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South Carolina Association of Counties

Volume 30

Number 4



Pickens County's COPE Program Fights Opioid Crisis



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W. Stuart Morgan III, Editor

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America, Land of Opportunity, Competitive Again

By U.S. Representative Tom Rice (R-S.C., 7th District, S.C.)

America is the land of opportunity again. Republicans' in Congress and President Trump's pro-growth agenda has restored American competitiveness. The economy has continued to grow.

America is competitive again.

- Since 2016, the economy has created 7.3 million new jobs.
- The unemployment rate is at its lowest level in half a century.
- Nearly 2.5 million Americans, including 1.4 million children, have been lifted out of poverty.
- For 18 consecutive months there have been wage gains above 3 percent.
- Last year was the first time in 51 years drug prices went down.

Four years ago, President Trump promised to Make America Great Again. Alongside Congressional Republicans, he has done just that. These are signs of a booming economy that are empowering American workers and families.

Alongside President Trump, Republicans have worked to modernize outdated, decades-old policies. The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement has replaced the North American Free Trade Agreement. USMCA is leveling the playing field for American farmers by allowing them to sell more of their agricultural products without being subject to price restrictions. USMCA also includes provisions to protect American intellectual property and promote digital trade.



U.S. Representative Tom Rice

The Phase One Trade Deal with China is a landmark deal that will finally hold China accountable for its unfair and deceptive trade practices. The deal will provide more protections for American companies' intellectual property. China has also pledged to increase its purchases of U.S. goods by more than 50 percent. Both deals ensure that we are able to export more American goods and fewer American jobs.

Congressional Republicans passed and President Trump signed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA). TCJA's pro-growth reforms of the individual and corporate tax codes resulted in the largest tax cut in a generation. As a result, small businesses have the lowest top marginal tax rate in more than 80 years. Small businesses are the backbone

of South Carolina's economy and the TCJA has empowered these companies to invest more in their business, workers, and communities.

The policies are working for all Americans. African-American, Hispanic-American, and Asian-American unemployment is at the lowest rate ever recorded. Veterans' unemployment is at a 20-year low. Additionally, 95 percent of U.S. manufacturers are optimistic about the future.

More affordable generic drugs have been approved than ever before. Medicare has been reformed and can no longer overcharge low-income seniors for prescription drugs. Six billion dollars has been secured in new funding to fight the opioid epidemic.

The solution to the stagnant Obama economy has been getting government out of the way and allowing American workers to keep more of their hard-earned money; not an expansion of government control. In order to continue this Great American Comeback, we must empower American workers and families, instead of government bureaucrats.

In my opinion, everything Congress does should be viewed through the lens of American competitiveness. When businesses and people are able to compete, our country is at its prime, our economy is stronger, and the quality of life improves for all Americans. Ninety percent of people said they were happy

(See America, P. 4)



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America ...

(Continued from P. 2)

with their lives.

Restoring America's competitiveness has been a priority, and I will continue to work alongside the Trump Administration to keep America great. As I have said over and over again, turn off the screaming heads on Fox News and CNN and look around. America is doing very well. South Carolina is booming.



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Pickens County's COPE Program Fights Opioid Crisis

By W. Stuart Morgan III

Pickens County ranked second per capita in South Carolina last year for opioid addiction. Now, it's the first county in the state to implement a Community Outreach Paramedic Education (COPE) program to tackle the crisis.

"Our opioid crisis is dire, and there isn't an appropriate way to describe the situation," said Angela B. Farmer, executive director for Behavioral Services of Pickens County. "There are many reasons why, but it's a perfect storm. We're located between two major drug trafficking highways, Highway 11 and Interstate 85, we're a rural county, and we have a lower socioeconomic standing. The compilation of all these things creates the crisis, which goes both directions. The drug problem creates all those issues, and all these problems create the drug problem.

"But we're not just talking about typical drug addicts taking illegal drugs," Farmer added. "We're talking about anybody who's



Pickens County



See South Carolina
County Map,
Page 43

taking pain medicine and getting addicted quickly. People experiencing pain do not realize how dangerous it is to take prescription medicine, and our program is working really hard to educate our county's residents of the dangers." (See **You Need to Know More ...**, P. 10)

Last January, the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) awarded a \$25,000 Federal grant to Bowers Emergency Services, a licensed community-based paramedic program based in Easley, to conduct a community outreach program to fight the opioid crisis. Randy Bowers, the company's chief executive officer, then presented an opportunity for a public-private partnership to Pickens County, which had already been working with the sheriff's office to find innovative ways to combat the crisis.

Governor Henry McMaster had just said the silent hurricane of opioid addiction was continuing to pummel the Palmetto State, and promised to form an Opioid Crisis Response Team and to disperse \$14.3 million to all 46 counties in the state to fight the opioid crisis. The White House had also just declared the opioid crisis a public health emergency.

"Because I felt that the fight against the opioid crisis warranted specific attention, and that it was imperative for Pickens County to take action soon rather than wait until our next regular council meeting," said Pickens County Council Chairman Roy Costner, "I called a special meeting just to discuss creating what would be called the COPE program, and sent a message that we were serious about taking action to address our county's drug and opioid crisis."

Pickens County's community relations manager, Jamie Burns, acted quickly to effectively communicate the severity of the county's opioid crisis and the county's serious commitment to tackle the crisis and to provide resources to help anyone suffering from addiction. It isn't a stretch at all to describe her communication efforts as "effective," because *Fox News* picked-up the story on the county's opioid crisis. This helped spark conversations across Pickens County and the nation on how communities could unite to fight opioid epidemics where they live.

The partnership, which quickly formed Pickens County's COPE program, includes: Pickens County, S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Services; S.C. Depart-

ment of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services; Behavioral Health Services of Pickens County; Bowers Emergency Services; local police departments; Pickens County EMS; and other emergency response organizations.

Pickens County officially announced the formation of its COPE program in January 2019 and launched the program by June that same year.

The county's EMS department continues to provide the same services it has in the past.

However, Bowers Emergency Services' specially-trained and equipped community paramedics, and peer support specialists, working for Behavioral Health Services of Pickens County (BHSPC), have been treating addicts differently and making a difference in the process since the COPE program's formation. They've been making home visits and providing the long-term support often required to help anyone recover from addiction to opioids.

Pickens County's effort to communicate its fight against the opioid crisis began when the county announced the formation of the COPE program.

"I spent time listening to the experiences shared by community paramedics and peer support specialists to better understand the impact of the COPE program," Burns recalled. "This helped me understand just how impactful the program's hands-on approach to recovery can be, and made me a better advocate and spokesperson for the COPE program."

(See *COPE*, P. 11)



"We're not just talking about typical drug addicts taking illegal drugs. We're talking about anybody who's taking pain medicine and getting addicted quickly."

— Angela B. Farmer

Executive Director for Behavioral Services of Pickens County



You Need to Know More About the Opioid Crisis

If you think the opioid crisis is only about drug addicts, and you'll never be affected, think again.

Pickens County's COPE program strives to educate everyone about the dangers of opioids, and offers treatment to anyone who has an opioid problem. Learn a little more about the crisis, and you might realize that you or someone you care about could be affected now or later.

"The people who are overdosing on opioids aren't just drug addicts," explained Angela Farmer, executive director of Behavioral Health Services of Pickens County. "It's your mom, it's your dad, it's your brother, it's your sister, it's your children. Most of the patients seeking help from us due to an opioid problem started because they were on a prescription for a medical reason, and then it worsened. So, anybody can have an opioid problem. So, don't discount this."

People don't realize how dangerous it is to take medications for pain.

"Opioids—typically prescribed pain medications like Lortab, Hydrocodone, Morphine, Oxycodone, OxiContin and even the street drug, Heroin—are opioids," Farmer said. "Heroin is an opiate, and pain medication comes from a derivative of opium and heroin. It's the same kind of medicine. It's easier to get the prescription medication because you can find it on the street. Most people have these narcotics in their cabinets and hold on to them for a rainy day, and don't realize how easy it is for other people to get access to these narcotics."

"A person can become physically dependent on such medication within a short period of time because of how it is absorbed in the brain, which creates a greater need and desire to take the narcotics," she added. "More older patients are overdosing because their bodies no longer metabolize medications as well as when they were younger, or they forget they've taken their medication and end up taking too much."

The partnership, which last Janu-



Angela B. Farmer, executive director for Behavioral Services of Pickens County, outside her office in downtown Pickens
(Photo by Stuart Morgan)

ary formed Pickens County's COPE program, is one of the first partnerships the county has formed during the past several years to help provide a better quality of life in the county.

"The people who are overdosing on opioids aren't just drug addicts. It's your mom, it's your brother, it's your sister, it's your children. Most of the patients seeking help from us due to an opioid problem started because they were on a prescription for a medical reason and then it worsened."

— Angela B. Farmer
Executive Director for Behavioral Services of Pickens County

"We decided several years ago to build partnerships with organizations, municipalities, the local school board and state government," recalled Roy Costner, Pickens County Council Chairman. "My fellow council members and I decided to tear down any and all walls, to begin repairing partnerships and to work hard to clean up Pickens County by working with PalmettoPride and creating Five ON Friday cleanup initiatives."

"We rejoined our Upstate Alliance, and began working with our state delegation to declare that Pickens County is open for business," he added. "We've

created a forum for Greenville, Anderson, Oconee, Abbeville and Pickens county councils to meet quarterly to share ideas and best practices. After consolidating our 13 fireboards into one EMS county-wide board, we continue to create efficiencies saving thousands of dollars. The COPE program is just one tool in our box of opportunities designed to solve challenging problems, like the current opioid crisis, to create economic development and much more."

Pickens County's COPE program was one of many counties recognized for competing in SCAC's 2019 J. Mitchell Graham/Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Awards Competition at SCAC's 52nd Annual Conference. The county didn't win, but Costner still believes submitting the entry on Pickens County's COPE program was a good idea.

"Absolutely, competing last year was worth the effort despite the fact we didn't win anything," replied Costner, when asked if it was worth the effort.

"Everytime we attend SCAC meetings, the citizens of Pickens County benefit when we have the opportunity to participate and learn from other counties," he added. "Sharing our county's success with its COPE program also gives other counties the opportunity to learn, whether we win an award or not. Educating everyone on the opioid crisis and sharing ideas to help each other win the war on drugs is far more important than recognition."

For more information about Pickens County's COPE program, contact Angela B. Farmer, M.Ed., LPC, MAC, LAC, executive director for BHSPC, at (864) 898-5800 or visit:

www.bhspickens.com.

America ...

(Continued from P. 9)

“Addiction isn’t limited to those who illegally acquire ‘street drugs,’” Burns added. “Addiction can affect anyone—your neighbors, friends, coworkers and family members. It can also affect individuals in endless ways. In fact, I was surprised to learn that many who are treated for overdose were not intentionally abusing substances. In some cases, a patient has taken medication as prescribed—or as they thought it was intended to be taken—unaware of how the medication could react with other substances or how quickly dependency on opioids could develop.”

Addiction affects work performance or the ability to parent; decreases productivity at work, which could lead to unemployment or underemployment; and requires federal, state or local tax dollars to be used to provide housing assistance, medical assistance and more.

It also affects an individual’s ability to parent, which could affect a child’s academic performance or mental health; cause a child to be born into addiction if the mother uses opioids while pregnant; and statistically, as it has been proven, children whose parents abuse drugs are more likely to become addicts.

Fortunately, the COPE program is beginning to change

the way people think about addiction and opioid usage.

“Hopefully, by making people aware of the dangers,” Burns said, “they may use prescribed opioids less frequently than the maximum dosage permitted or stop taking them as their symptoms subside and before their prescription expires.”

Physicians are more carefully considering the dangers before prescribing opioids to patients.

“I spent time listening to the experiences shared by community paramedics and peer support specialists to better understand the impact of the COPE program. This helped me understand just how impactful the program’s hands-on approach to recovery can be, and made me a better advocate and spokesperson for the COPE program.”

— Jamie Burns

Pickens County Community Relations Manager

instruct them when and how often to take more medication.

Bowers Emergency Services isn’t a 911 service, but acts as

Printing the words, “Take as needed,” is “a simple way to remind people that they should only use prescribed opioids when critically necessary rather than simply following medicine bottle label instructions that tell them when and how often to take more medication.”

— Randy Bowers

CEO, Bowers Emergency Services

911 system.

Within 72 hours after Pickens County EMS paramedics pick up someone who has overdosed or law enforcement arrests

(Continued on next page)



PICKENS COUNTY COUNCIL—County Council Members Wes Hendricks and R. Ensley Feemster; Council Chairman Roy Costner III and Vice Chairman Chris Bowers; and Council Members Carl Lee Hudson and Trey Whitehurst.

an addict, Bowers Emergency Services community paramedics then follow up. Community paramedics are required to have at least five years' experience as paramedics, and to have received an additional

"A community paramedic is a cross between a social worker, case manager and paramedic, and each one acts a little bit like a case manager."

— Randy Bowers

CEO, Bowers Emergency Services

400 hours of training to be certified.

"A community paramedic is a cross between a social worker, case manager and paramedic, and each one acts a little bit like a case

manager," Bowers explained. "Our community paramedics, using our company's vehicles, make COPE visits. Carrying our paramedic gear, we work as paramedics when we encounter something—like someone who has overdosed—or when the COPE program, after being contacted by Pickens County EMS or the Sheriff's Office, asks us to conduct a well-check and follow up on the patient.

"Working with peer support personnel from Behavioral Health Services of Pickens County, our community paramedics visit patients to conduct well-checks," he added. "A peer support person will talk with each patient and explain the services provided by Behavioral Health Services and treatment services, including NARCAN® (Naloxone). Each support person, who takes NARCAN® with them on these visits just in case it's needed, also encourages every patient to seek the COPE program's help and services at Behavioral Health Services."

So far, Pickens County's COPE pro-

Partners in the Fight



Partnering with Pickens County's COPE program to fight the county's opioid crisis are (above, left and right) Pickens County EMS Director Michael E. Marling, Sheriff Rick Clark and (below, left to right) a few associates of Bowers Emergency Services—Robert Johnson, emergency medical technician; Chris Gaillard, operations supervisor/community paramedic; and Randy Bowers, CEO, community paramedic. (Photos by Stuart Morgan)



gram is making a positive difference.

"Pickens County's opioid crisis is significant, but we're making progress fighting it," said Pickens County EMS Director Michael E. Marling. "I think our COPE program is a great program. Our relationship with our partners—the Sheriff's Office, Bowers Emergency Services and Behavioral Health Services of Pickens County—is working out great as well. It took awhile for us to get everything to run smoothly, but our partners in the COPE program are doing an excellent job.

"I hope our COPE program continues to succeed and spread to other counties across the state, and that it helps other counties implement a program in their county to help them achieve the success we have," Marling added. "With the opioid crisis as significant as it is, I believe the COPE program can make a positive difference. The program's community paramedics and peer support counselors help people who would normally not seek or receive help they need for treatment, counseling and services."

"With the opioid crisis as significant as it is, I believe the COPE program is one, whose community paramedics and peer support counselors can help people who would normally not seek or receive help they need for treatment, counseling and services."

— Michael E. Marling
Pickens County EMS Director

Pickens County Sheriff Rick Clark said other drugs, including methamphetamines, which he described as the "drug of choice" in Pickens County, have been a big problem in the county for awhile. But he said the opioid crisis is beginning to affect Pickens County as it has other counties across South Carolina as well as the nation.

"The COPE program has worked out well for us, and it's a model that we see can be used to provide follow-up care," Clark explained. "Before we had this program, there was no follow-up when drug offenders were released from jail, and patients were released from hospitals to return home only to return to their previous behavior.

"Statistics tell us that time and time again," he added, "that if we're not intervening or trying to do something to interrupt the process, drug abusers are going to return to their drug of choice—and that's opioids. Our COPE program is very good about interrupting this process, and hopefully, giving them a chance to rebuild their lives. It's important that we interrupt this chain or cycle to reduce the recidivism rate."

Pickens County Council Chairman Roy Costner said he's excited to see how the COPE program is beginning to impact families in a positive way.

"We've only just begun," he said. "But when we see a report on the number of referrals to the program, I can't help but think if we saved but one life and changed the direction for just one family that our COPE program is worth the effort. Every month, we see the numbers of 30, 40 or more people have been

referred and now have new hope."

"The Opioid Crisis is a problem across the state, with over a thousand drug related deaths, and more than 75 percent of those deaths related to opioid use," Costner added. "In the

"Statistics tell us that time and time again, if we're not intervening or trying to do something to interrupt the process, drug abusers are going to return to their drug of choice—and that's opioids. Our COPE program is very good about interrupting this process, and hopefully, giving them a chance to rebuild their lives."

— Sheriff Rick Clark
Pickens County

past, people with drug related problems—opioid or otherwise—were treated, charged with criminal violation, and released. Our COPE program gives people hope and an opportunity to break the cycle of abuse with real help. The program takes a proactive approach to stopping the cycle of abuse. Many times patients receive NARCAN® that saves their lives, but they often become addicted to it. So, the COPE program opens up an avenue to break free from the addiction and to recover."



PalmettoPride is coordinating efforts for a statewide cleanup on April 22 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day 2020.

PalmettoPride encourages South Carolina county officials and other South Carolinians to do their part by joining local efforts to remove litter from neighborhoods, beaches, parks, schools, etc.



For more information about Earth Day 2020, contact info@palmettopride.org. For more information about PalmettoPride, visit www.PalmettoPride.org.

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Purpose of the SCAC

- To promote more efficient county governments
- To study, discuss and recommend improvements in government
- To investigate and provide means for the exchange of ideas and experiences between county officials
- To promote and encourage education of county officials
- To collect, analyze and distribute information about county government
- To cooperate with other organizations
- To promote legislation which supports efficient administration of local government in South Carolina

✦ For more information about the SCAC, please contact:

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SCCounties.org is the primary resource for information about South Carolina's counties and issues affecting county government.

Visitors to the site will find conference schedules, legislative initiatives, and numerous Association publications, including the *Friday Report* and *Legislative Alerts*.



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WHAT IS THE SCAC?

South Carolina Association of Counties, chartered on June 22, 1967, is the only organization dedicated to statewide representation of county government in South Carolina. A nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with a full-time staff in Columbia, SCAC is governed by a 29-member Board of Directors selected by county officials at the Association's Annual Conference.



Counties have made tremendous progress since the enactment of the Home Rule Act in 1975. County government has also become more diverse in order to meet the increasing needs of its citizens. SCAC is dedicated to providing programs and services that equip county officials with the tools to govern effectively.

CONFERENCES

■ SCAC provides many opportunities for county officials to meet and learn, among them:

★ **Mid-Year Conference** — Held in late winter in Columbia, this conference enables all county officials to become better informed about the Association's legislative program. The Association also hosts a reception for all members of the S.C. General Assembly during this conference.

★ **Annual Conference** — Held in August, this conference is open to all elected and appointed officials. The conference includes a business session, general session, workshops, group meetings, and exhibits of county products and services.

★ **Legislative Conference** — Held in December, this conference allows members of the Legislative Committee to discuss and adopt a legislative program for the upcoming year. The committee is composed of each council chairman along with the Association's Board of Directors.

EDUCATION

■ The Association, in cooperation with the Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities at the College of Charleston, conducts the Institute of Government for County Officials (Level I, Level II, and Advanced levels).

Clemson University's Master of Public Administration program is a sponsor of the Institute.

This certificate program helps county officials enhance their skills and abilities. Courses are offered at the Annual and Mid-Year Conferences and at the County Council Coalition Meeting in the fall.

SCAC also sponsors a number of continuing education webcasts and webinars for county officials and employees throughout the year at no charge to counties. Within a few weeks after the live broadcast, county officials and employees are able to access the session as a video on demand via SCCounties.org.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

■ SCAC offers a number of financial services to its member counties. The Association sponsors two self-funded insurance trusts to provide workers' compensation and property and liability coverage. The trusts are designed specifically to meet the unique needs of local governments.

SCAC also offers the following services through affiliate organizations: GovDeals internet auction of surplus assets; and competitive purchasing discounts through Forms and Supply, Inc. and the U.S. Communities purchasing cooperative.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

■ SCAC provides legal assistance to county governments by rendering legal opinions, preparing *amicus curiae* briefs, drafting ordinances, and consulting with other county officials.

The Association provides support to counties involved in litigation that might affect other counties. It also sponsors the Local Government Attorneys' Institute, which provides six hours of continuing legal education for local government attorneys.

SETOFF DEBT PROGRAM

■ South Carolina counties are able to collect delinquent emergency medical services debts, magistrate and family court fines, hospital debts, as well as other fees owed to the counties through SCAC's Setoff Debt Collection Program.

Debts are submitted through the Association to the S.C. Department of Revenue to be matched with income tax refunds. The debt is deducted from a refund and returned through SCAC to the claimant.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION

■ The S.C. General Assembly convenes each January in Columbia and adjourns *sine die* in May. One in every four bills introduced affects county governments.

SCAC monitors each bill as it is introduced and keeps its members up-to-date on all legislative activity with a weekly *Friday Report*. The Association also dispatches Legislative Alerts and publishes *Acts That Affect Counties* each year.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

■ SCAC publishes an annual *Directory of County Officials* listing addresses and telephone numbers of county offices and their elected and appointed officials. The Association also publishes *Carolina Counties Newsletter* five times a year to keep the Association's membership informed about legislation and various county news. *County Focus Magazine* is published four times a year and features articles on county trends, innovations, and other subjects of interest to county officials—including a "County Update" section.

RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

■ SCAC provides research and technical assistance in many areas to those counties that request it. The Association staff annually responds to hundreds of inquiries from county officials ranging from simple requests for a sample ordinance to more complex questions requiring considerable research. The Association also develops technical research bulletins and conducts surveys on a variety of subjects. Regular publications such as the *Wage and Salary Report*, *Home Rule Handbook*, *A Handbook for County Government*

in South Carolina, and *Case Law Affecting Local Government* are made available to county officials.

SCAC's website address is:

SCCounties.org

The site provides county officials with the latest information on SCAC programs, services, and meetings as well as legislative information, research and survey results, and links to other local government resources.



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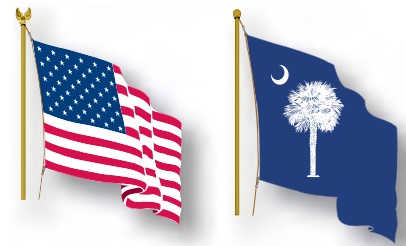
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SCAC-Sponsored Insurance Trusts



History of the Trusts

The S.C. Counties Workers' Compensation Trust (SCCWCT) was formed in 1984 with only 11 counties. Today, the membership consists of 41 of South Carolina's 46 counties and an additional 47 county-related entities. SCCWCT is approved as a self-insured trust by the S.C. Workers' Compensation Commission in accordance with South Carolina statutes. It provides statutory workers' compensation coverage for its members.

The S.C. Counties Property & Liability Trust (SCCP<) was formed in 1995 due largely to the success of the Workers' Compensation Trust. SCCP< started with only four members and now has 24 members, including 16 counties.

Boards of Trustees

The Trusts were designed by and for county government with the goal of providing insurance to counties at the lowest rates possible, while providing services uniquely tailored to the needs of county governments. The Boards of Trustees are made up of county officials who are elected by the SCAC's Board of Directors. Although not a requirement, both boards currently share the same membership.

Risk Management

Because member contributions (premiums) are based both on the accident histories of the individual counties (experience modifiers) and on the membership as a whole, both Trusts employ very aggressive risk management strategies. The philosophy adopted by the Trusts is that, if accidents are caused, they can be prevented. Risk Management services are provided by the SCAC staff. The payoff is lower premiums and a safer working environment.

Claims Administration

SCAC's staff administers the S.C. Counties Workers' Compensation Trust and S.C. Counties Property & Liability Trust.



BOARDS OF TRUSTEES for South Carolina Counties Workers' Compensation Trust and Property & Liability Trust



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Protecting Your County's Greatest Asset

By Robert E. Benfield, ARM, AINS
Director of Risk Management Services

When we ask someone, "What is your county's greatest asset?", we typically hear buildings, land, equipment, finances, and the tax base. However, if you take a moment to really think about what makes our counties work in their everyday operations, you will realize that the greatest asset any county has is its employees.

Without employees all government functions stop. So the real question is, since our employees are our greatest asset, what are we doing to keep them safe? This is where a truly effective risk management program comes into play. The safety and security of your people is critical to effectively running your county.

Keeping employees safe should be our number one priority. Unfortunately, with tight budgets and understaffing we are asking our employees to do more with less. This often leads to employees taking shortcuts and getting injured or killed. Without proper training, equipment, and supervision employees are more likely to be injured.

A successful risk management program will result in fewer employee injuries, improved morale, less down time and damage to equipment and operations, improved efficiency, better public relations with the citizens, and overall more money in your budget.

It does not cost a lot of money to have an effective risk management program. The following core risk management principles are inexpensive and will make a significant impact on the safety of your employees and your budget:

1. Conduct Accident Investigations

Anytime an employee is injured we need to conduct an accident investigation to determine the root cause of the injury. The purpose of the accident investigation is not to find fault, but to prevent future accidents and injuries. Correctly conducting the accident investigation is a critical component of a successful

risk management program. We will be glad to come on site and conduct accident investigation training at the department or county level. Training your supervisors and employees on how to conduct an effective accident investigation and holding them accountable is the key to reducing employee injuries.

2. Conduct Workplace Inspections

Everyday your employees are surrounded by things that can hurt them. The purpose of conducting workplace inspections is to prevent accidents and injuries by identifying and correcting hazards. The frequency of inspections can vary from daily to monthly depending on the departments operations and potential for injury.

Each department should develop a customized checklist tailored to their unique operations and exposures. In addition to identifying hazards, corrective action should be taken and documented as soon as possible. We are available to come on site and walk through your work sites with your employees to help identify and provide recommendations to mitigate hazards.

3. Vehicle Accident Review Board (VARB)

Another critical component of a successful risk management program is the use of a vehicle accident review board. The purpose of this board is to review all employee motor vehicle accidents and determine if the accident could have been avoided and if the employee's actions contributed to the accident. Not all accidents can be avoided, but many accidents occur due to distractions, driving too fast for conditions, and poor driving habits. It is critical that your employees be held accountable for their actions.

We also recommend that you conduct annual motor vehicle
(See *Greatest Asset*, next page)



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Greatest Asset ...

(Continued from previous page)

record checks on all employees who drive county vehicles. Your marked county vehicles are a moving billboard for your county and how your employees drive those vehicles impacts public perception and your county's budget.

4. Conduct a Risk Management Principles (RMP) class

The goal of our Risk Management Principles class is to help educate and get buy-in from your employees on the value of risk management. This one-and-a-half day training class covers the basic risk management principles relating to workers' compensation and property and liability claims, changing the safety culture, conducting accident investigations, safety committees, and other critical areas impacting the safety of your employees and the liability exposures relating to county operations.

We can conduct this class in your county for FREE if you can guarantee at least 12 people for the class.

5. Conduct a Self-Audit of Your Risk Management Program

One of our mandatory Basic Risk Management Standards is to conduct an annual self-audit of your risk management program. The self-audit consists of 21 questions relating to the

operations of your risk management program. This audit will help you benchmark your current program and identify areas where you can improve. The self-audits are due each year by December 31st. We will be conducting on-site visits to discuss your submitted audits and provide assistance to those members who are still in the process of completing their audits.

By implementing these core risk management principles you can help protect the most important asset your county has—its employees!

Our risk management team is excited about assisting your county with your risk management program. Please feel free to contact Van Henson, SCAC Risk Manager, vhenson@scac.sc or Robert Benfield, SCAC Director of Risk Management Services, rbenfield@scac.sc to schedule a meeting. We look forward to talking with you soon.



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Not All Bonds Are Created Equal

Strategically Implementing Your Capital Plan

By Gary T. Pope Jr.

Public Finance Attorney, Pope Flynn

Capital planning is, in no small part, the practice of avoiding unintended consequences. Not too far in the past, counties engaged with their outside financing team to assist them in obtaining capital for a specific project without reference to any larger context. If another capital project was planned for the next fiscal year, it may or may not have been discussed. This resulted in money and political goodwill being left on the table.

Informed capital planning requires two things—a realistic assessment of needs and an understanding of the tools available and how those tools interrelate. That interrelation of financing tools is the focus of this article.

Know Your Financing Tools

Generally speaking, counties may borrow money (issue municipal bonds) backed by either property taxes, or utility revenues and fees. Bonds backed by taxes, known as general obligation bonds, often represent the lowest-cost option from an interest rate perspective, making this tool relatively more appealing to the county. But this tool is limited by a constitutional debt limit. Absent a referendum, the South Carolina Consti-

tution imposes a general obligation debt limit at an amount equal to 8 percent of the assessed value of the property in the county, which can significantly constrain

use of this tool. By contrast, revenue bonds are not subject to the borrowing limit and, for the most part, may be issued in any amount a lender thinks

the county can pay back. To maintain separation between these tools, the South Carolina Constitution prevents counties from using taxes or licenses to secure revenue bonds.

The result is that all bonds are not created equal and some are better suited to certain tasks than others. A county would not want to exhaust all of its scarce general obligation bond capacity for the foreseeable future with a nice-to-have quality of life project if it anticipated that the general obligation bonds would be needed for a critical public safety project within the next few years. Similarly, even if roads were the top priority of county council, the expense of large-scale transportation projects would exhaust the debt capacity and financial resources of the county without a capital project sales tax or transportation sales tax referendum, each of which requires substantial lead time to implement.



Gary T. Pope Jr.

Plan Now to Have Options Tomorrow

Comprehensive capital planning is not a panacea, but it will become increasingly necessary as escalating pension contributions put pressure on the general fund, infrastructure from past decades wears out, and economic development places new challenges on service delivery. Said another way, what is cutting edge now will become a necessary aspect of county fiscal fitness in the years to come.

Informed capital planning should be conducted with a view toward preserving flexibility. Using general obligation debt



capacity today precludes use of the same capacity tomorrow (until the bonds are paid down). Referenda, revenue bonds, and installment purchase transactions preserve flexibility, but often at a somewhat higher interest cost and through more complex transactions. The capital planning process helps the county to understand how much it values that flexibility and whether it is important in making sure the county is prepared for challenges and opportunities in the future.

An Example

The following example may be helpful in bringing the issue to life. The fictional County Council of Rutledge County, South Carolina has identified \$65 million of capital projects to be initiated in the next five years. County council expects to spend \$30 million on a new jail, \$10 million on economic development site work and infrastructure in their multi-county industrial park, \$10 million for a new recreation and sports facility, and \$15 million for roads. Rutledge County presently has \$35 million of 8 percent general obligation capacity.

For the jail financing, Rutledge County could issue general obligation bonds for the entire \$30 million, leaving only \$5 million of capacity for the remaining projects. On the other hand, because the jail is an essential facility, it may be a good candidate for an installment purchase transaction that would preserve all of its debt capacity for the remaining projects.

For the \$10 million of economic development improvements, Rutledge County could consider special source revenue bonds payable from the fees-in-lieu of taxes generated from its multi-county parks, issue general obligation bonds, or combine the financing with an installment purchase transaction.

For the \$10 million for the new recreation and sports complex or the \$10 million road financing, Rutledge County could issue general obligation bonds, create a special tax district within a portion of the county benefiting from the park or road to levy millage and issue

(See *Bonds*, P. 30)



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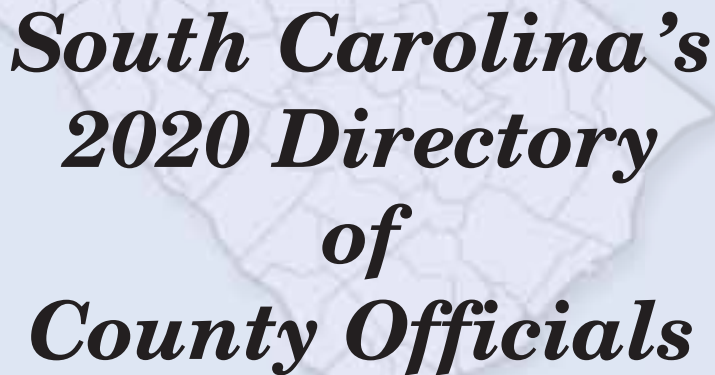
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South Carolina's 2020 Directory of County Officials

South Carolina's *2020 Directory of County Officials* is scheduled to be published and distributed in February. So, order a copy if you want to know "Who's Who" in South Carolina county government.

The *Directory* identifies all elected and appointed county officials in the state. This popular, award-winning publication also identifies SCAC's Officers, Board of Directors and Corporate Supporters; Regional Councils of Government; Federal and State Officials; and State Senators and Representatives. Addresses and telephone numbers are included for all county officials, state officials and members of the S.C. General Assembly.

Cost: \$25.00 per copy (including tax, postage, shipping and handling).

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Bonds ...

(Continued from P. 29)

general obligation bonds of the county that would not count against the 8 percent debt limit, leverage hospitality or accommodations fees assuming the park or road had a sufficient tourism purpose, or combine the park or road financing with a larger installment purchase transaction.

If Rutledge County issues \$30 million for the jail, it may be some time before it has debt capacity for roads. If Rutledge County undertakes an installment purchase financing for all \$65 million of projects, it would preserve flexibility and debt capacity for future projects, but may pay a higher interest rate on the relatively more complex financing. If, on the other hand, Rutledge County undertakes separate financings for each project, it may lose the benefits of scale through higher transaction costs and staff burden. Additional financings can also result in additional covenants in the bond documents that impact how your county does business.

These considerations highlight the need to conscientiously allocate scarce resources, carefully select financing tools, and avoid the opportunity costs associated with considering capital projects in isolation and outside of a broader context. Comprehensive capital planning can help your county find the right mix of flexibility, cost of funds, and debt capacity, and ensure you have the right tool available at the right time to meet the needs of your county.



Gary T. Pope, Jr, an attorney with Pope Flynn, concentrates on public finance, serving as bond counsel, disclosure counsel, or underwriter's counsel for public finance transactions. He regularly advises counties, municipalities and special purpose districts, and the State of South Carolina and many of public universities and agencies on their debt offerings and public-private partnerships. For more information, contact Gary at (803) 354-4917, gpoppe@popeflynn.com, or via <https://www.popeflynn.com>.

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Designed by William Augustus Edwards and constructed in 1914, the **York County Courthouse** holds an honored spot on the National Register of Historic Places.

To restore this icon of South Carolina's heritage and justice system, York County turned to a trusted partner in historic architectural design, **Stewart-Cooper-Newell**.

The renovation was completed in 2016.



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A Roadside Guide to Chesterfield County

The County's Role in the American War for Independence

By Alexia Jones Helsley
www.historyismybag.com

Chesterfield County



See South Carolina
 County Map,
 P. 43

At the time the Revolution broke out in South Carolina, Chesterfield County was part of the historic old Cheraw District. In 1769, as a response to backcountry demands for equal access to justice, the South Carolina Commons House of Assembly divided the colony into judicial districts with courthouses and jails. One of these was the Cheraw District, and later, in 1785 the state of South Carolina created what is now Chesterfield County from the former judicial district.

During the Revolutionary War, Loyalists (Tories) and Patriots (Whigs) hotly contested the territory that is now Ches-



terfield County. While few known battles or skirmishes occurred there, the pension applications of participants testify to the costly struggle waged in the backcountry of South Carolina.

Private Bentley Outlaw

For example, the pension application and supporting affidavits of Bentley Outlaw mention a number of skirmishes in Chesterfield County. Outlaw, approximately 89 years old in 1832, remembered serving under Captain Elijah McGee and Lieutenant James Holmes "scouring the Country for Tories." In particular, Outlaw mentioned a little-known skirmish at Hem Branch (also known as Hemp Branch and presently Ham Branch). According to Jack Parker, the location now lies within the National Wildlife Refuge near McBee, S.C. During the skirmish, McGee and his troops killed several Loyalists and dispersed the rest. At another time, during an encounter on Black Creek in Chesterfield, Outlaw and his compatriots wounded and captured a Loyalist. Unfortunately, Outlaw did not remember the dates of these engagements.

Outlaw's recollections include a very personal insight into the fluid nature of the Revolution in the backcountry. He remem-

bered stopping by the home of Patriot William Witherington (who had a grant for 200 acres in 1772) for food. While eating, a group of Loyalists captured him. En route to Camden, he escaped and by riding hard eventually reconnected with Captain McGee's force. As he wrote, he "was well acquainted with the woods and knew where to find Captain McGee's company." In the pursuit, though, he lost his hat.

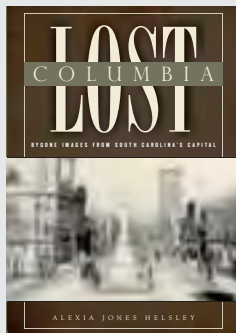
Ephraim Gandy testified in support of Outlaw's application. Under oath, he declared that he fought with Outlaw at "Hemp Branch" and also at the Battle of Eutaw Springs, the last major engagement of the Revolution fought in South Carolina near Charleston. Despite Gandy's testimony, due to a lack of official documentation, Outlaw did not receive a pension.

Henry William Harrington and the Battle of Cheraw

The life of Henry William Harrington was one of achievement and service. Harrington, though born in London in 1748, immigrated first to Jamaica and from there to South Carolina where he settled on the Pee Dee River. Harrington was active in his community and served as a warden of

Lost Columbia: Bygone Images of South Carolina's Capital City (Charleston: the History Press, 2008)

Lost Columbia combines an overview of the turbulent history of Columbia with rare and little seen images of the city's destruction in 1865, the Assembly Street farmers' market, the changing face of Main Street and lost institutions and neighborhoods.



Lost Columbia is available in bookstores such as Barnes & Noble, from Amazon.com, or by mail from AJH Historical Enterprises, P.O. Box 3683, Irmo, SC 29063.

St. David's Parish. In addition, he was a fervent Patriot, a militia captain and chair of the Committee of Observation for St. David's—a group that reported on local preparedness. In 1776, he became sheriff of Cheraw District and in June served with his company during the first siege of Charlestown. Although not actively involved in the fighting, he later housed British prisoners in the Cheraw District jail.

In 1776, he married and after his marriage relocated to Anson County, N.C. In 1779, he was commissioned a colonel of the Richmond, North Carolina militia and in that capacity served under General Benjamin Lincoln trying to defend the Charleston area in 1780. Fortunately, perhaps for him, Harrington was elected to the North Carolina Assembly and left Charlestown before Lincoln's ignominious surrender.

In June 1780, with his commanding officer General Griffith Rutherford unavailable, North Carolina official named him pro tem Brigadier General of the Salisbury District, N.C. His tenure was brief as the N.C. General Assembly named another as Brigadier General. Consequently after valiant service to the Patriot cause, Harrington resigned his commission on Nov. 3, 1780 and later served in the N.C. General Assembly and as a trustee of the University of North Carolina.

Yet, during his brief five months service as a Brigadier General, Harrington played a crucial role in Chesterfield County history. While the details are vague and the date open to debate, at some point in the fall of 1780 Harrington and the Salisbury

District troops attacked British and Loyalist forces near the town of Cheraw. Harrington and his men defeated Lt. Colonel Robert Gray and Major Thomas Fraser, secured control of Cheraw, and captured a number of prisoners. While there, he established a prisoner of war camp to house his prisoners as well as later prisoners. Logically, this engagement dates in the five months between June 1780 when Harrington was named Brigadier General and Nov. 3, 1780 when he submitted his resignation.

Harrington's family suffered greatly during the war. The British plundered his home, seizing slaves and livestock and forcing Harrington's wife and family to flee to South Carolina.

Harrington, the Patriot, died in 1809 in NC. His epitaph reads: "Here lies one who united in himself the bold achievements of the statesman and patriot with the mild virtues of social life, the kind neighbor, the tender husband and the fond parent."

From such personal stories, South Carolinians

today can briefly encounter the lives of the officers and enlisted men who fought so gallantly and with so little worldly reward for American independence.



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ALEXIA JONES HELSLEY

Identify These Courthouses Contest

IDcourthousescontest@scac.sc

South Carolina has some of the most historic county courthouses in the United States. Beginning this issue, county officials will be challenged to learn more about these important county buildings.

ELIGIBLE: This contest is open ONLY to South Carolina county officials, including all county employees.

RULES: The first county official to identify all three courthouses shown here, and correctly answer by EMAIL the trivia question asked below IN ONE EMAIL (see above) will be recognized in the next issue of *County Focus Magazine*. Photos of the three courthouses, including a brief history of each, will also be provided.

TRIVIA QUESTION—What county courthouse, originally built in 1753 to serve as the provincial capitol for the colony of South Carolina, was reconstructed in 1792 to serve the county's district courts?

A—



C—



B—



TIP: Visit the section of the South Carolina Picture Project's website, which includes photos of state's courthouses, at <https://www.scpictureproject.org/>

The Photographer—Born in Darlington County, Bill Segars is the photographer who is sharing his photos of South Carolina's courthouses for covers of SCAC's annual *Directory of County Officials* (beginning with the 2020 edition) and this magazine's quarterly photo contest.

Born in Darlington County, Segars grew up on a family farm in the Kelleytown community just west of Hartsville. The farm has been owned by his family since 1820. During his 45-year-long career in construction, Segars has combined his interest in history and knowledge of buildings with his historic restoration work. Since 2003, he has travelled more than 42,000 miles of South Carolina's back roads to photograph more than 850 historic churches, the state's 46 courthouses or "judicial centers" plus 10 buildings that once served as courthouses.

Segars and Jim Neal co-authored a book, *Churches in South Carolina Burned During the American Revolution: A Pictorial Guide* (2016).



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- To promote more efficient county governments
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- To investigate and provide means for the exchange of ideas and experiences between county officials
- To promote and encourage education of county officials
- To collect, analyze and distribute information about county government
- To cooperate with other organizations
- To promote legislation which supports efficient administration of local government in South Carolina

✦ For more information about the SCAC, please contact:

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County Update



See South Carolina
County Map,
Page 43

*Keeping you informed
about what's happening in
South Carolina's counties.*

Bamberg County

● On Feb. 4, Bamberg County Council Chairwoman **Sharon Hammond** presented the Regional Medical Center's CEO Charles Williams and RMC's Vice President for Operations, **Matthew Hinkle**, an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo).

NACo awarded Bamberg County, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg counties, and RMC the award in the Health Category for the newly-constructed, Emergency Medical Center in Denmark. NACo recognized RMC's new Emergency Medical Center in the Health Category for its program titled, "A Regional Solution to a Healthcare Desert: A Freestanding Emergency Center." This collaborative project involved Bamberg, Barn-

well, Orangeburg, and Calhoun counties, the Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg and Calhoun, Southern Carolina Alliance, S.C. Department of Health and Human Services, and the local legislative delegation including **Sen. C.B. Hutto** (Dist. 40); **Sen. John W. Matthews** (Dist. 39), **Rep. Justin T. Bamberg** (Dist. 90) and **Rep. Loney Hosey** (Dist. 91).

● PalmettoPride recently announced that Bamberg County received \$14,647 in grant funds through the Keep South Carolina Beautiful grant and the Litter Prevention grant. The grants, to be administered through Keep Bamberg County Beautiful and Bamberg County Code Enforcement offices, will fund litter prevention, enforcement, and education efforts throughout the county.

The grant funding will support litter enforcement efforts by funding the purchase of improved and additional equipment for litter enforcement officers. The funding will also allow the purchase of equipment and supplies needed for community litter cleanups, promotional materials, support for professional development opportunities, and beautification efforts.

● On Jan. 23, S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control staff presented Bamberg County Councilwoman **Sharon Hammond**, Councilman **Trent Kinard**, and Administrator **Joey Preston** with a \$250,000 check to be used for the construction costs of a new office for the Bamberg County Health Department. The new office will be located in the former Bamberg County Hospital building, which is being renovated.

● On Dec. 30, at a special council meeting, Bamberg County Council passed a resolution to honor the county's sheriff, **Ed Darnell**. Darnell is the longest-serving sheriff in South Carolina and third longest serving sheriff in the U.S. Elected as Bamberg County Sheriff in 1978, Darnell has served the county continuously in the same role for more than 40 years.

Bamberg County Council unanimously

approved a resolution to honor Darnell for his dedicated service, contributions, and achievement to Bamberg County. The resolution also approves the naming of the new Bamberg County Sheriff's Office headquarters as the Ed Darnell Law Enforcement Center.

The facility, under construction at the site of the former Bamberg County Hospital, will provide improved office space for Sheriff Department employees and deputies when completed. Revenue from the Capital Project Sales Tax, passed by Bamberg County voters in a referendum in 2018, is funding its construction.

● On Dec. 10, Bamberg County presented 21 employees with Continuous Years of Service awards. Then, **County Council Chairman Trent Kinard** presented each employee with an engraved pin commemorating their number of years of service.

The longest serving employees recognized were: **Clerk of Court Pedie Hiers**, and **Coroner Willard Duncan**, each recognized for 30 years of service to Bamberg County.

Employees receiving years of service awards included: 3 Years—**Sharon Hammond**, Bamberg County Council; **Billy Dean Priester**, **Jack Dickey** and **Harold George**, Public Works; **Brittany Barnwell** and **Tiffany Kemmerlin**, Emergency Services; and **Amber Davis**, Voter Registration and Elections; **Allen Cook**, Sheriff's Department; 5 Years—**Gina Smith**, Finance; **Melinda Johnson**, Voter Registration and Elections; **Melissa Waltz**, Solid Waste; **Lauren Threatt**, E-911 Dispatch; and **TyJah Deputy**, E-911 Dispatch; 10 Years—**Craig Walker**, Veterans Affairs; and **Sharon Williams**, Delinquent Tax; 15 Years—**Richard Ness**, County Attorney; **Bill Johnson**, Director of Operations; and **Eddie Williams**, Sheriff's Department; 20 Years—**April Campbell**, Assessor's Department; and 30 Years—**Willard Duncan**, County Coroner; and **Pedie Hiers**, Clerk of Court.

● In December, public works employees from Bamberg County and the City of Bamberg began removing rubble from the burned down buildings on Main Highway in downtown Bamberg. The buildings were destroyed by fire in early March 2019.

● On Dec. 2, Bamberg County announced that the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC) would contribute \$250,000 toward the construction costs of a new office for the Bamberg County Health Department. The new office will be located in the former Bamberg County Hospital building, which is being renovated to house, in addition to the Health Department, the Bamberg County Sheriff's Department.

★ Counties Reporting in This Issue of County Update:

Abbeville	Greenwood
Aiken	Hampton
Allendale	Horry
Anderson	Jasper
★ Bamberg	Kershaw
Barnwell	Lancaster
★ Beaufort	Laurens
Berkeley	Lee
Calhoun	Lexington
★ Charleston	Marion
Cherokee	Marlboro
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Clarendon	Oconee
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Edgefield	Spartanburg
Fairfield	Sumter
Florence	Union
★ Georgetown	Williamsburg
Greenville	York

The majority of the hospital renovation and rehabilitation will be funded by the Capital Project Sales Tax revenue, which passed by voter referendum in 2018. The former Bamberg County Hospital is being prepared for the upcoming construction project to include demolition of unsafe or outdated structures, meet ADA standards, fire protection improvements, among other upgrades.

● On Oct. 29, Bamberg County Fire Services held a dedication and blessing ceremony in front of the Bamberg County Courthouse in Bamberg for the county's three new fire pumper tankers. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development provided grants and loans the funding for the trucks, which will replace old, unreliable equipment in Ehrhardt, Olar, and Little Swamp fire substations. Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett announced that Bamberg County received three awards to purchase the three new fully-equipped fire pumper tankers. USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to assist rural communities.

Beaufort County

● Beaufort County Council has opened two new homes for persons with intellectual disabilities. The county now has a total of nine homes with a 10th home nearing completion and an 11th home pending construction. The homes represent the county's mission to ensure that all of its citizens enjoy and appreciate a positive quality of life. Three of the new homes are replacements for an antiquated facility. The fourth home is an expansion of residential services that allows Beaufort County Disabilities and Special Needs Department to return individuals, previously placed outside of the county, to their home community and be close to their loved ones.

● The Beaufort County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Department (BCADAD) is providing NARCAN® training free of charge to all Beaufort County residents, with the goal of empowering the community, opiate drug users, family and friends to save lives. Free one-on-one NARCAN® training is a key part of overdose prevention education, allowing individuals to learn what an overdose looks like and how it can be reversed. Training for interested residents includes learning rescue breathing, what NARCAN® is, and how to administer it. Training sessions take no more than 15 minutes and are available at both the BCADAD Beaufort and Bluffton locations.

● The Beaufort County EMS Department and the Beaufort County Risk Management

Department teamed-up to offer JACOB's Kit training to employees. It is a small "stop-the-bleed" trauma kit developed by the Burton Fire District and named for **Jacob Hall**, a six-year-old gunshot victim who lost his life in 2016 due to a school shooting in Townville. The JACOB's Kit was made especially for public building locations in case a shooting were to happen. County council authorized the purchase and installation of these kits in

all county buildings. The Beaufort County Facility Management staff have been installing them near AED (Automated External Defibrillators) stations, front doors and fire extinguishers. The focus of these kits is to allow anyone the ability to provide emergency medical care (after dialing 911) to someone losing significant amounts of blood.

(Continued on next page)



Webcasts & Webinars

Webcasts and webinars will be published here when scheduled. So, please check this schedule whenever you receive *Carolina Counties Newsletter*.

For more information, please contact Susan Turkopuls, SCAC, at (803) 252-7255 or sturkopuls@scac.sc. Or visit SCAC's website at: www.SCCounties.org/webcasts-and-webinars

SCAC's 2020 Conference Calendar

Aug. 1 – 2
Aug. 2 – 5

**Institute of Government
Annual Conference**
Hilton Head Marriott

August

Setoff Debt/GEAR
Date and location TBD

September 23

Continued Education, Update for Risk Managers, Etc.
DoubleTree by Hilton, Columbia

Oct. 21
Oct. 22

**Institute of Government
County Council Coalition**
Embassy Suites, Columbia

Nov. 20

S.C. Local Government Attorneys' Institute
DoubleTree by Hilton, Columbia

Dec. 3 – 4

Legislative Conference
Renaissance, Charleston

Dec. 15

Orientation for Newly-Elected County Council Members
DoubleTree, by Hilton, Columbia

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



NACo's 2020 Conference Calendar

July 17 – 20

Annual Conference
Orlando, Florida

Charleston County

● In March, Chief Deputy **Eric Watson** became Deputy County Administrator of Public Safety for Charleston County Government. Emergency Medical Services, Charleston County 9-1-1 Consolidated Dispatch, Emergency Management, and the Awendaw Fire Department. Watson currently manages law enforcement operations and strategic leadership planning for the Charleston County Sheriff's Office, where he has worked for the last 25 years.

Watson will continue to promote the importance of positive community relations between law enforcement and the citizens of Charleston County in his new role and will serve as a liaison for Charleston County Government and other public safety entities. He will also continue to serve as a special guest lecturer at the FBI National Academy where he is currently working on community policing relations projects.

● Charleston County Probate Court held a dedication flag ceremony on Nov. 12 at the Judicial Center Complex in Charleston. The Isle of Palms Exchange Club donated the flags, which include Army, USMC, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard.

● Charleston County Probate Court, working with the Ninth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office, began Veteran's Treatment Court in July. The Veterans Treatment Court is an 18-month-long program that accepts veterans who have non-violent offenses.

Instead of going to prison, they are guided through the program and take responsibility for their actions. During the process, the veteran receives inpatient or outpatient treatment for mental health and addiction, guidance in housing, education and employment, individual and group counseling and regular weekly court hearings to review and monitor their progress.

● **Jay M. Kramer**, Existing Industry Specialist for Charleston County Economic Development, graduated from the University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute on Oct. 24 at the OU EDI Fall session, held in Denver, Colo. OU EDI is an intensive 117-hour certificate program that provides a broad spectrum of advanced education for the economic development professional. Kramer has been with Charleston County Economic Development since 2016. He has a B.S. degree in Management, and a B.A. degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from Appalachian State University, a Masters in Project Management, and an MBA from The Citadel.

● In October, Charleston County's Environmental Management Department and Board of Elections and Voter Registration began offering an online chat service to citizens in need of assistance. The departments join the Auditor's Office that has been utilizing the service to answer tax-related questions. Live Chat provides citizens the ability to communicate directly with a Charleston County representative through a messaging service on-line.

● The service is available at each department/office home page on the Charleston County website. A "Chat" icon will pop up on the bottom left side and citizens will simply click to initiate the conversation. The Live Chat is available during normal business hours, however you can send in a message after hours and a representative will get back to you the next business day. Citizens will have the ability to send and receive documents. Staff can assist multiple citizens at the same time. The chat provides additional communication resources for citizens in addition to phone and e-mail. Live Chat is mobile-friendly. Citizens can provide a rating and feedback at the conclusion of each interaction, which allows Charleston County to access and improve service

● Since Sept. 24, Charleston County residents have had access to a new and improved tax payment website providing taxpayers better navigation, new options and lower costs to use a credit card for payment. Staff with the Treasurer's Office utilized customer feedback to assist in the development of the new website. Features of the new payment website: 1) The search features are much more user friendly. The ease of finding your bill to pay will be less time consuming 2) Taxpayers are able to pay their bill with new options, including e-checks free of charge 3) online receipts are automatically emailed to the taxpayer that will also be DMV ready (if paying motor vehicle taxes) 4) The convenience fees for credit cards/debit cards are reduced to 2.39 percent from 2.5 percent and 5) Mobile friendly so the site can be accessed on smart phones and tablets.

● The Charleston Magistrate Court held its first Housing Court on Oct. 2 to provide access to legal services for tenants in Charleston County facing eviction from local housing. The initial Housing Court session was held at the North Area 1 Magistrate Court, located in North Charleston. The North Area 1 Magistrate Court will conduct eviction hearings on Wednesday mornings each week, and a pro bono attorney will be present to represent indigent tenants who qualify for pro bono services based on their income.

This is the first Housing Court in South Carolina, and the goal is to provide all parties involved with the opportunity to resolve issues without an eviction. According to Charleston County magistrate judges, often times these eviction situations are the result of a breakdown in communication. Once the Housing Court is established at the North Area 1 Magistrate Court, it will be rolled out to the North Area 3 and West Ashley Magistrate Courts at a later date.

Dorchester County

● On Oct. 28, **Craig Lloyd** joined Team Dorchester County as Communications Coordinator in the Public Information Office.

● On Nov. 25, **Chad McIntyre** joined Team Dorchester County as the Deputy Director of EMS.

● On Dec. 2, **Amy Dixon** graduated from the South Carolina Economic Developers' Association Institute.

● On Dec. 6, Dorchester County held a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house of the First Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office. The second floor of the county's old court-

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house was renovated to house the solicitor's office. The cost of the renovations totaled \$225,000. By renovating the old courthouse and relocating the solicitor's office, Dorchester County will save approximately \$150,000, annually.

● On Dec. 6, Dorchester County Public Information Officer **Tiffany Norton** was elected and sworn in as the Vice President of Communications for the South Carolina Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America.

● On Dec. 9, County Council recognized the Business Services Department for earning the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for their Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) from the Government Finance Officers Association. The CAFR award is the highest form of recognition awarded to local governments for transparency in annual financial reporting.

● On Dec. 9, Magnolia Botanicals, a joint venture between South Carolina-based Blue Water Green Bridge, LLC and United Cannabis Corporation, announced plans to establish an industrial hemp processing plant in Dorchester County. With a capital investment of \$3.2 million, the company will create 52 new jobs.

● On Dec. 12, Dennis Eagle Inc. announced plans to establish operations in Dorchester County. The company is expected to create 21 new jobs.

● On Jan. 7, the independent accounting firm, Greene Finney, LLP issued Dorchester County an unmodified opinion after auditing the County's FY 2019 financial statements.

● On, Jan. 14, Dorchester County announced the passing of former Dorchester County Councilman **Richard H. Rosebrock**.

● On Jan. 30, **Craig Lloyd** completed the Basic PIO Course at the S.C. Emergency Management Division.

Georgetown County

● The Georgetown County Public Services Department has received reaccreditation from the American Public Works Association. The public works department, which scored a perfect 100 percent, was commended for development of a comprehensive safety manual, development of a countywide asset management system, and developing a policy that has managers review proper personal protection equipment usage annually with staff. The APWA accreditation program recognizes governmental agencies that go beyond the requirements of the management practices established in the public works industry.

● **Ed Kilcullen**, who has served as Georgetown County's accounting manager for more than a decade, became the county Finance Department's new director in January. Kilcullen replaced **Scott Proctor**, who retired on Jan. 31. Proctor served as the county's Finance Director since 2004. Kilcullen, who joined Georgetown County's finance team in 2009, is a certified public accountant and a certified internal auditor with substantial experience in governmental accounting. Prior to his current position, he worked on finance teams at the Medical University of South Carolina and the City of Charleston, and was Deputy Finance Director for Berkeley County.

● **Herbert Linnen**, 89, a longtime recycling center attendant with Georgetown County Environmental Services, died on Dec. 23. He had worked part-time for Environmental Services since Aug. 2006.

● Three Georgetown County Public Services employees were recently certified as erosion protection and sediment control inspectors: **James Coley**, Project Planner, Capital Projects and Engineering Division; **Christopher Hancock**, Senior Compliance Inspector, Stormwater Division; and **Jacob Nesmith**, Senior Construction Inspector, Capital Projects and Engineering Division.

● **Wesley Bryant**, who served as Georgetown County Attorney for almost 13 years, left the position on January 17 to accept a position with Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments as Director of Government Services and Compliance. He will still work in partnership with the county in this new role. Bryant will also handle legal matters on a contractual basis for the county until a replacement is hired.

● **Tamara McIntyre**, branch manager for the Waccamaw Library for just under three years, was named the county's Manager of the Year for 2019. In a relatively short time with the county, McIntyre has made an excellent impression on her superiors, as well as library patrons, as she manages one of the busiest facilities in the county.

In Fiscal Year 2019 alone, the Waccamaw Library was the site of 854 community meetings attended by more than 16,000 people. The library staff and the Friends of the Waccamaw Library also hosted 409 public library programs with a turnout of nearly 9,200 people. On top of that, there were 32,114 customer checkouts, more than 10,000 uses of library computers, 25,000 inquiries at the reference desk, and more than 86,000 items borrowed. Since the Waccamaw Library reopened in a new, larger space in 2015, the branch has been an enormous success and has become a true community center for

residents on the Waccamaw Neck.

● Georgetown County Council recognized two individuals for volunteer service in January: **Cedric Geathers** was named Georgetown County Volunteer of the Year for 2019, and **Lesley Eastham** was named Employee Volunteer of the Year for 2019.

Geathers has been a dedicated volunteer with Georgetown County Fire/EMS since 2014.

Eastham, employed with Georgetown County for 28 years, has been volunteering for 20 years. In addition to her work as a firefighter/paramedic and Infectious Control Officer with county fire/EMS, she volunteers significant time to helping teach CPR and medical courses.

● In December, Georgetown County announced that a police and fire complex in the Town of Andrews were the last items remaining to be completed from the original projects list that was part of a 2014 Capital Project Sales Tax referendum. The sales tax, which will expire this spring, raised more than \$41 million. The revenue raised was significantly greater than anticipated, and will leave council with about \$18 million in excess funds that it will have to determine how to spend this year.

● In November, **Linda Drayton**, a clerk in the Georgetown County Auditor's Office, was recognized by county council in November as Georgetown County's Employee of the Quarter. She has been employed with the county for six years. Drayton started with the county as a part-time staff member and was promoted to full-time when **Brian Shult** was elected auditor and took over that office.

● Georgetown County's Department of Public Services and Director **Ray Funnny** paid tribute to the department's outstanding employees on Nov. 20 with a luncheon and awards ceremony. The department recognized three employees who stood out this year in their excellence.

The top award, Employee of the Year, was presented to **Gina Speight** of Environmental Services. The annual Customer Service Award was presented to **Karan Cokley**. **Chris Hancock** received the Professional Achievement Award. He started his career with Georgetown County Public Services two years ago and took on the sole responsibility of implementing a new permitting program for Public Services that has increased revenue.

● Georgetown County Administrator **Sel Hemingway**, the county's administrator since 2008 who retired at the end of February, was presented the Lifetime of Leadership Award by the Georgetown County Chamber

(Continued on next page)

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of Commerce at its 102nd Annual Meeting and Celebration on Nov. 7.

Hemingway served as Georgetown County council chairman for eight years prior to becoming administrator, and served a total of 11 years on council. He was recognized in December for his many years of dedicated service and contributions to SCAC as a member of the Association's Board of Directors, Scholarship Selection Committee, and Legislative Committee.

Hemingway has been involved in a number of civic activities in addition to his time on county council. He served two terms as President of the Andrews Rotary Club, as chairman of the Georgetown County United Way Campaign and the Georgetown County Economic Development Commission; and as President of the Andrews Industrial Development Corporation. He is a member of Trinity United Methodist Church, where he teaches Sunday School and serves as a certified Lay Speaker.

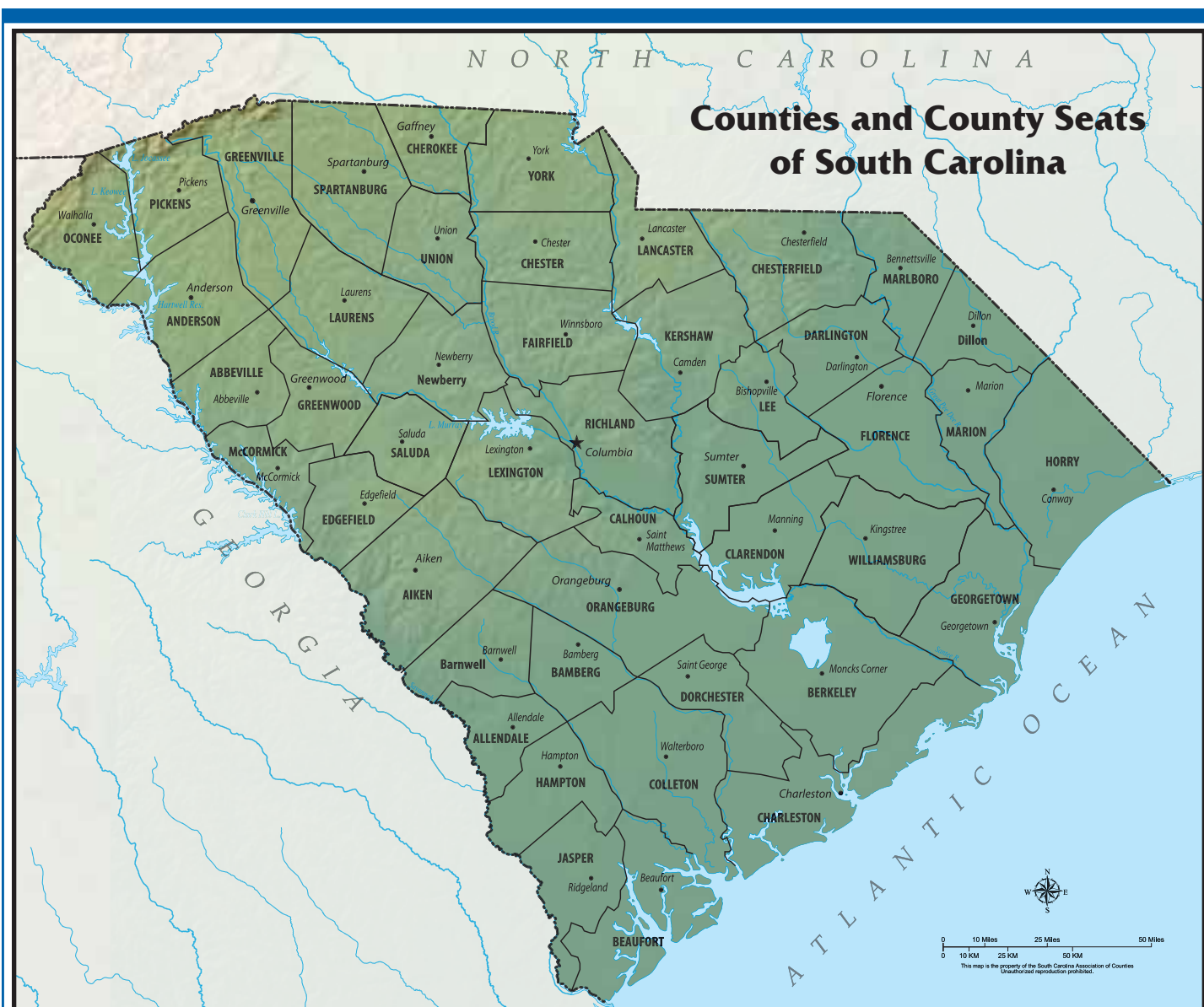
● Georgetown County Public Information Officer **Jackie Broach-Akers** has been declared a master in her field by the National Emergency Management Institute. Broach-Akers graduated from FEMA's Master Public Information Officer program on September 19 at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, Md. She joins an elite group of just 65 PIOs in the nation who have earned the title of Master PIO through the program. This is the highest level of training available to PIOs in the U.S.

● **James Coley**, engineering and capital projects planner for Georgetown County's Public Services Department, has graduated from the Emerging Leaders Academy of the American Public Works Association.

● Georgetown County Acting Sheriff **Carter Weaver** honored three employees in October with sheriff's office Employee of the Quarter awards and presented a plaque to a retiree with 25 years of service at the County Detention Center.

The Detention Center retiree, **Lamond O. Oliver Sr.**, began his career in May 1994 and retired last summer. Oliver, who began his service at the old county jail and transitioned to the facility on Browns Ferry Road shortly afterward, is the first to retire from the detention center. He served 25 years.

Employees of the Quarter (July–September 2019) were: Deputy of the Quarter, **Cpl. Brian Delval**; Emergency Communicator of the Quarter, **Andrea Morris**; and Correctional Officer of the Quarter, **John Maloney**.



Richland County

● A joint initiative by Richland County and the City of Columbia continues to pave the way for economic growth, with an estimated \$92 million project taking shape downtown. Greenville-based Windsor Aughtry Co. will redevelop the former Kline Iron & Steel Co. location at Huger and Gervais streets into a mixed-use development with two hotels, retail space, an office building and structured parking.

The project includes 35,000 square feet of commercial and retail development space and 75,000 square feet of office space for the four-acre property. The two hotels will include a seven-story, 146-room AC Hotel by Marriott with a rooftop bar, and a second hotel with 114 rooms. Windsor Aughtry received approval for the project through

the Commercial Development Incentive Program (CDIP), a city-county initiative. The county approved the deal at its meeting in January.

● A Richland County educator has been named the state's Conservation Teacher of the Year (Primary) by the S.C. Association of Conservation Districts. **Jennifer Mancke** of Harmony School was nominated for the award by the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), which named her the County's Conservation Teacher of the Year in 2019. Mancke is the first-through-fifth-grade lead teacher at Harmony School, a nonprofit Forest Acres institution that offers a multiyear blended curriculum inspired by Montessori, Waldorf and inquiry-based principles. For winning the county honor, Mancke received a cash award and a \$500 Conservation Education Mini-Grant toward

school conservation projects. She received another cash prize for earning the state title. Mancke was recognized on February 18 at the Association of Conservation Districts' Partnership Conference in Charleston.

● The Columbia-Richland County Fire Department celebrated its new firetruck with a push-in ceremony on February 10. **District 11 Councilwoman Chakisse Newton** and other county officials helped firefighters ease the vehicle into the bay at the department's Capitol View Station, ushering in its service to the community. Richland County bought the new truck, Engine 30, using \$430,866 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

● The County Auditor's Office in December installed a computerized kiosk in the second-floor lobby at 2020 Hampton St. to
(Continued on next page)

speed up the process for people who prefer to visit the county building to pay their taxes in person instead of online. Previously, a resident paying taxes in-person had to either wait in line at the Auditor's Office to have a tax bill printed or bring the bill that was mailed to them to the Treasurer's Office for payment. (The county auditor prepares tax bills. The county treasurer collects the payments.)

At the new kiosk, taxpayers enter their vehicle license plate numbers and the first three letters of their last name, or their street address and last name. A taxpayer can then have the bill printed and take it to the Treasurer's Office, also located on the second floor of the Administration Building, for payment. Residents still have the option of printing tax bills online. Bills can be paid online for an extra charge.

● With a pair of new developments, Richland County and the City of Columbia are seeing the first results of a partnership to encourage quality economic growth.

Redeveloping the former Capital City Stadium site will transfer 17.5 acres onto the tax rolls with the construction of six multi-family residential buildings, as well as providing retail and green space. The stadium project includes stream restoration in the Olympia area, helping resolve long-standing flooding issues. The \$63 million development will also support pedestrian access from the University of South Carolina campus to Williams-Brice Stadium.

The second project, a \$45 million devel-

opment in the Bull Street District, involves 262 apartment homes and more than 60,000 square feet of ground-level retail space. As part of the project, the developer will construct a 345-space garage at a cost of about \$7.9 million. This development will help Bull Street build on its efforts to create a walkable live-work community that represents "new urbanism."

Earlier this year, both councils approved the innovative joint city-county initiative to spark major developments that tax challenges previously stifled. The program offers to reimburse developers who invest in public infrastructure if they agree to commit at least \$30 million in taxable new investment.

● Kemira, a global chemicals company, announced on Dec. 10 plans to expand operations in Richland County, investing \$20 million into the project. Founded in 1920 and headquartered in Finland, Kemira has more than 4,900 employees worldwide. The company utilizes chemistry to add optimal quality, functionality and strength to paper and board products, ensure the safety and hygiene of water and food packaging, and maximize yield from energy resources.

Located at 191 Water Station Road in Eastover, S.C., the company's expansion is expected to be completed in 2020.

● On October 30, Richland County announced that its Finance Department had earned the highest honor in governmental accounting and financial reporting for the 36th consecutive year. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) awarded the

department its Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. An impartial panel recognized the county's 2018 comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) for meeting a high level of standards. The Chicago-based GFOA represents the public finance industry and has more than 20,000 members.

● **Richland County Councilman Calvin "Chip" Jackson** is serving in a new leadership position within the South Carolina Association of Counties (SCAC). Jackson was elected vice president of the SCAC's County Council Coalition during the group's October 24 meeting in Columbia. The SCAC, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, works to provide education and training, legislative reporting, research and technical assistance to county governments. The County Council Coalition includes representatives from all 46 S.C. counties and allows them to take a leadership role in shaping the SCAC's legislative policy positions. Jackson previously served as the coalition's secretary. He has represented District 9 on Richland County Council since January 2017.

● REI Automation, a Columbia-based company that designs and builds robotics, assembly lines and special-purpose machines for the automotive, medical, nuclear, electronics and consumer goods markets, announced on October 16 that it was expanding its operations in Richland County. The company's \$3 million investment is projected to create 35 new jobs.



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A South Carolina Statewide Cleanup



PalmettoPride is coordinating efforts for a statewide cleanup **April 22** to celebrate Earth Day 2020. On the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, we hope that you will join us as we work together to create a litter-free SC.

We encourage South Carolinians to do their part in joining their local cleanup effort by removing litter from their neighborhoods, beaches, parks schools, etc. Let's make the 50th anniversary of Earth Day one to remember in South Carolina. Sign up at www.palmettopride.org today to be a part of this statewide event.



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