice Chairman

Jesica Mackey
Richland County
Council Chairwoman

Jason P. Phillips
Anderson County
Treasurer

SC Counties Insurance Trusts Chairman

Cecil M. Thornton Jr.
Calhoun County
Council Vice Chairman

NACo Board Representative

Waymon Mumford
Florence County
Council Member

PAST PRESIDENTS

1960s-1970s

Charles W. Lawrimore,
Georgetown County
J. Mitchell Graham, Charleston County
John L. Greer, Union County
J. Hugh McCutchen,
Williamsburg County
James O. Thomason, Spartanburg County
Arthur H. Burton, Charleston County
Jack Q. Gerrald, Horry County
Harold L. King, Darlington County
E.E. Johnson, Hampton County
Berry L. Mobley, Lancaster County
Marjorie H. Sharpe, Lexington County

1980s

Howard A. Taylor, Charleston County
Alfred B. Schooler, Georgetown County
Lonnie Hamilton III, Charleston County
James P. Whitlock, Pickens County
Charlie I. Crews, Hampton County
Sue H. Roe, Aiken County
O.V. Player Jr., Sumter County
Danny E. Allen, Spartanburg County
David K. Summers Jr., Calhoun County
Lowell C. "Butch" Spires,
Lexington County

1990s

Kenneth R. Huckaby,
Spartanburg County
James R. McGee, Orangeburg County
Belle J. Kennette, Greenwood County
William L. McBride, Beaufort County
Raymond C. Eubanks Jr.,
Spartanburg County
George E. Bomar, Greenville County
Betty T. Roper, Clarendon County
Alzena Robinson, Bamberg County
Robert R. Nash Sr., Ph.D., Pickens County
Polly C. Jackson, Lancaster County

2000s

James H. Rozier Jr., Berkeley County
Steve S. Kelly Jr., Kershaw County
James A. Coleman, Laurens County
Gonza L. Bryant, Greenwood County
Barrett S. Lawrimore, Charleston County
Waymon Mumford, Florence County*
Belinda D. Copeland, Darlington County
K.G. "Rusty" Smith Jr., Florence County
L. Gregory Pearce Jr., Richland County

2010s

Diane B. Anderson, Laurens County
R. Carlisle Roddey, Chester County
Joseph B. Dill, Greenville County
Charles T. Edens, Sumter County
Joseph R. Branham, Chester County
James R. Frazier, Horry County
John Q. Atkinson Jr., Marion County
Julie J. Armstrong, Charleston County
Henry H. Livingston III,
Newberry County
Charles T. Jennings, McCormick County

2020-Present

Dwight L. Stewart Jr., Clarendon County
Johnnie Wright Sr., Orangeburg County
Paul A. Cain, Oconee County
Debra B. Summers, Lexington County
Roy Costner III, Pickens County

*Presidents are listed in chronological order for each decade. *Waymon Mumford served as president for two terms in 2005 and 2006 due to the untimely death of SCAC President Barrett S. Lawrimore.*

STAFF

Executive Director

Timothy C. Winslow

Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel

Joshua C. Rhodes

Senior Director of Operations

Anna B. Berger

SCAC Staff Members

sccounties.org/staff



“Whether it’s fire protection, EMS, recreation, waste water, it’s a service. Now we have the ability to regulate what we do on a local basis to satisfy the citizens. We can attack our problems immediately instead of waiting for legislation. That’s been a plus.”

William E. Robinson

SCAC President and
Allendale County Council Chairman

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF HOME RULE

The Home Rule Act was signed on June 25, 1975, marking the beginning of modern county government in South Carolina.

Over the past five decades, the Palmetto State’s 46 county governments have advanced to serve their communities with critical services, protecting and improving quality of life.

Explore the evolution of county government in South Carolina — scan the QR code to the right.



Local Leaders. Statewide Strength.®

www.sccounties.org



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