

COUNTY FOCUS

SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
VOL. 34, NO. 2 SUMMER 2023



The Future Is Here: **Why Counties Should Prepare** **for Autonomous Technology**

**Rethinking Fire Service in
Unincorporated Areas**

**2023 Legislative Session
in Review**

**Picturing Innovation at
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County Focus Magazine is published quarterly by the South Carolina Association of Counties.

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VOLUME 34, NUMBER 2

SUMMER 2023

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The Future Is Here: Why Counties Should Prepare for Autonomous Technology

By Patrick J. Bresnahan, Ph.D.

Over the past few years, many of our county colleagues have begun using drones for various operations. Most of these operations have been effective in their implementation and expanded the capabilities of our staff. Along with search and rescue, mapping and law enforcement are the most common applications currently.

The adoption and evolution of drone operations is at a pace rarely seen in county government. Every few months new and improved equipment and software becomes available that prompts expanded applications. Drones are becoming commonplace as clipboards are moving toward extinction. This evolution is just a small insight into the innovation and disruption coming from robotics and automated systems.

What Are Autonomous Systems?

On college campuses across the country, you can observe the first-world luxury of food delivery robots scurrying on their missions.

Autonomous vehicles are currently shuttling people around both retirement and traditional communities in Florida and Arizona. In North Carolina, the National Park Service tested its first automated shuttle at Wright Brothers National Park during spring and summer 2021 in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

These are all examples of autonomous systems, which encompass environments of air, land, and water. While you are likely most familiar with aerial missions conducted with drones, operations of autonomous technology on land and water are moving from the development and testing phases to practical applications.

Such transportation platforms include passenger automobiles, or robotaxis, as well as driverless minibuses. Water-based craft are already being used in South Carolina to map lake and river bottoms as technicians monitor progress from small boats or the shore.



Crewed Volocopter 2X lands in front of the Skyports and ADP veriport terminal at Pontoise-Corneilles Airfield in France. *Photo courtesy of Volocopter.*

Benefits for County Governments

Most of the technologies are being employed without consideration of impacts or issues at the county government level. Yet autonomous technologies can and will have positive impacts in county government. As with aerial drones, autonomous equipment will improve and expand citizen services. For example, robotic crawlers are now used in a variety of pipes for pigging (maintaining and cleaning) and inspections. These crawlers collect data during operations and are available now for utilities and public works departments. Walking or crawling robots are already being used by electric utilities to collect data in confined or dangerous spaces.

Other systems collect data but only for immediate use. Autonomous mowers use sensors to collect information, but those data are only used to guide the equipment in completing a programmed task. As individual technology components of autonomous systems continue to improve at lightning speed, robotic mowers will be able to support significant operations in county facilities departments.

Most autonomous tools will fit into county operations with few issues. Industrial robotic mowers and pipe crawlers will require additional staff training but should have minimal impact at the administration level. Most likely, states will dictate the rules of the road for most autonomous vehicles such as trucks and passenger transports. However, there will be local input as to smaller autonomous platforms that will be used for transport and delivery. Some of those discussions will revolve around local infrastructure like sidewalks and pavement types. As with drones, we cannot foresee all the potential issues until practical applications begin.

Potential Issues for Consideration

With the current benefits and future promise of autonomous systems, there are issues county governments must address for some platforms.

The most common relates to drone operations. Many counties have either passed or proposed ordinances restricting drone flights. Although these are likely reactions to citizen complaints, they are often unproductive. The most elementary point to be made about drone flight is that anywhere a craft flies, from the blade of grass to the heavens, is controlled by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). In what is

known as the National Airspace (NAS), the FAA determines where, how, and sometimes when registered craft can fly in the United States. So, counties that try to legislate where a drone can fly run into the domain of the federal government.

In 2015, the FAA published a factsheet outlining state and local government regulation issues. The FAA provided additional guidance in 2018 describing what aspects of drone operations local authorities can regulate. Those items include restricting take-off and landing loca-

(Continued on next page)



Richland County Geographic Information Officer Patrick Bresnahan flies a drone at the Construction and Demolition Landfill in June.

tions on public property as well as enforcing traditional laws of privacy and law enforcement actions. To assist county leaders nationwide, it has been recently suggested that the National Association of Counties (NACo) GIS Subcommittee and IT Standing Committee work with the Transportation Steering Committee to create a template of standard ordinance language to address drone issues in

individual communities.

Drone Flights and Local Control

One very important note about drone flights and local control. As drones became more practical for business uses, a few local governments across the country promoted shooting them if citizens found

Resources ...

NACo's Exploratory Committee on Artificial Intelligence | Sign up to receive updates on the committee's work and opportunities to get involved at www.naco.org.

Grounded: Beyond the Technical Mapping, police, fire and other city and county departments across the country have had millions of dollars of equipment grounded in the past several years. Federal government agencies, private utilities and entire states have banned drones manufactured in other countries. As one of these manufacturers represents approximately 90 percent of the U.S. public safety market, such drone bans can be costly for counties.



Connected Autonomous Shuttle Supporting Innovation, or CASSI, was launched at Wright Brothers National Memorial in Kill Devil Hills, N.C. in 2021. Photo courtesy of the N.C. Department of Transportation.



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them to be a nuisance. The same recommendation floats around on neighborhood social media sites frequently. Shooting a drone is a federal offense. The FAA requires working drones be registered and assigned an aircraft number, just as with commercial airliners. The aircraft must be visibly marked with that number and its registration maintained throughout its lifespan. The operator must also be certified by the FAA to fly the drone and maintain that certification through continued training. Thus, shooting a drone is similar to shooting at an airplane!

The Future Is Here: Veriports and Local Aerial Transportation Sector Impacts

Although many local governments have experience using drone technologies and addressing related issues, the future is here and is much more complex. Consider autonomous airborne transportation. The day of the Jetsons may finally be upon us with flying taxis expected to be in service for the Paris Olympics next summer. Technology advances move as quickly as aircraft takeoffs these days, and county officials must be aware of the landscape covering a variety of artificial intelligence aspects and plan for potential impacts.

The framework for Urban Air Mobility (UAM) and Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) is on its way to completion with work by the FAA. This new aviation transportation system is classified by short hops (UAM) and longer-range trips (AAM) using a variety of aircraft with a common capability to depart and arrive in spaces much smaller than traditional airport runways. Most of the aircraft being tested are also powered by electric motors. Thus, electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing (eVTOL) craft will create less noise than traditional combustion propulsion.

The use of eVTOLs is not in the distant future. The FAA expects to certify the first round of aircraft for flight in this new category by the fourth quarter of 2024. In March 2022, the FAA published interim guidance, via an engineering brief, to support the design and operation of facilities for eVTOL operations known as Veriports. This new industry will require significant input and support from county governments with the involvement of multiple thematic departments. Counties must consider the approval of geographic locations for Veriports and the impact of zoning, ingress and egress of ground vehicles, and possible noise issues. Like any other construction, utilities, permitting, and inspections must be provided.


Questions for consideration include:

- How will county permitting and inspections be impacted by new technologies?
- What new training must inspectors have for such equipment and technologies?
- Licensing and taxation issues must also be decided.

Conclusion

The topic of autonomous technologies is being seriously discussed in several NACo committees. The result of such work is often white papers, templates, or policy examples to guide and assist leaders. In May, NACo announced the formation of an Artificial Intelligence

Exploratory Committee. The group will examine emerging policies, practices and potential applications and consequences of AI, which includes autonomous technology. The work will focus on the lens of county governance policies and practices, operations and constituent services, public trust, privacy and security, and workforce productivity and skills development.

Because South Carolina already has a significant footprint of automobile and aircraft production, it lends itself to the technological evolution of those industries. Thus, we can expect autonomous transportation on our roads and in our skies sooner than most expect. These issues are at the doorstep of our county membership. The question is, are you aware and preparing? 

Dr. Patrick Bresnahan is the Geographic Information Officer at Richland County and is a member of the NACo Technology Advisory Council, NACo IT Standing Committee, and has chaired the GIS Subcommittee. He is also an active member of the Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International. Dr. Bresnahan has presented at professional conferences on topics of geospatial systems/GIS, open-source computing, remote sensing, drones, and autonomous technologies.



Rethinking Fire Service in Unincorporated Areas

By Lawrence Flynn

Fire service has come a long way since the days of ancient Rome when Marcus Crassus would arrive at the scene of a fire and offer to purchase properties in the fire's path for a big discount before putting it out. Rather than leaving fire service to greedy entrepreneurs, the General Assembly has long recognized fire protection as a "valuable and essential governmental service."¹

However, for a variety of historical and legal reasons, fire service in the unincorporated areas of South Carolina remains a patchwork of special purpose districts (SPDs), volunteer fire departments (VFDs), referendum-created county fire districts (Home Rule Districts) and county fire service areas (FSAs and together with Home Rule Districts, Fire Districts). The bad news is that this translates to surplusage, disjointed response, inconsistent service, and uneven tax rates. The good news is that counties are empowered to address these issues and solve some of these problems.

Consolidation as a Solution

As South Carolina grew and evolved, the General Assembly, counties, and cities established a hyper-localized fire service network to meet the needs of the day. At a point in the not-so-distant past, one Upstate county had as many as 44 separate fire providers (consisting of a mixture of FSAs, SPDs and municipal providers) with millage rates ranging from three to 45. What was once a godsend and tailored to local needs, has become outdated, inefficient, and, in certain cases, dangerous. That county, like many others

in the state, knew that changes were needed, and it began exploring options for consolidation.

Consolidation² is a workable solution to reduce redundancy and obtain economies of scale that bolster service levels and rationalize the tax burden. This process is best undertaken with willing participants at the impacted fire provider, and a variety of forces are presently at work that are creating favorable conditions for consolidation. These tailwinds include: (1) costs: health insurance, state retirement, salaries and fire facilities, apparatus and equipment have all increased markedly over the past decade; (2) personnel: finding and retaining paid staff and capable volunteers is increasingly difficult, especially given the time, energy and training necessary to provide fire service; (3) attrition: many fire chiefs, volunteers, and "founders" of the current fire providers are retiring, stepping back or physically unable to serve; and (4) protocol: many successful consolidations have provided a roadmap and an example to fire providers that were previously hostile to consolidation.



The Roadmap to Consolidation

Counties possess the authority to exercise any and all powers “to operate and maintain a fire protection system within the county,” including the power “to designate . . . the areas of the county where fire protection service may be furnished” by FSAs;³ create, diminish or abolish Home Rule Districts that provide “fire protection;”⁴ or “enlarge, diminish or consolidate any existing” fire SPD.⁵ It is important to point out that Fire Districts cannot be statutorily consolidated with an SPD; instead, they may only be combined with a like entity.⁶ However, FSA or Home Rule District consolidations, SPD service area alterations and VFD terminations may be made effective at the same time and under a common plan for addressing fire service.

An administrative consolidation of Fire Districts can eliminate or consolidate Fire Districts into one entity through an ordinance and supporting agreements.⁷ While the ordinance provides for the legal consolidation of the Fire Districts, additional agreements are typically necessary to address existing contractual obligations and the transfer of assets of the Fire Districts. If Fire Districts have outstanding debt subject to prepayment, the county often must either pay off the existing debt or issue refunding bonds to satisfy the debt. If the debt is not subject to prepayment, the county must negotiate an assumption of the debt obligation prior to the elimination of the Fire District. Any existing service agreements should be assigned to the newly consolidated entity (or to the county on behalf of the applicable Fire District) to ensure that the appropriate level of fire service is maintained. Supplementary agreements will also be necessary to

transfer the assets, including both real and personal property, to the county.

The enlargement, diminishment, or consolidation of SPDs can be done upon receipt of a petition to the county from the affected SPDs, or by county council, acting on its own motion. Upon receipt of such a petition, or acting on its own, the county may determine whether to enlarge, diminish or consolidate any existing SPD located within the county’s boundaries. Similar to the process for the consolidation of Fire Districts, the enlargement, diminishment, or consolidation process is subject to the terms of an ordinance of the county council and is often supplemented with separate agreements that are necessary to complete the consolidation. Counties cannot directly abolish an SPD without a complicated referendum process⁸, and SPDs cannot convey away all of their assets in an effort to end-run the abolition statute.⁹

Counties do not have the direct authority to terminate VFDs as they are standalone corporate entities.¹⁰ However, most of the VFDs do not (or cannot) operate independently of the county. Often, the county either contracts directly with the VFD for service or maintains a Fire District that overlays the service area of the VFD, providing a mechanism for the levy and collection of taxes or fees in support of the VFD. While suffering from many of the inefficiencies attributable to Fire Districts and SPDs, many VFDs additionally lack the training protocols, insurance coverage and tort-claims act protection attendant to local government entities like Fire Districts and SPDs. As a result, counties can leverage their role as the revenue provider (under

(Continued on next page)



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contract or through the overlapping Fire District) to get the VFDs to join or initiate a consolidation effort. This is dramatic leverage as the VFDs cannot operate or function without the county-derived revenue streams.

Operational Considerations after Consolidation

As with all essential governmental services, the goal of consolidation should be a higher level of service at a lower overall cost to citizens. Though some redundancies will be eliminated, closing fire stations or otherwise reducing the fire staff may not be required. In fact, counties may notice an uptick in recruiting as a result of increased location options, enhanced training opportunities, and a larger salary pool to support paid staffing. A county should also consider drafting updated employment and staffing policies, assessing training requirements, and evaluating equipment compatibility.

Governance options for Fire Districts include (1) establishing the Fire District as an administrative division of the county, essentially a county department, or (2) establishing a separate fire commission. Given the political implications attendant to a separate governing body, many counties have opted to bring the Fire Districts in-house and operate them as a department of the county. Unfortunately, that option is not available in an SPD consolidation; since each SPD is an independent political subdivision, self-governance is still required. However, the county does maintain the flexibility to determine whether to provide for a new commission, the applicable number of commissioners and may decide to expand or reduce the size of the governing board.¹¹

As technology improves and growth continues unabated, counties should evaluate whether existing fire service structures best serve their constituents. Consolidating fire providers can have numerous benefits, including attracting new and retaining existing firefighters (both paid and volunteer); allowing for enhanced training; stabilizing service calls and fire station capacity; promoting better responsiveness to taxpayers, residents, and businesses within a county; and unifying and potentially improving ISO ratings throughout the county. Though consolidating fire providers comes with some growing pains, it often results in better and higher quality service for taxpayers. 

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¹Act 408 of the Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina for the year 1984.

²The term “consolidation” is used in this article, and is generally intended to encompass both merger, as well as the creation or reconstitution of new fire providers to the exclusion of departments that will be abolished.

³S.C. Code Ann. § 4-19-10.

⁴S.C. Code Ann. § 4-9-30(5)(a) & (e).

⁵S.C. Code Ann. § 6-11-420.

⁶SPDs can only be consolidated with other SPDs or expanded into the service area formerly occupied by a VFD, FSA or Home Rule District, after such VFD, FSA or Home Rule District is abolished.

⁷Given the referendum requirements associated with Home Rule Districts, the preferred consolidation path is to use the FSA statute,



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which does not require a referendum as a condition of creation. As a result, the consolidation of Home Rule Districts often results in reconstitution as an FSA.

⁸See S.C. §§ 6-11-2010 et seq. providing for the onerous methodology to dissolve an SPD, including the submission of a petition signed by 40% of the registered voters in the district to be dissolved, an election, which may be held only on a general election date (November in even numbered years) and the approval of 2/3 of the voters casting ballots on the question.

⁹See *Evins v. Richland County Historic Preservation Com'n*, 341 S.C. 15 (2000).

¹⁰See Title 33, Chapters 31 & 36 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina 1976, as amended.

¹¹See S.C. § 6-11-610 wherein the county has the authority to adjust the board to determine whether “there should be a new commission or changes in the personnel of the old commission” and otherwise as necessary to “provide for the proper functioning of the special purpose district The number of commissioners shall be not less than three nor more than nine.”



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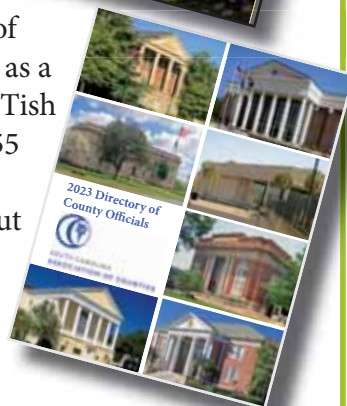
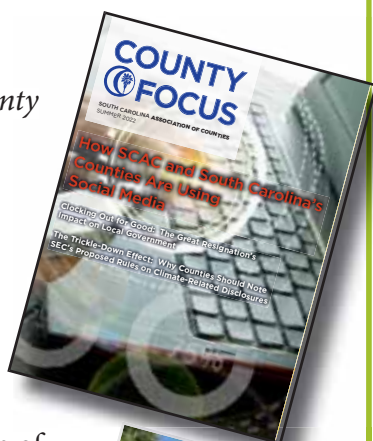
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The advertising deadline for the next issue of *County Focus Magazine*, the fall issue (Vol. 34, No. 3), is **Sept. 15**. The advertising deadline for the *2024 Directory of County Officials* will be announced in October.



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Picturing Innovation at SCAC's Annual Awards Competition

Officials representing 15 counties presented a range of innovative projects and partnerships during the SCAC Annual Awards Competition in May at SCETV.

The presentations covered creative ways to address common issues facing county governments across South Carolina and the nation. Winners will be announced at the Annual Conference in August.

Thanks to all the presenters and teams who shared their project success stories with the judges and their colleagues. Video recordings of the presentations are available at www.sccounties.org/awards/video-library.



Dorchester County Deputy Administrator Mario Formisano, Public Information Officer Michelle Mills and Emergency Management Specialist Dave Amann shared about a campaign with Tradesman Brewing Company and the “Know Your Zone” beer.



Pickens County Administrator Ken Roper (center) and team presented on the Fixing County Roads: Road Sustainability Program.



Hank Ammons explained Beaufort County’s program to respond to a shortage of healthcare workers.



Judges Greg Pearce, Bill Tomes, Milton Pope, and Katherine O’Neill.



The Sumter County team shared success of its Stash the Trash initiative.



Berkeley County representatives pose after their presentation on a partnership with Trident Technical College to certify EMTs.



York County discussed how it preserved 1,900 acres along the Catawba River to serve as a park and benefit quality of life for the county's residents.



Lexington County implemented a partnership with a private ambulance service to maximize county resources.

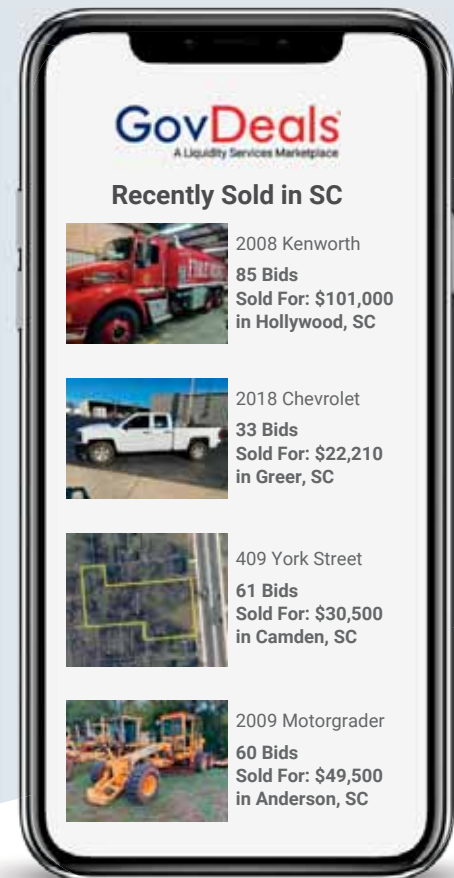


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Legislative Wrap-Up | June 2023

The South Carolina Association of Counties continues to **advocate on behalf of county government** and shape **statewide** legislation to benefit all South Carolina counties. Some highlights of the 2023 session* include:

SC State Budget – H. 4300

SCAC works with legislative leaders to continue to ensure full funding in the Local Government Fund (LGF) and Rural Stabilization Fund. In FY2023-2024, the LGF will **increase by over \$13 million** and **\$12 million** will be returned to **rural counties** in the Rural Stabilization Fund.

SCAC **prevented provisos** from being amended to withhold LGF revenues if certain funding thresholds aren't provided to the Solicitors' and Public Defenders' Offices.

SCAC worked with legislators and stakeholders to avoid unintended consequences from a penalty provision in a proviso related to bans on short-term rentals.

Status: The budget bill has become an Act.

Short Term Rental Bans – H. 3253

SCAC worked with the bill's sponsor to amend this bill, which would have affected LGF and 6 percent property tax revenues, to not only remove those provisions but to add provisions related to the collection of accommodation taxes on short-term rentals, an **SCAC policy position**.

Status: The bill is currently in the House.

Municipal and County Audits – S. 31

SCAC saw an opportunity with this bill dealing with municipal audits to address an issue counties were having with their LGF being withheld. SCAC staff talked with the bill's sponsor and legislative leaders to **add an automatic 90-day grace period to the deadline** for providing the county audits to the state before a county's LGF will be impacted.

Status: The Governor's veto was overridden by the Senate and the House and S. 31 has become an Act.



Commercial Rooftop Solar Property Taxes – H. 3948

SCAC took a bill that provided a 100 percent property tax exemption to all solar companies, including solar farms with fee-in-lieu of tax agreements, and rewrote the bill to limit it to rooftop solar to **eliminate its fiscal impact on counties**.

Status: The bill passed the House and has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

Cell Phones in Jails – H. 4002

This bill initially only applied to state prisons, but SCAC leveraged its relationships to extend the prohibition of cell phones in prisons to county jails, an **SCAC policy position**.

Status: Passed the House and has been referred to the Senate Committee on Corrections and Penology.

Accommodations Tax Revenue for Workforce Housing – S. 284

SCAC staff worked with legislative leaders to ensure passage of this bill to allow accommodations tax revenue to be used to develop workforce housing, an important need in many counties.

Status: Signed by the Governor.

SCAC will continue to **advocate on behalf of county government** at the General Assembly and update counties on all the happenings at the State House through the Friday Report and other Legislative Alerts. **Sign up** | www.sccounties.org/email

*Note: This was the first of a two-year session, meaning bills that did not pass are still active in 2024.

Join SCAC's 2023 Corporate Partner Program!



NEW OPPORTUNITIES ...

The South Carolina Association of Counties (SCAC) offers a unique way to market your company—both efficiently and cost-effectively—to South Carolina's 46 counties! SCAC's Corporate Partner Program provides a comprehensive marketing opportunity to showcase products and services directly to county leaders. The program also offers year-round exposure to county officials and employees at multiple SCAC events, and opportunities to advertise in the Association's quarterly magazine and annual directory.

ACCESS ...

If you are looking for ways to build and strengthen relationships with county governments, this program is for you. As an SCAC Corporate Partner, you will be able to maintain contact with county officials throughout the year. You will also be updated on trends in county government and legislative initiatives.

COST EFFECTIVE ...

This "one stop shop" approach will minimize costs and make it easier for you to budget because you will be able to support the SCAC as a partner at one of the levels for an entire calendar year. Still, "a la carte" options will remain available if you choose to advertise in SCAC's publications.

BENEFITS OVERVIEW ...

- Four levels of partnership — \$1,500, \$3,000, \$5,000, or \$10,000.
- Complimentary/discounted rates to attend (including premier exposure) three SCAC events — Counties Connect: A Legislative Action Day in February, Annual Conference in August, and County Council Coalition Fall Meeting in October. All Partners will be recognized during all three events, whether virtual or in-person.
- Advertising in *County Focus Magazine* and annual *Directory of County Officials* will be included in the top three levels and discounted advertising may be purchased at the Bronze Level.
- Complimentary/discounted rates to attend and exhibit exclusively at SCAC's Annual Conference.
- Complimentary promotion on SCAC's website and Annual Conference app.
- Exclusive benefits and exposure at the top levels.
- Complimentary subscription(s) to *County Focus Magazine* and copies of the annual *Directory of County Officials*.
- Benefits will be available on a calendar year basis, and
- Much more!

To learn more about SCAC's Corporate Partner Program, please visit:

SCCounties.org/corporate-partner-program

SCAC Staff Contact:

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(803)252-7255, Ext. 333

SCAC Corporate Partners



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For more information regarding SCAC's Corporate Partner Program, please visit sccounties.org/corporate-partner-program or contact Tish Anderson at tanderson@scac.sc. Participation as an SCAC Corporate Partner shall not imply, nor be considered or presented as, an endorsement by SCAC of any service or product provided by the company.



SOUTH CAROLINA
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES



SCCOUNTIES.ORG



TIMELY NEWS &
INFORMATION



ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS



COUNTY JOB POSTINGS

SCAC'S PURPOSE

- To promote more efficient county governments;
- To study, discuss, and recommend improvements in government;
- To investigate and provide a 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; and
- To promote legislation that supports efficient administration of local government in South Carolina.

CORE SERVICES



Advocacy



Research & Resources



Events & Education



Insurance Trusts



Programs



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ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**

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Cecil M. Thornton Jr.
Calhoun County
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Johnnie Wright Jr.
Orangeburg County
Council Chairman

What is the SCAC?

Local Leaders. Statewide Strength.®



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:

- **Counties Connect: A Legislative Action Day**—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 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 Conference; Counties Connect: A Legislative Action Day; and County Council Coalition Meeting in the fall.

SCAC also sponsors a number of webinars on a variety of topics for county officials and employees throughout the year at no charge to counties. Recordings of the webinars are made available in the Association's online educational library via SCCounties.org/webcasts-and-webinars.

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 competitive purchasing discounts through Forms and Supply, Inc.

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 posts *County COMPASS* newsletter 12 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 *Acts That Affect Counties* 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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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 26 members, including 19 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 of Trustees 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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Joseph R. Branham
*Chester County
Council Chairman*



VICE CHAIRMAN
Waymon Mumford
*Florence County
Council Member*

Risk Management Award Winners Showcase Safety, Dedication and Public Service

By Robert E. Benfield, ARM, AINS
SCAC Director of Insurance Services

Successfully putting out a two-day landfill fire with no injuries reported from the multiple county, state, volunteer and other agencies involved in extinguishing the blaze.

Implementing QR codes so the public can quickly report issues at county parks.

A safety awareness detective program prompting county employees to find clues in key areas with important protective equipment.

These were just some of the risk management and safety initiatives recognized at the 2023 SC Counties Insurance Trusts awards ceremony.



Annual Trusts Membership Meeting, Jan. 24, 2023

The awards are one way we say thank you to those hard-working problem solvers who are dedicated to keeping county residents and employees safe around the clock. Risk management often means working behind the scenes to mitigate potential losses and minimize the impact of unforeseen events, and we want to spotlight these outstanding public servants for their leadership and dedication.

Each year the awards recognize counties who have made significant achievements in their risk management and safety programs. Below are more details about the winners and their outstanding work.

(Continued on next page)



Charles T. Jennings
McCormick County
Council Chairman



Gary M. Mixon
Sumter County
Administrator



Debra B. Summers
Lexington County
Council Member



Cecil M. Thornton Jr.
Calhoun County
Council Member



**SECRETARY/
TREASURER**
Timothy C. Winslow
Executive Director, SCAC

Barnwell County

Most Improved County Award and Outstanding Safety Achievement Award

The Barnwell County Landfill caught fire on Sunday, May 15, 2022. Six local fire departments responded and began spreading water on the fire until 10 p.m. At 7 a.m. Monday the fire returned, fully involved, and crews soon started working to cover hot spots. At noon, responders from the Barnwell County Emergency Management, Buildings and Grounds, County Administration, State Emergency Management, the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority and Public Works Departments, Medshore EMS, Aiken County, Beaufort County, Dorchester County, Hampton County, and the SC Forestry Commission were heavily involved in working to cover hot spots. By 4 p.m., the fire was almost completely cured.

That evening, the Aiken County Civil Air Patrol provided assistance with drones to show hotspots that needed to be covered. Fire departments from the City of Barnwell, Barnwell Rural, Blackville, Elko, Long Branch, Red Oak, and Williston were all on site. There were two local contractors called in to help move dirt along with the Public Works and Solid Waste employees. Bulldozers and manpower were provided by the State Forestry Commission and other counties. A tent was set up for heat/sun exposure and water was available. Everyone was kept hydrated, and there was no heat exhaustion or burns reported. Thanks to collaboration and teamwork, no injuries of any type occurred.

Berkeley County

Sustained Excellence Award; Outstanding Safety Achievement Award

Berkeley County Government purchased wheel dollies for fleet garages to reduce the chance of strains and sprains when changing out large tires and wheel assemblies. The dollies are made of heavy-duty tubular steel and can tote up to 300 pounds. The bent arm handle design improves leverage making loads easier to lift while minimizing back strain. The dolly features onboard rollers that make stud-to-hole alignment a snap, and a spring-loaded kickstand that stabilizes the dolly for parking when not in use. The wheel dolly is designed to handle 24" to 48" tire and wheel assemblies with ease. The wheel dolly gives technicians the leverage they need to easily remove or install large car, truck, and SUV tire-and-wheel assemblies all while reducing the chances of injury.

Dorchester County

Sustained Excellence Award; Outstanding Achievement Award

Parks and Recreation posted QR codes at the four county parks so the public could scan with mobile devices and quickly report issues.

Georgetown County

Outstanding Safety Achievement Award

The Central Safety Committee developed a Safety Awareness Detective Program to increase safety awareness throughout the county. A total of 30 paper magnifying glasses were hidden throughout county departments with safety questions written on them. When an employee found the hidden magnifying glass, they would have to bring it to the risk manager and answer the safety question. If they answered it correctly, they won a gift card. Clues were hidden in strategic places so employees could be more aware of where fire extinguishers were located or areas where housekeeping issues would arise. Clues were also hidden on county vehicles to encourage vehicle walk around inspections. If a job required personal protective equipment, a clue would be hidden near the PPE to determine if employees were using the proper equipment for the task.

When an employee answered the safety question correctly, their picture was posted so other employees could learn from the answer. This project increased safety awareness throughout the county by allowing all departments to participate.

Greenwood County

Outstanding Safety Achievement Award

The Greenwood Fire Services division partnered with the County Public Works department to clear roads of debris during inclement weather such as severe thunderstorms, snow and ice storms or following tornadoes. The crews include two-to-four person teams that respond in a four-wheel drive vehicle and operate chain saws to clear roads of downed trees. The Public Works department responds with two crews equipped with a loader/backhoe and dump truck or trailer to load the debris and remove it from the roadside. The county equipped all personnel with full protective gear including chainsaw



YIKES!

Looks like *somebody* wants to know why the government needs her land.

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• PROGRAM MANAGEMENT • LAND ACQUISITION •
• RELOCATION • R/W COST ESTIMATES •

chaps during the past year.

Horry County
Sustained Excellence Award
Outstanding Safety Achievement Award

Horry County Public Works led a collaboration with Horry County Fire Rescue and Horry County Storm Water to build a new multi-department Permit Required Confined Space training program.

Kershaw County
Outstanding Safety Achievement Award

The KC Works Well Committee was established as a creative approach to workforce development and promoting the importance of health and wellbeing among all employees. The goal was to emphasize that members of a healthy workforce have improved quality of life; benefit from a lower risk of disease, illness, and injury; and are more productive at work with a greater likelihood of contributing to their communities.

Lancaster County
Sustained Excellence Award, Outstanding Safety Achievement Award

Lancaster County EMS hosted an active shooter class for police, fire, EMS, and Emergency Management. This allowed all agencies to come together, coordinate response plans, treatment, and transport of people involved in a potential active shooter event. Participants responded to a “hoax call” at a middle school. The cost of the class was offset by partnering with the State Law Enforcement Division and offering more than one class in the state.

Laurens County
Outstanding Safety Achievement Award

The Laurens County Judicial Complex Physical Security Plan was implemented including ID badges for all county employees, assigning required employees scan badges for secured areas/doors, installing 10 new first aid cabinets with contract servicing and four new AEDs in cabinets with signs, adding a large monitor for viewing cameras at the metal detector, installing 35 panic buttons throughout complex and in courtrooms that are monitored 24/7 and goes through E 9-1-1 if pulled. In addition, the county offered CPR/AED training to all employees, removed two trees blocking camera visibility in the parking lot, and replaced/installed lighting around exterior doors and on the building.

Colleton County
Sustained Excellence Award

S.C. Counties Property & Liability Trust Lag Time (Prompt Reporting) Awards

Sumter County	.69 Days
Saluda County	.73 Days

McCormick County	1.07 Days
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S.C. Counties Workers Compensation Trust Lag Time (Prompt Reporting) Awards

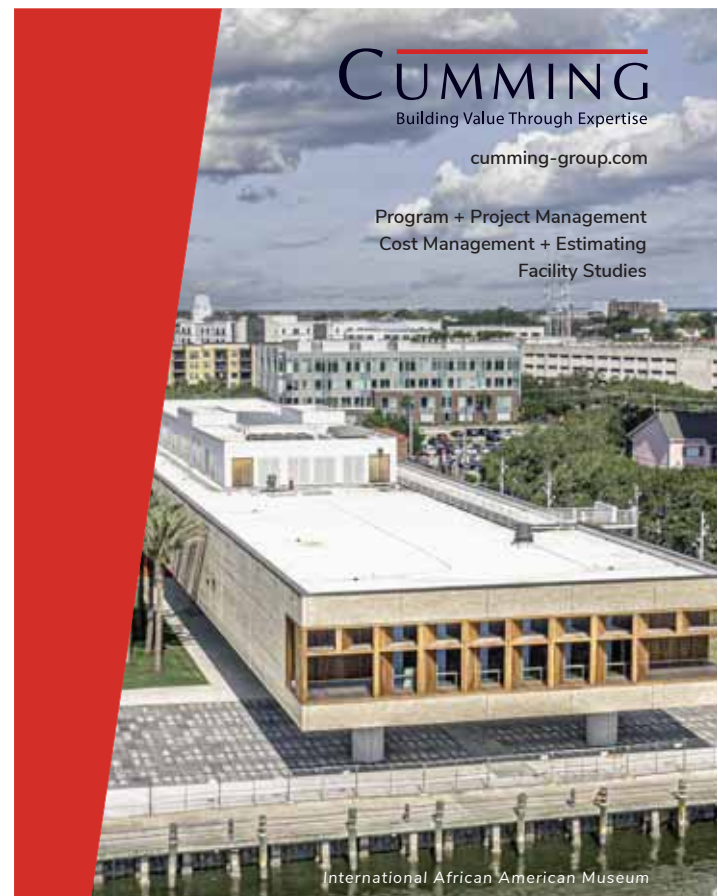
Fairfield County	.08 Days
Colleton County	.12 Days
Spartanburg County	.12 Days
Lancaster County	.26 Days

S.C. Counties Workers Compensation Trust Experience Modifier Awards

Spartanburg County	.55
Abbeville County	.62
Calhoun County	.64
Saluda County	.64

See more about the Risk Management Awards categories and criteria at www.sccounties.org/insurance-trust-programs.

See Photos of Risk Management Award Winners, Pp. 29 to 35



Risk Management Award Winners for 2022!



Accepting Barnwell County's Most Improved County Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) are (left to right) Debra Fickling, Business Manager/Human Resources; Jerry Creech, Council Chairman; Roger Riley, Emergency Management Director; and Wesley Gatling.



Accepting Berkeley County's Outstanding Safety Achievement Award and Sustained Excellence in Risk Management Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) is Josh Godin, Safety Superintendant (left).



Accepting Colleton County's Sustained Excellence in Risk Management Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) is George Welch, Risk Manager (left).

Accepting Georgetown County's Outstanding Safety Achievement Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) is Holley Causey, Risk Manager (left).





Accepting Dorchester County's Outstanding Safety Achievement Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) is (left to right) Daniel Prentice, Deputy County Administrator and Chief Financial Officer, and Nancy Johnson, Director of Risk Management (Center).



Accepting Greenwood County's Outstanding Safety Achievement Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) is Anita Baylor, Purchasing/Risk Manager (left).



Accepting Kershaw County's Outstanding Safety Achievement Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) is Barry Catoe, Risk Manager (left).



Accepting Horry County's Sustained Excellence in Risk Management Award and Outstanding Safety Achievement Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) is Shelly Moore, Risk Manager (left).



Accepting Lancaster County's Sustained Excellence in Risk Management Award and Outstanding Safety Achievement Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) is Ryan Whitaker, Risk Manager.



Accepting Laurens County's Outstanding Safety Achievement Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) is Wendy Alley, Risk Manager (right).



Accepting McCormick County's Third Place Prompt Reporting Award (Property & Liability Trust) is Crystal Barnes, Assistant to Administrator/Clerk to Council (left).



Accepting Saluda County's Second Place Prompt Reporting Award (Property & Liability Trust) is Hardee Horne, Risk Manager (left).



Accepting Lancaster County's Third Place Prompt Reporting Award (Property & Liability Trust) is Ryan Whitaker, Risk Manager (Left).

Accepting Sumter County's First Place Prompt Reporting Award (Property & Liability Trust) is (left to right) Rob Lybrand, Assistant Director, Emergency Management, and Donna Dew, Director, Emergency Management.



Accepting Spartanburg County's Second Place Prompt Reporting Award (Property & Liability Trust) is Robby Anders, Risk Manager (left).



Accepting Calhoun County's Second Runner Up Best Experience Modifier Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) is Brandy Roberson, Human Resources Director/Risk Manager (left).



Accepting Colleton County's Second Place Prompt Reporting Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) is George Welch, Risk Manager.



Accepting Saluda County's Second Runner Up Best Experience Modifier Award for 2022 (Workers' Compensation Trust) is Hardee Horne, Risk Manager (right).



Accepting Spartanburg County's Best Experience Modifier Award (Workers' Compensation Trust) is Robby Anders, Risk Manager (left).

“Mere color,
unspoiled by meaning,
and unallied with definite form,
can speak to the soul in a thousand different ways.”

~ Oscar Wilde



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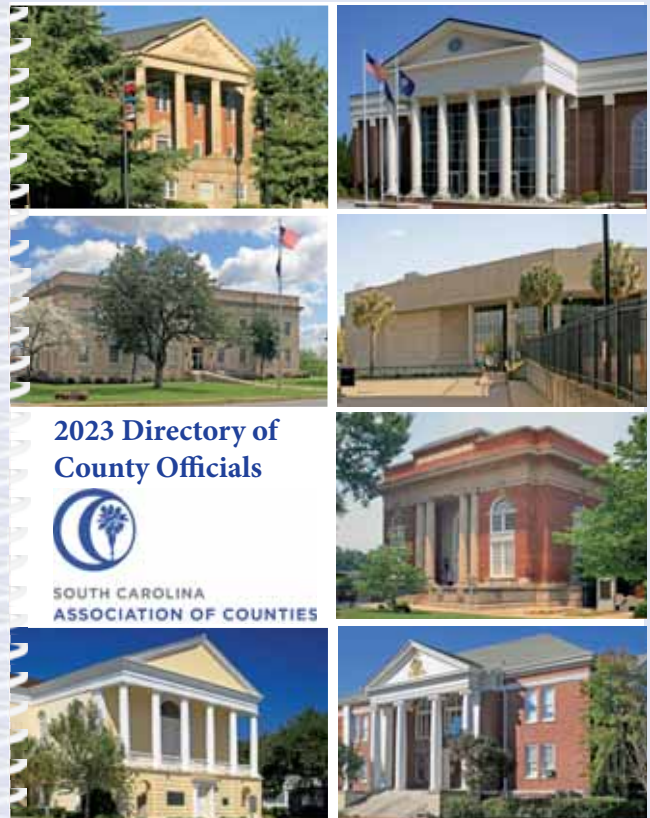
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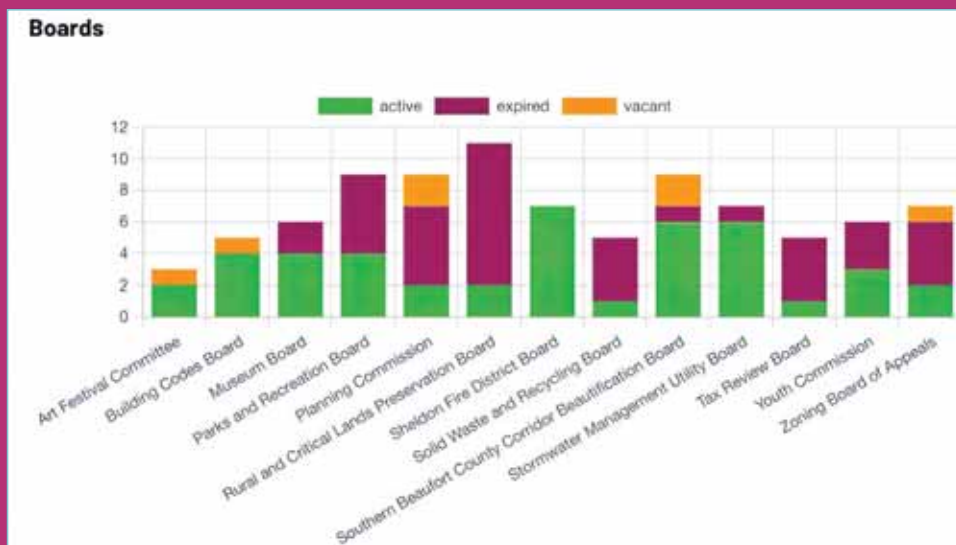
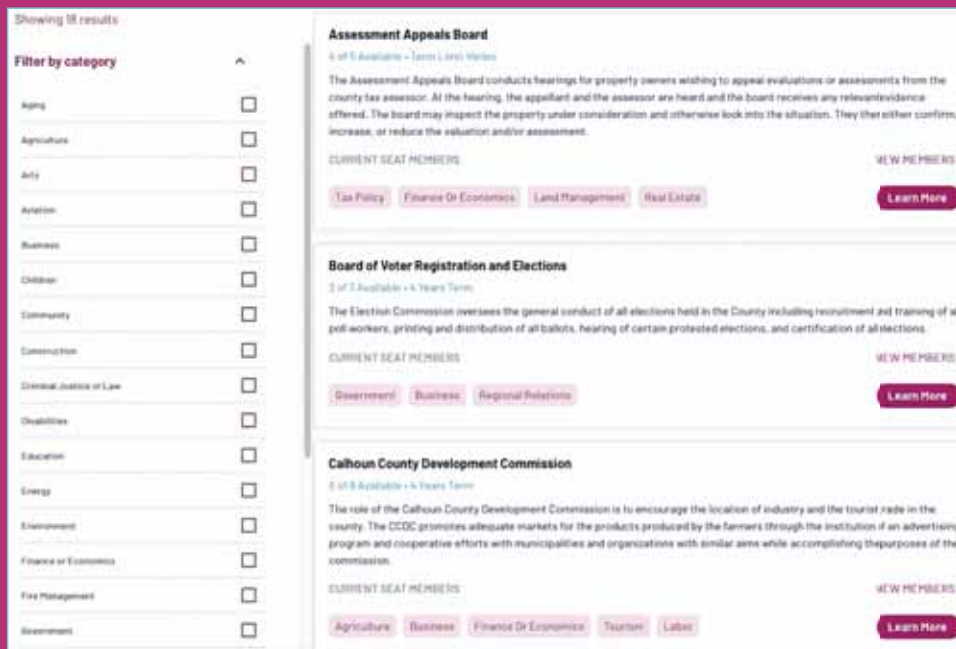
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A Roadside Guide to Hampton County

The County's Role in the American War for Independence

By Alexia Jones Helsley

Revolutionary Hampton County, Originally part of Colonial Granville County, later Beaufort District, has deep roots in the tumultuous history of the Carolina lowcountry. In 1878, the South Carolina General Assembly split antebellum Beaufort County and created a new county - Hampton County. In the Twentieth Century, the creation of Jasper and Allendale Counties reduced Hampton's territory. The county's name honors Confederate General Wade Hampton, III who also served not only as governor of South Carolina, but also, later in the United States Senate.

In 1779, Brigadier General Augustine Prevost brought the perils of revolution to Hampton County. His march across the Carolina lowcountry left a path of devastation in its wake. Augustine Prevost (1723-1786), a native of Geneva, Switzerland, enlisted in the 60th Regiment of Foot in 1756 and fought for the British in both the French and Indian War and the American Revolution.

By 1776, Prevost was stationed in St. Augustine. In 1778, Sir Henry Clinton ordered Brigadier General Prevost to invade Georgia. He arrived at Savannah in January 1779. Within a few months, the American commander, Major General Benjamin Lincoln, seeking a back-door approach to retake Savannah, led his Continental troops from South Carolina to Augusta, Georgia. Lincoln's move left only a small Patriot force in the state; so, Prevost determined to attack Charlestown.

On April 28, 1779, the British crossed the Savannah River and Prevost's march to Charlestown began. In early May, British troops passed through the edge of Hampton County. On May 11, Prevost's army reached Charlestown Neck. Nevertheless, with the timely arrival of Lincoln's army, Prevost began a long, slow retreat from Charlestown to Beaufort. His retreat was difficult as he faced supply issues as well as the challenges of transporting his army with cavalry and artillery across several rivers as well as St. Helena Sound. In addition, the amount of booty seized by the retreating army and the thousands of runaway slaves who joined Prevost seeking freedom greatly slowed the enterprise. The path of Prevost's march left not only looted plantations, but also burned homes, barns, and even Old Sheldon Church (the Parish Church of Prince William Parish). Nevertheless, by July 8th, Prevost had occupied Beaufort and Hampton's first brief brush with the invading British ended.



The next chapter came during the dark days of 1780 and lasted until the British finally withdrew from South Carolina in December 1782. During those years, several skirmishes and engagements occurred within the bounds of modern Hampton County.

McPherson's Plantation (March 14, 1780)

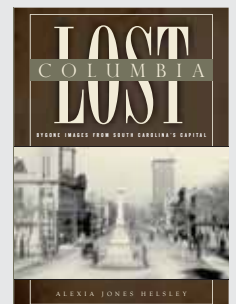
Isaac McPherson was reputedly a well-to-do planter with large land holdings. For example, an Isaac McPherson whose will was proved in 1787 owned plantations in Prince William and Saint Paul Parishes. In addition, according to records held by the SC Department of Archives and History, someone named Isaac McPherson had large tracts of land surveyed in Granville and Colleton Counties in the 1760s and 1770s, including several thousand acres on the Coosawhatchie River. In addition, an Isaac McPherson loaned over 4,000 pounds to the State of South Carolina in 1781 and also received indents from the state for 20 barrels of rice furnished and two horses impressed for state service during the War for American

(Continued on next page)

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.



Independence.

In March 1780, British troops pursuing a mounted Patriot force occupied a plantation belonging to an Isaac McPherson. During their time there, a skirmish occurred. But rather than a conflict with Patriot supporters, the skirmish pitted British troops under the command of Major Charles Cochran against Major Patrick Ferguson (who later died during the Battle of King's Mountain) and a force of Loyalists. Major Ferguson, according to J. D. Lewis, was slightly injured. A historical marker in McPhersonville commemorates this engagement.

Salkehatchie (March 17-20, 1780)

Shortly thereafter, Captain Abraham DePeyster and his Loyalists learned that Lt. Colonel James Ladson and men from the Colleton militia were scouting in the area. The scouts worked to block access to the Salketcher [Salkehatchie] Ferry and prevent the British crossing the river.

On March 18, DePeyster and his men reached the river, but Ladson's men had destroyed the bridge and occupied the other bank of the river. Lt. Colonel Banatre Tarleton's troops exchanged fire with the Patriots while other British sympathizers forded the river and attacked Ladson and his men from the rear. Both sides suffered casualties and it took two days for the British troops to cross the river.

Salkehatchie Bridge (April 5, 1781)


Crossing the river was also an issue in 1781. On April 5, in an effort to disrupt a Loyalist sanctuary, Colonel William Harden and his men encountered Captain Edward Fenwick with his troops near the Salkehatchie Bridge. The Loyalists prevailed, and one of Harden's men blamed Harden's poor leadership for the defeat.

Hudson's Ferry (July 27, 1781)

In July 1781, Colonel Isaac Shelby of North Carolina led a Patriot force that skirmished with an unidentified force of Georgia Loyalists near the ferry on the Savannah River. According to Roger Allen, Hudson's Ferry was located below Brier's Creek near Newington below Augusta. In 1779, Brigadier General Augustine Prevost established his headquarters near Hudson's Ferry.

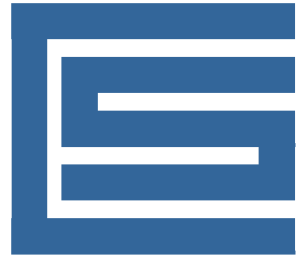
Saltketchers (May 25, 1782)

In the spring of 1782, there was an uneasy truce between a strong Loyalist contingent and Patriots along the Salkehatchie River. This agreement fell apart when the Patriots under the command of Captain William Goodwyn attempted to kidnap the Loyalist leader, Captain Tenison Cheshire. The plan failed.

So, while open hostilities ended in Hampton on an inconclusive note, the tide had turned in South Carolina. Nathanael Greene and his Continentals working with South Carolina Partisans such as Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter captured the British interior fortifications and forced the evacuations of Camden and Ninety-Six. On 14 December 1782, about two and a half years after their victorious entrance into Charlestown, the British with their Loyalists supporters finally left South Carolina's capital. 



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SCAC is pleased to partner with NACo to build strong county leaders. The [NACo High Performance Leadership Academy](#) is an online 12-week program that empowers frontline county government professionals with the leadership skills to deliver results for counties. The [NACo Enterprise Cybersecurity Leadership Academy](#) is similarly structured and geared for county employees dedicated to cybersecurity and IT.

NACo launched these programs in partnership with the team from the Professional Development Academy, including the late General Colin Powell, Dr. Marshall Goldsmith, and many other executives from both private industry and government agencies.

Over 1,600 counties have enrolled emerging and existing leaders since the launch of the program last year, with incredible feedback and results. In fact, the positive feedback and demand for this NACo program has been truly unprecedented.



The programs have proven relevant and practical for leaders and are convenient and non-disruptive to busy schedules. The 12 weeks of content are expertly facilitated online, and it takes about 4-5 hours per week for participants to fully engage in the program.

\$1,895 per enrollee for South Carolina counties. The retail price is \$2,995.

To enroll visit the [NACo High Performance Leadership Academy](#) and [NACo Enterprise Cybersecurity Leadership Academy](#) webpages at naco.org/skills. For questions and assistance in enrolling please contact Luke Afeman at lukea@pdaleadership.com, Professional Development Academy/NACo Leadership Academy.



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The Late General Colin Powell

"The commitment of time and energy towards this program served as an important reminder of the value of continued learning and professional development...for all levels of public servants/leaders. The High Performance Leadership Program completely reignited my passion and commitment to my career in local government service."

*Beth Goodale
Georgetown County (SC) Recreation
& Community Services Director*

"I think it would be helpful to all levels of leadership in the organization, but especially to mid-level managers that are seen as "rising stars"...I thought it was an excellent program."

*Clay Killian
Aiken County (SC) Administrator*

County Update

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
Chester	McCormick
Chesterfield	Newberry
Clarendon	Oconee
Colleton	Orangeburg
Darlington	Pickens
Dillon	Richland
Dorchester	Saluda
Edgefield	Spartanburg
Fairfield	Sumter
Florence	Union
Georgetown	Williamsburg
Greenville	York

Charleston County

● Charleston County has received about \$900,000 as part of a \$26 billion-dollar national opioid settlement, and plans to use the money to expand treatment and prevention programs.

● Neal Brothers Charleston, Inc. (Neal Brothers), a global logistics leader, announced on April 6 plans to expand its existing operations in Charleston County. The company's \$9.48 million investment is expected to create 10 new jobs in the first year. The company plans to expand its existing location by building a state-of-the-art, 100,000-square-foot facility at 4229 Domino Ave. in North Charleston.

● Interloop, an innovative software company, announced on March 9 plans to expand its existing operations at the Charleston Tech Center, 997 Morrison Dr. The company's \$100,000 investment is expected to create 32 new jobs over the next five years.

● Patten Seed Company, one of the largest turfgrass producers in the Southeast, announced plans on March 15 to relocate its corporate headquarters to Charleston County. The company's \$2.2 million investment is expected to create 40 new jobs.

Patten Seed Company will expand its

presence in South Carolina by relocating its corporate headquarters from Lakeland, Ga. to an existing facility at 22 Westedge Street in Charleston. The new headquarters will centralize the company's senior management team and create a marketing and technology hub. Operations are expected to be online by the first quarter of 2023.

● Charleston County's Public Safety Directorate hosted a Counterterrorism Threat Conference from Feb. 22 to 24 for more than 200 business and local and federal law enforcement leaders nationwide to discuss domestic terrorism, critical infrastructure threats, and terrorists' use of the internet. Keynote speakers included Charleston County Council Vice Chairwoman Jenny Costa Honeycutt, U.S. Representative Nancy Mace, and S.C. Law Enforcement Division Chief Mark Keel.

● Charleston County has been selected as the honoree for Distinguished Municipality for the 2023 Lowcountry Diversity Leadership Awards.

The award from the Charleston Regional
(Continued on next page)



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HAVE YOU EVER HEARD ABOUT...

- the person for whom Paris Mountain was named?
- the man who bought the town of Pleasantburg?
- the time when Greenville was the capital of South Carolina?

Historically, Greenville County owes much to its natural advantages of scenery, location and abundant water, but it has also benefited from its colorful characters, such as Richard Pearis, Vardry McBee and the Earle family. *Hidden History of Greenville County* details the personalities, places and events that have given Greenville its progressive, diverse environment. Join archivist and history professor Alexia Helsley as she explores some of these individuals and their contributions, as well as little-known events in the area and the ever-fascinating "Dark Corner." From mansions to murders, learn things about Greenville County history that you've never encountered before.

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Business Journal and the Riley Institute of Furman University recognizes outstanding Lowcountry individuals and organizations that make diversity, equity, and inclusion a strategic priority in policy and practice. The award recognizes a city, town, county, or governing body that has set itself apart with its focus on cultivating and supporting a diverse population both internally in its leadership such as boards, commissions, or administration and externally by creating opportunities for its residents to learn and grow together.

- Protego (USA), Inc., a global industrial equipment manufacturer, announced on June 2 plans to expand its Charleston County operations. The company's \$10.1 million investment is expected to create 39 new jobs.

The company, with current operations at 9561 Palmetto Commerce Parkway in North Charleston, plans to expand its existing facility and transition from assembling to manufacturing tank venting and explosion protection product lines. The expansion will also allow the company to implement production welding and computer numerical

control machining capabilities.

The expansion is expected to be complete by 2026.

The Coordinating Council for Economic Development awarded a \$50,000 Set-Aside grant to Charleston County to assist with the costs of building construction.

- Charleston County Government, Charleston County Public Library, and the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission have partnered to provide electric vehicle charging stations to the public. The collaboration is a pilot program that is partially grant funded.

Three chargers will be housed at the Public Service Building, located at 4045 Bridge View Dr., North Charleston, SC 29405, and one at each of the following locations: Bees Ferry West Ashley Library, 3035 Sanders Rd., Charleston, SC 29414; Baxter-Patrick James Island Library, 1858 S. Grimball Rd., Charleston, SC 29412; and Caw Caw Interpretive Center, 5200 Savannah Hwy., Ravenel, SC 29470.

- Ranger Design, a manufacturer and

provider of innovative fleet upfit solutions, announced plans on May 30 to establish its first South Carolina operations in Charleston County. The company's \$1.5 million investment is expected to create approximately 50 new jobs.

The new-commercial vehicle upfitting center, located at 9035-K Sightline Drive in North Charleston, will enable Ranger Design to better serve its current customers with extra warehousing capacity and allow the company to expand its footprint for fleet upfit solutions in commercial electric and gas-powered vehicles.

Operations are expected to be online by the summer of 2023.

- The Charleston County Board of Elections and Voter Registration's Partnerships at the Polls initiative was recently recognized with a national Clearinghouse Award. Also known as the "Clearies," the U.S. Election Assistance Commission presents the awards program annually to celebrate the hard work of election offices across the country. Charleston County was recognized in the

A more connected community is a better community.

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"Best Practices in Recruiting, Retaining, and Training Poll Workers" category for the Adopt a Polling Location and Day for Democracy programs.

- Ignite Digital Services, a leading digital technology solutions company, announced plans on May 24 to establish headquarters in Charleston County. The company's \$966,426 investment will create 135 new jobs.

The company, which is moving to 1505 King Street in Charleston, is leasing a facility for its new Charleston headquarters. The company currently operates in San Diego, C.A., Norfolk, Va., Washington, D.C., and New Orleans, La., but plans to expand across all locations, and most significantly, at its Charleston location.

Operations are expected to be complete by 2024.

- Charleston County leadership broke ground on May 16 on phase two of the Azalea Complex. County Council approved the purchase of about 3.8 acres on Headquarters Road in March of 2022 to build the facility.

"As our community continues to grow,

Charleston County Government also has to grow so we can meet the needs of our residents," said **Charleston County Council Chairman Herb Sass**. "Our public works, facilities staff, and equipment are currently spread out in several locations, and the new Azalea Complex will be more accessible and convenient for our staff, especially in emergencies."

- Charleston County Economic Development (CCED) recently released its inaugural economic impact study revealing its efforts contribute \$18 billion annually to the Charleston County economy, representing nearly 25 percent of the county's GDP. Providing data on jobs, capital investment and economic output, this analysis illustrates a comprehensive assessment of CCED's total economic impact on the county during its three decades of operation.

- Defense Engineering Services (DES), a governmental engineering company, announced plans on April 27 to expand its Charleston County operations. The company's \$2.5 million investment is expected

to create 45 new jobs.

Located at 6920 Weber Blvd., Suite 300 in North Charleston, DES' new 53,000-square-foot facility will accommodate manufacturing space for large scale projects and add manufacturing capabilities to its prototype and low-rate initial production shop.

The expansion will be complete in May 2023, and operations are already online.

Georgetown County

- Georgetown County Fire & EMS announced in May that **Robbie Williams** was promoted to Battalion Chief. Williams, a Georgetown native, joined the department as a volunteer in 1990. He was hired as a fulltime firefighter in 1993.

- **Sanda Carter**, an administrative assistant in the Building Department, was selected as Georgetown County's Employee of the Quarter. She has been employed with the county for 38 years.

- Georgetown County was named a Fire

(Continued on next page)



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Safe Community in May, thanks to the efforts of both Georgetown County Fire-EMS and Midway Fire-Rescue. The departments were recognized by Fire Safe South Carolina for efforts in 2022 to develop community risk reduction plans for their jurisdictions.

● As part of its celebration of National Public Works Week, the Georgetown County Department of Public Services recognized several of its outstanding employees during an event on May 25. **Seamen Linen** received

The Team Player Award, **Harley Walker** received the Leadership Award, and the entire Facilities Services Division received the Green Earth Award.

● Georgetown County announced in May that the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration had awarded a \$3.6 million grant to the Georgetown County Airport for infrastructure improvements to support business growth and job creation. The

grant will allow for site upgrades necessary for the development of two commercial hangars, including updated water and sewer lines, and a new taxiway as well as engineering design services. This EDA investment will be matched with \$881,548 in state and local funds and is expected to help generate \$8 million in private investment.

● The Georgetown County Emergency Management Division has been named

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the 2023 Agency of the Year by the S.C. Emergency Management Association. The announcement was made during the association's annual conference Feb. 20-24 in Charleston.

● Georgetown County Sheriff's Office Captain **Robert Sarvis** has earned the most prestigious award presented to an officer

who supports Special Olympics South Carolina. Sarvis received the Joseph Pellicci Keeper of the Flame Award in March at the Law Enforcement Torch Run Awards Luncheon. Sarvis, who has spearheaded the Sheriff's Office Polar Plunge for Special Olympics since its
(See County Update, P. 50)




**SOUTH CAROLINA
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**

Conference Calendar

2023

July 31 & Aug. 1	Institute of Government
Aug. 1-3	Annual Conference
	Wild Dunes, Isle of Palms
Sept. 21	Continuing Education Update for Risk Managers
	Wild Dunes, Isle of Palms
Oct. 18	Institute of Government
Oct. 19	Fall Advocacy Meeting
	Embassy Suites, Columbia
Nov. 17	S.C. Local Government Attorneys' Institute
	(USC Alumni Center)
Nov. 30 & Dec. 1	Legislative Conference
	AC Hotel, Greenville



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inception, helped turn the chilly day into one of the top fundraising events for Special Olympics South Carolina.

● **Nancy Silver**, Georgetown County purchasing officer, has achieved renewal of the Certified Procurement Professional designation from the National Institute of Government Purchasing. The renewal is good for three years and requires successful completion of the competency-based qualifications set forth by the NIGP Certification Commission. Silver was hired in the Georgetown County Purchasing Division in 2012 and promoted to Purchasing Officer in 2018.

● The Hurst Green Cross Award was recently presented to four Georgetown County Fire-EMS staff members: **Lt. Acey Taylor**, **Lt. Matthew Howell**, Firefighter **Dylon Stokes** and Firefighter **Ryan Lukac** in March. They received the award for their response to a wreck involving a school bus, including 30 passengers, and a small utility van, which had sustained heavy front end damage, that required the

driver to be extricated from the vehicle.

● **Brandon Ellis**, Georgetown County's Director of Emergency Services, was sworn in as the association's president at the S.C. Emergency Management Association's Annual Conference (Feb. 20-24). Ellis takes over leadership of the Association following the expired term of Past President **Kristy Burch** of Florence County Emergency Management. Ellis's term will run through the spring of 2025.

● Georgetown County recently received a \$25,000 Palmetto Pride grant that will help the county's Environmental Services Division remove litter from roads and other public areas by employing a part-time litter crew. The county's litter crew initiative began in 2021 with the aid of a \$15,000 local accommodations tax grant.

A \$25,000 Palmetto Pride grant the following year allowed the plan to be fully implemented, and this latest award will allow it to continue throughout this year with matching accommodations tax funds. The county's part-time litter crew is

dedicated to roadside cleanups, as well as increasing public awareness about the growing litter problem in Georgetown County. The litter crew removed more than 33 tons of litter from more than 660 miles of roadway throughout the county during 2022.

● **WingIts**, a specialty designer and manufacturer of bathroom accessories, fastening systems and Americans with Disabilities (ADA)-compliant products, held a ribbon-cutting ceremony February 15 at a new facility in the Georgetown County Business Center. The facility at 259 Technology Drive in Andrews serves as the company's primary distribution and fulfillment center for North America.

● Deputy Assessor **Tim Holt** was promoted to assessor on January 1. **Susan Edwards**, who has worked for the county for more than 50 years and served as assessor since 2003, will serve as deputy assessor.

● Georgetown County Council recognized **Zonda Cox** as the county's Volunteer

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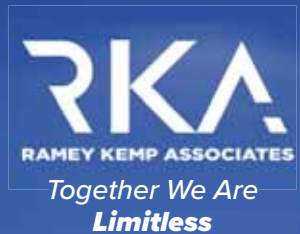


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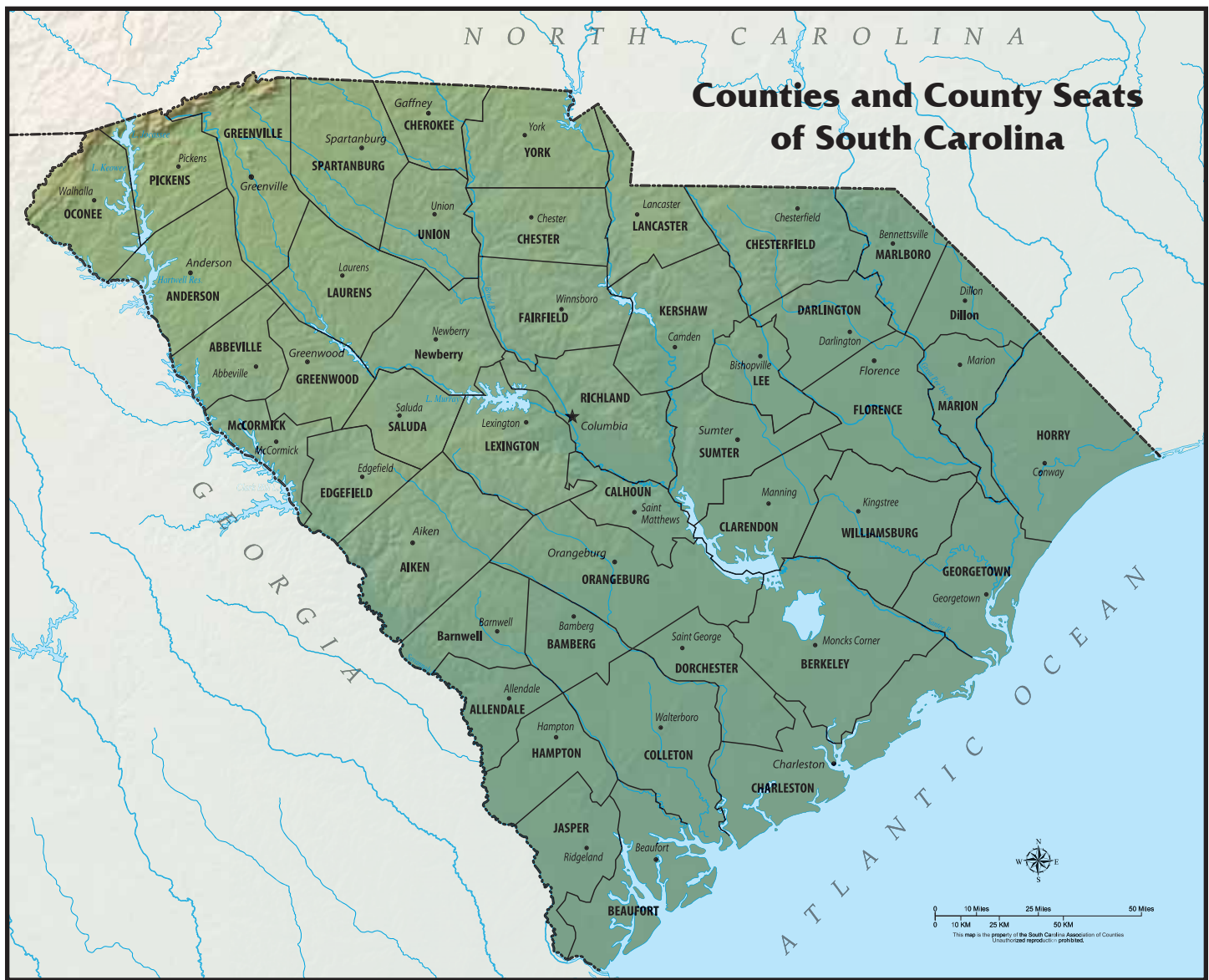
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County Update ... (Continued from P. 47)

of the Year for 2022 for the work she has done for Georgetown County Parks & Recreation and the Georgetown Baseball/Softball Booster Club. Cox was honored at council's January 24 meeting, with others from the Booster Club on hand to support her and offer thanks for her seven years of service.

- **Theresa Floyd** and **Ollie Lewis** were selected as Georgetown County's Employees of the Quarter for the last quarter of 2022. Floyd is the Clerk to County Council and has been with Georgetown County for 25 years. Lewis is administrative assistant to the County Administrator and has worked for the county for 28 years.

They were recognized by county council in February.

Horry County

- The Horry County Sheriff's Office 287(g) Program, in conjunction with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, held its annual Steering Committee Meeting on February 23. The 287(g) program allowed state and local law enforcement to enter into a partnership with ICE in order to receive delegated authority for immigration enforcement within their jurisdictions. The meeting, open to the public, was be

held at J. Reuben Long Detention Center in Conway.

Lexington County


- Students at River Bluff High School are using their artistic abilities to bring beauty to their campus and awareness to stormwater runoff through the Storm Drain Mural Project. In conjunction with the Lexington County Stormwater Consortium and the Congaree Riverkeeper, River Bluff High School students have the opportunity to paint murals onto their storm drains around their school's campus. These murals are meant to remind students to keep our storm drains clean

(Continued on next page)

and help protect our local waterways from pollution. The murals are being painted by Art Club students and students in the National Art Honor Society during the

2022-2023 school year.

● Lexington County Solid Waste Management and Sheriff's Department implemented a "Zero Tolerance for Litter" campaign during the month of April. The campaign is a joint initiative from the S.C. Litter Control Association, statewide law enforcement agencies and PalmettoPride to heighten awareness of the litter laws in South Carolina.

This monthlong public awareness event united law enforcement officers from municipalities to county and state agencies in a two-part mission: to enforce the state litter laws and to educate the public on the effects of litter. The campaign focused on making sure residents were properly covering and securing their loads (tires, trash bags, wood waste, etc.) while driving. The Zero Tolerance for Litter Campaign in Lexington County is partially funded by a \$6,000 Litter Enforcement Grant from PalmettoPride. 

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