



SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

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

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Four SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTIES RECEIVE AWARDS IN SCAC's 2019 J. MITCHELL GRAHAM/BARRETT LAWRIMORE MEMORIAL AWARDS COMPETITION

Four South Carolina counties recently received awards in SCAC's 2019 J. Mitchell Graham/Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Awards Competition, held on August 4 at the Association's 52nd Annual Conference. The conference was held August 3 – 7.

DORCHESTER COUNTY WINS SCAC's 2019 J. MITCHELL GRAHAM MEMORIAL AWARD

Dorchester County won the 2019 J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award for its Online Newsroom, an innovative approach that tells the county's story by improving information communicated to the public and reducing the spread of misinformation, particularly on social media.

"Being the smallest county in its area, Dorchester County had difficulty getting news out to newspapers and television viewers in traditional markets. And, news that did get out was rarely positive," said William E. Tomes, Fellow, Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities, College of Charleston, who headed the three-judge panel evaluating this year's competition. "The county's online newsroom is the culmination of a series of initiatives, which includes hiring a public information officer, developing a communications strategic plan and redesigning the county's website.

"Dorchester County studied media consumption habits of its audience to ensure articles in the online newsroom are written in a manner to appeal to the reader," Tomes added. "In addition to county-generated news articles, information from state agencies, local businesses and the county's school districts appear in the newsroom. The county has engaged citizens and businesses via social media to interact and get real time information and feedback."

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.

HONORABLE MENTIONS AWARDED TO YORK COUNTY (OVER 150,000 POP.) AND BARNWELL COUNTY (UNDER 50,000 POP.)

Barnwell and York counties won Honorable Mentions

In the category for counties with populations greater than 150,000, **York County** won an Honorable Mention for producing a three-hour documentary, *The Many Heroes*, that is available on YouTube. The documentary honors the county's fallen detective, Mike Doty, and details a series of night ambushes on January 15/16, 2018, during which Doty was shot and killed and three other officers were wounded. The documentary, produced by the Sheriff Office's Public Information Officer, allows 17 public safety officials who were involved to tell the story in their own words and chronicles the events to help heal and unify the community. So far, the documentary has received approximately 50,000 views.

In the category for counties with populations under 50,000, **Barnwell County** won an Honorable Mention for addressing the needs of local residents and those of other counties in the region by securing funding to construct a monolithic dome-shaped, dual purpose gymnasium and safe room.

"The facility is designed to withstand winds in excess of 200 miles per hour and will provide shelter to students, county residents and those being evacuated from coastal regions in South Carolina," Tomes said. "A Federal Emergency Management Association Hazard Mitigation Grant and school district matching funds will pay for the project."

CHARLESTON COUNTY WINS 2019 BARRETT LAWRIKORE REGIONAL COOPERATION AWARD

Charleston County won SCAC's 2019 Barrett Lawrimore Regional Cooperation Award for collaborating with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to create a partnership that offers business opportunities, educational outreach and increased access to technology.

"The results of this *Launch with NASA* partnership gave small businesses the tools to gain contracts with NASA and exposed students to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) careers, internships and scholarships," Tomes said.

"Charleston County has existing industries in the aeronautic and manufacturing cluster, and was looking for opportunities to expand business development in that field," he added. "Since 2018, Charleston County NASA Team hosted the Launch with NASA small business form, the NASA STEM expo, an astronaut visit to several county schools, the NASA Prime Contractor Council meeting and small business week presentations. The success of these efforts has led to an expansion of the activities in 2020 that will go beyond the county's borders."

J. MITCHELL GRAHAM/BARRETT LAWRIKORE MEMORIAL AWARDS COMPETITION

This year marks the 47th year that the SCAC has awarded the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award, and the 22nd year the Association has awarded the Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award.

J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award recognizes counties that address community challenges, implement operational improvements, or enhance their citizens' quality of life in a unique way. The award, first presented in 1972, honors the memory of J. Mitchell Graham who served as SCAC's president from 1969 to 1970.

The Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award 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. The award is named in memory of Barrett S. Lawrimore who served as SCAC's president in 2004.

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 of Political Science and Policy Studies, Clemson University; and Kris Krauza Sikes, Ph.D., J.D., Public Service Associate, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia.

On August 6 at the General Session for SCAC's Annual Conference, Tomes briefly described all of the entries submitted in this J. Mitchell Graham/Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Awards Competition. As SCAC President Charles T. Jennings presented plaques to each county that participated, he 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:

J. MITCHELL GRAHAM MEMORIAL AWARD COMPETITION

Charleston County

In response to a large percentage of its workforce approaching retirement age, Charleston County is being proactive in alleviating potential gaps in leadership positions. The Emerging Leader Program (ELP) was created to mitigate challenges associated with a dynamic and ever-changing workforce. ELP takes employees out of their traditional "silos" by building new relationships, sharing experiences, working together, and learning how to overcome challenges. The ELP seeks to delve deeper into the organization to develop and strengthen Charleston County's next generation of leaders with broader management techniques, leadership experiences, and insight on how the operations of the county are executed.

Horry County

HCCConnect was created to provide a technology platform to inform, engage, and connect with the citizens of Horry County. This is a first of its kind application, developed completely in-house, creating a direct channel for citizen driven communication and feedback. Users create a profile based on location and subscribe to feeds that are important to them. Neighborhood-specific feeds include crime tracking, zoning hearings, building permits, and activities at parks and recreation facilities. The app also provides frequently requested information in real-time to mobile devices, and it gives users the ability to submit service requests instantly.

BARRETT LAWRIMORE MEMORIAL REGIONAL COOPERATION AWARD

Marlboro County

Economic conditions make travel to doctors' offices, shopping, schools, and government facilities a challenge for many residents of Marlboro County. Additionally, area businesses and industries face difficulty in hiring and retaining employees due to a lack of workforce transportation. Recognizing these issues, Marlboro County partnered with the Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority, CareFIRST Carolina Foundation/Care South Carolina, and several regional sponsors to develop a public transportation initiative. By using fee-in-lieu of tax agreement funds, the county was able to use an innovative strategy to leverage additional funding sources to provide this needed service to its citizens.

McCormick County

McCormick County was the ideal location for the inception of Savannah Lakes Village, a large-scale, master-planned community on the shores of Lake Thurmond. The national housing economy crash of 2008 led to a near-fatal delinquency trend that resulted in 50 percent of the properties falling into the county's Forfeited Land Commission. The county and Savannah Lakes Village refused to accept this outcome, and worked together to craft a plan, identify a capable development partner, and chart a course for redevelopment.

Pickens County

Pickens County joined forces with the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Services, the S.C. Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, Behavioral Health Services of Pickens County, Bowers Emergency Services, local police departments, Pickens EMS, and other emergency response organizations to address the community's opioid epidemic. The partnership is the first in the state to take a personal, hands-on approach to tackling the national opioid crisis through the Community Outreach Paramedic

Education (COPE) program. This program equips specially trained paramedics and support specialists to make home visits and provide long-term support to opioid addicts in recovery.

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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