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SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
WINTER 2022

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County Emergency
Management Directors
Discuss Emergency
Preparedness

County PIOs Explain
How Their Counties Are
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Season

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2021 J. Mitchell Graham
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Greenwood County Wins 2021 J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award

For Developing and Implementing a Soil Class Application

By W. Stuart Morgan III

Greenwood County won SCAC's prestigious 2021 J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award for developing and implementing a Soil Class Application for the Greenwood County Assessor's Office.

The new application addresses previous issues that the Assessor's Office faced when trying to accurately identify soil classifications on property designated for agricultural use. The application has already proven to be particularly helpful in Greenwood County where most of the acreage is agricultural, and much of it is designated for agricultural use.

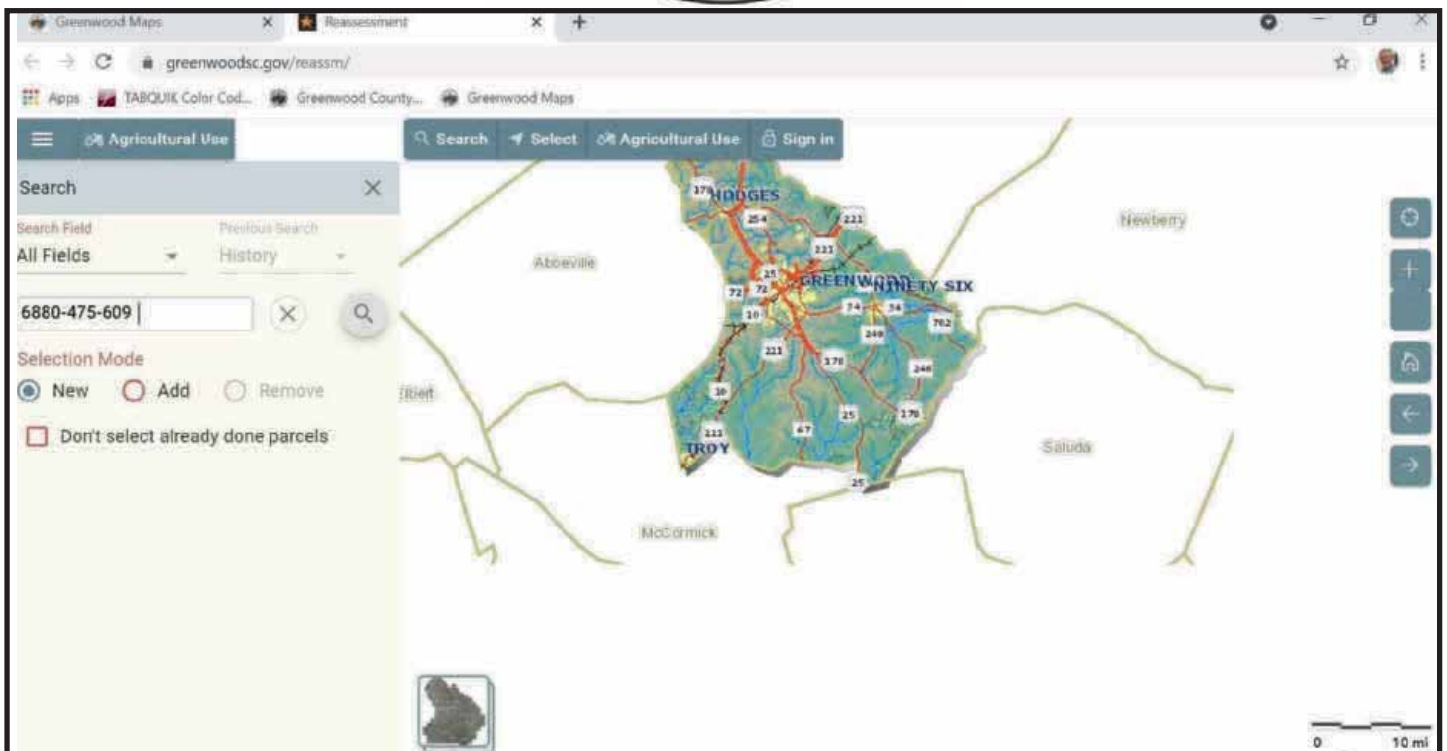
"Each acre or portion of an acre has a value per acre that must be calculated, based on values established by the state legislature, and the values change depending on soil class and type," explained William E. Tomes, Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable

Communities, College of Charleston, who headed the three-judge panel evaluating SCAC's 2021 J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award Competition. "The prior method of determining soil class had multiple steps involving both appraisers and administrative assistants,

using a combination of automated and manual processes. Through a collaborative effort of the county's GIS and Assessor's departments, a component of an in-house computer assisted mass appraisal software application was developed to quickly and accurately compute soil classification data of agricultural properties using GIS layers."

Many other counties contract with software vendors to use third-party Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) Software that might include similar soil classification applications as components.

(See *Greenwood County*, P. 4)



Screenshots (above and on the next page) show GIS layers of soil classification data provided by Greenwood County's Soil Class Application.

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Search Results (1 Parcels)

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Property Report

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\$293,500

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Crop

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Click a parcel on the map to define ag use area

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☐ 6% tax (10 or more owners)

Save

Search

Select

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Click a parcel on the map to define ag use area

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111.82 acres of GaC

73.49 acres of GaB

47.45 acres of HrB

29.85 acres of GaB

18.04 acres of GaB

5.04 acres of GaB

3.3 acres of HrC

2.16 acres of EnC

1.49 acres of EnB

0.86 acres of 2 Timber at \$192

288.99 acres of 3 Timber at \$141

3.65 acres of 4 Timber at \$102

293.5 Acres Ag Use: 41,285

Search

Select

Agricultural Use

Sign in

Greenwood County ... (Continued from P. 2)

But Greenwood County's assessor and IT director partnered over a 10-month period during 2019/2020 to design and create a unique Soil Class Application. The Assessor's Office then began using the application during the spring of 2020 for all agricultural exemption requests. Created entirely in-house without help from outside agencies or organizations, the application allows one person in the Assessor's Office to calculate the value of property per acre, and thus, calculate the agricultural use tax based on soil classifications within one hour instead of up to two days as required when the previous manual process was used.

"This project to create a Soil Class Application came out of a need," said V. Lynn Hammett, assessor/commercial appraiser, Greenwood County Assessor's Office. "Because the previous process was complicated and lengthy, we asked our county's IT Department to simplify the process so we could use technology in a more efficient way. The Soil Class Application is just one component of a larger project to create a computer-aided mass appraisal program that we want to implement for the next reassessment in 2025."

More than 75 percent of the acreage in Greenwood County is agricultural, and more than 4,800 parcels are designated for agricultural use. Multiple soil classes are typical on large tracts that exist in the county, and each soil class has an acreage amount that must be identified. Each soil class must also be classified as "crop" or "timber."

This explains why the county's new Soil Class Application is so significant. The county's GIS Department created the application, which eliminates the multiple steps that appraisers and administrative

assistants in the Assessor's Office previously had to take to calculate soil classes. The application allows the county's Assessor's Office to use soils classification polygons, and whenever necessary, manually-drawn polygons, that can be overlaid on layers to identify soil classes and the amount of acreage in each class, and calculate agricultural use tax areas.

Creating the Soil Class Application was a challenge, according to Hammett, because the expertise of the IT Department and Assessor's Office had to be combined to create and design the new application. The IT Department's programmer had to understand the process that staff members of the Assessor's Office were required to follow, and the math they were required to use to calculate soil classes or valuations. Keith Banks, Deputy Assessor, collaborated with the IT Department's programmers on behalf of the Assessor's Office to produce the Soil Class Application.

"We met often, asked questions, defined and updated processes, and conducted tests," Hammett said. "We learned from a good bit of trial and error when 'bugs' and discrepancies were discovered, and then adjusted the Soil Class Application prior to implementing it."

Greenwood County's IT Department and Assessor's Office created the Soil Class Application that the county needed despite the challenge, and won last year's J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award for the project to create the application.

"Taxpayers benefit from the consistency and fairness of our county's new Soil Class Application's calculations," Hammett said, "because, in a nutshell, using the application reduces inconsistencies due to human error."

Brad Barnell, IT director for Greenwood County GIS, said he

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appreciated the statewide recognition that the county's Soil Class Application project has received, but it was "just icing on the cake" to win SCAC's J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award last year.

"The previous process of calculating Greenwood County's agricultural use tax was time consuming, but new geographic information technology made it possible for the county's GIS Department to efficiently program the Soil Class Application for the Assessor's Office," he added. "The county's new application benefits county residents because the automated process ensures that agricultural properties are not taxed disproportionately as compared to residential and other classifications of real property. Using software to compute the tax value of property instead of manually calculating the value also greatly reduces the chance for errors and improves the fairness of the tax that's assessed."


Hammett admitted she was unaware of SCAC's J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award when she was hired as a commercial appraiser for Greenwood County in 2018. However, someone told her about the award at a staff meeting shortly after she was hired.

Hammett then met with Barnell, and they agreed to meet with Toby Chappell, the county manager, to explain how the county's new Soil Class Application worked. Chappell liked the application, and encouraged them to submit the new Soil Class Application project as an entry at SCAC's 2021 Memorial Awards Competition and COVID-19 Response and Resiliency Showcase, held on June 8 at S.C. Educational Television in Columbia.

The rest is history.

Greenwood County won its fourth J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award in 2021! The county previously won the award 1985, 1991 and

2007.

"Sometimes we don't realize how significant our work is until someone recognizes our achievement," Hammett said. "Our county's IT director, Brad Barnell, and deputy assessor, Keith Banks, and our county's prior assessor, Joseph Richey, who put this project in motion, deserve all the accolades for what they accomplished on behalf of Greenwood County and its taxpayers." 



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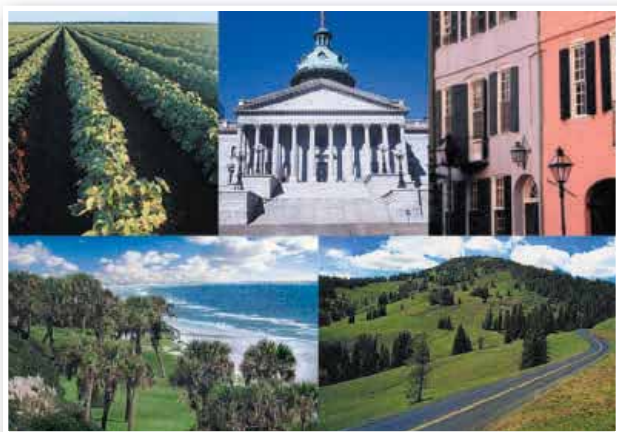


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County Emergency Management Directors Discuss Emergency Preparedness

By W. Stuart Morgan III

South Carolinians have experienced hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding and ice storms in recent years, and major earthquakes in the distant past. For them, the threat of terror attacks also remains real since the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

The federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (H.R.707) requires all localities to adopt a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, which identifies hazards, establishes mitigation goals and objectives, and identifies projects that will help prepare for and reduce the impacts of natural resources every five years.

So, the state's 46 counties should be prepared.

Recently, emergency management directors for Dorchester, Spartanburg and York counties described their county's state of emergency preparedness, and their responsibilities and experience handling disasters. They also explained how the Coronavirus Pandemic has affected their county's emergency preparedness, and how they felt about the threat of terror attacks.

All three emergency management directors offered some valuable advice.

Dorchester County

Mario Formisano, Emergency Management Director*

One thing is certain in this world of uncertainties—Job descriptions for county emergency management directors vary across the state.

Mario Formisano, Dorchester County's emergency management director, actually serves as the county's deputy administrator for public safety. He provides coordinated leadership to the consolidated dispatch center, emergency management department, emergency medical services, and fire

rescue. He also serves as liaison to the sheriff and coroner.

Formisano defined emergency management as:

"The responsibility of preparing a jurisdiction, such as a county,



for natural and man-made hazards—incidents that exceed the day to day single point emergency. It facilitates the emergency management cycle which includes preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. During large scale emergencies/disasters, and in some jurisdictions special events, emergency management leads the emergency operations center, which manages information, coordinates resources, and advises the executive and policy levels."

During the past 10 years, Dorchester County has experienced the Ice Storm of 2014, Thousand Year Flooding of 2015, Hurricane Matthew (2016), Tropical Storm Irma (2017), Hurricane Florence (2018) and Hurricane Dorian (2019). The county's emergency management staff has also participated in FEMA Emergency Management training exercises to prepare for earthquakes, an uncommon occurrence in South Carolina but one worth preparing for due to the state's seismic past.

One word, "continuity," best describes why Dorchester County has successfully maintained a high state of readiness for



*Mario Formisano's official position changed just before this issue of *County Focus Magazine* was completed. Formisano has served as Dorchester County deputy administrator since July, but became the county's permanent deputy administrator when the county hired Tom McNeal to serve as emergency management director.

emergency preparedness.

"Many of our public safety leaders as well as administration, public works, water and sewer, IT, mass care, and other support agencies have been with us for more than five years," Formisano explained. "So, we have a lot of knowledge and experience."

"Unfortunately, we've also had a number of disasters, which has allowed us to constantly identify strengths and areas for improvement," he added. "After each Emergency Operations Center's activation, we conduct an after-action review with all participating agencies. We identify lessons learned and corrective actions to mitigate issues in future response and recovery missions."

The Coronavirus Pandemic has affected Dorchester County's emergency preparedness efforts since early 2020, according to Formisano.

"The Coronavirus Pandemic has affected Dorchester County's emergency preparedness efforts, primarily in the decision-making process and interaction with other departments," he explained.

"Like other organizations, the current pandemic has made us more accustomed to making decisions with incomplete information and uncertainty," Formisano added. "I also believe it has created even stronger relationships across not only public safety, but across other departments like human resources, risk management, and/or attorney's office."

The threat of terror attacks has also complicated Dorchester County's emergency preparedness efforts since 2001.

"I do believe the threat of a terror attack exists, and will likely always be there," Formisano said. "What makes preparing for and responding to such threats much more complicated than a natural disaster is that these threats—whether it's an actual terror attack or an active assailant—are low in frequency but high in risk. Fortunately, they don't happen frequently."

"But they're complex, and there's an increased risk for response actions to go wrong or be inadequate," he added. "This is why it's important for local jurisdictions to have robust training and exercise programs that cross discipline and jurisdictional boundaries. In many cases, for example, discussion-based or tabletop exercises create a great space for public safety leaders to walk through prevention, response and recovery activities in an effort to increase readiness for such events that typically have limited to no notice. Tremendous strides have been made since the attack of 9/11/01 to improve intelligence and information sharing between local, state and national level agencies. Dorchester County would certainly assist other counties if called upon for resources."

Formisano offered some important advice on emergency preparedness for county leaders across the state:

"Get involved at all levels, especially at the executive and policy level. I would like to think that the pandemic has helped many local leaders better understand the role of emergency management, and hopefully, realize that for local emergency management programs to be successful, their involvement is critical. Be familiar with local emergency plans and procedures, and who is assigned to the emergency operations center. Synchronize emergency policy level actions with municipal leaders, and maintain lines of communication with them before, during, and after actions. Ask questions, lots of questions. Be engaged."

Spartanburg County

Doug Bryson, Emergency Management Director

Doug Bryson, Spartanburg County's emergency management director, describes his role as "very diverse," which is an understatement.

He's responsible for maintaining the county's Emergency Operations Plan and a multitude of other required plans; ensuring that the county's EOC is always prepared; researching and applying for appropriate grants; overseeing the county's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program; and chairing the county's Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC).

Bryson is also responsible for maintaining the county's 24/7 on-call duty officer roster; building and maintaining relationships with all community partners; serving as a liaison to municipal, county, state, regional and federal emergency agencies; overseeing the county's social media platforms; keeping the county's chief administrative officer and county council members informed on the county's state of readiness, grant opportunities and updating county leadership during and after significant events; and coordinating training exercises and logistics countywide.



There's more.

He's the primary media point of contact for the county's emergency management department, and handles the majority of public speaking engagements, including those for the county citizen's academy.

Prevention, preparedness, mitigation, responses and recovery are the five principles of emergency management, according to Bryson.

"Our Office of Emergency Management works to identify and analyze the hazards that may face Spartanburg County, and to develop contingency plans for each hazard," he said. "The plans are regularly tested, refined and tested again, all with the goal of protecting or saving lives and protecting property. Another key element of emergency management is supporting first responders, primarily with resources that they may not have readily available."

During the past 10 years, Spartanburg County has experienced four devastating tornadoes. Three ripped across the county during October of 2017, and one tore across the county in February of 2020. The county has also experienced flooding and winter storms.

"Our emergency management program subscribes to the all-hazards preparedness doctrine," Bryson said. "This means we are as prepared as we plan/prepare for every possible hazard that could occur in our county—both natural and man-made events, including civil unrest and terror attacks, homegrown and domestic. I believe that terror threats against the United States continue to be a very real possibility, actually even more so now than after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001."

Because Spartanburg County, like many other areas across the state and country, experienced incidents of civil unrest during 2020, he believes Spartanburg County is much more likely to experience

(Continued on next page)

incidents of homegrown or domestic terrorism than attacks from foreign terrorists.

“We experienced civil unrest last year, the likes of which most of us had never seen before,” Bryson said. “We worked closely with our law enforcement, EMS and fire partners during these events to ensure they had the resources and support they needed to protect lives and property. We’re continuing to work with our local, county, state and federal partners to ensure we are prepared for similar events in the future.”

The Coronavirus Pandemic has affected Spartanburg County’s emergency preparedness efforts, especially the way the department operates, according to Bryson.

“Obviously, the pandemic has altered the way we all do business—especially in the public safety and health care professions,” he explained. “In April of 2020, the entire Upstate experienced numerous severe weather events, many during the overnight hours, which led to us activating our EOC.

“Due to the pandemic, we were not able to fully staff the EOC, and transitioned to a virtual EOC platform that worked well for us,” Bryson added. “We continue to utilize this format. Our operations, along with all of the county’s safety partners, are also much more aware of protocols dealing with personal protective equipment (PPE) during responses to emergencies as well as routine calls for service.”

Spartanburg County has a unique public outreach/education program that includes a robust social media presence, public engagements and one of the premiere CERT programs in the Southeast. The CERT program, which has trained more than 1,600 citizens since 2005, includes a core group of almost 100 volunteers who are vetted to respond to emergencies/disasters to augment emergency management staff.

The program is comprised of the six operational divisions:

- Support Services/Rehabilitation
- Search and Rescue
- Sheltering
- Disaster Animal Responses
- EOC Response
- Emergency Communications and Debris Services.

“The CERT program gives the average citizen an opportunity to receive hands-on personal emergency preparedness training,” Bryson said. “The program offers them advanced-level courses and the ability to join one of the six divisions.”

He offered some advice on emergency preparedness for county leaders across the state:

“I cannot stress the importance of building and maintaining relationships with your county partners, be it in schools, healthcare, private business/industry, nonprofit agencies, community service organizations, utilities, public safety agencies, other government entities, media and of course the citizens in general. All disasters start and end locally, which means at some point after a disaster, the federal resources such as FEMA will be leaving, and you will be left to continue the recovery process with your community partners. Having strong relationships with these partners BEFORE an event is paramount and will pay dividends in the long run.”

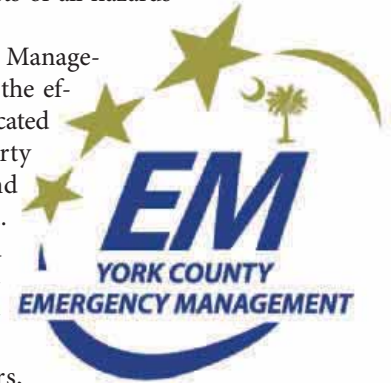
York County

Chuck Haynes, Emergency Management Director

Chuck Haynes provided another example of how much the roles of emergency management directors vary when he described his role as York County’s emergency management director.

Haynes said his role was simply to direct York County’s comprehensive emergency management program, which strives to minimize impacts and recover from effects of all hazards that threaten the county.

“Our county’s Emergency Management Department coordinates the efforts of the many partners dedicated to protecting lives and property during major emergencies and disasters,” Haynes explained. “These efforts include hazard mitigation, planning and preparedness, response, and recovery programs.”



During the past 10 years, York County has experienced severe weather—including tornadoes, flooding and extreme temperatures, a water infrastructure failure, large fires and several multiple casualty/fatality accidents. Although the county has not experienced any of the disasters that counties in eastern areas of the state have, the county’s Emergency Management Department continues to prepare for the same types of disasters, and to be capable of responding to all threats.

Haynes simplified his job description when he described his responsibilities as York County’s emergency management director.

But his responsibilities are not so simple.

York County must also be prepared to manage a robust radiological preparedness program because so many residents live in a densely populated area near a nuclear power plant, according to Haynes.

“Hundreds of responders are trained, thousands of pieces of equipment are maintained, and plans are written and coordinated each year on the many aspects of the program,” Haynes explained. “Neighboring counties in both South Carolina and North Carolina, along with both state governments, provide tremendous support to ensure the safety of York County citizens and visitors.

York County, like other South Carolina counties, always helps neighboring counties when they suffer disasters, including those that occur in other states. Whenever necessary, the county provides fire and rescue, EMS, law enforcement, communications, and emergency management resources.

“Our county continues to expand and improve capabilities in order to be prepared for future emergencies, including natural and technological hazards,” Haynes said. “Although natural hazards in York County remain the same, the population of our county has grown greatly as technological challenges continually change. We continue to focus on our department’s capacity to deliver services to more people, and on flexing our capability to meet new threats to keep York County prepared.

“Unfortunately, threats from human actors must continue to be considered in the emergency management program,” he added. “Consequences management from terroristic actions to single actors

wishing to cause harm remain a core function. Cyberattacks remain a real and constant threat that must be managed. Our county continues to prepare for all hazards, and if necessary, we'll respond to help other counties whenever needed."

Haynes said the Coronavirus Pandemic has affected York County just as it has other South Carolina counties, but he said it had actually strengthened his county's ability to handle emergencies.

"Through the efforts of many, remote working and virtual meetings," he explained, "we have had to realize and practice our county's emergency procurement, disaster logistics, continuity measures in both physical and human resources and other abilities."

As succinctly as Haynes described his responsibility as York County's emergency management director, he offered this advice county leaders across South Carolina:

"Simply support your county's emergency management program and the professionals dedicated to protecting lives and property."



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With ARPA Funding, Counties Should Partner in Critical Water, Sewer and Stormwater Infrastructure Projects

By Liz Rosinski and Kendra Wilkerson
South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority

With passage of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) last spring, South Carolina counties now have access to funds that can lay the foundation for a strong recovery from the pandemic. One of the primary ways that counties may invest those dollars is in critical water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure projects.

Why is such infrastructure critical? Much of the current water and sewer infrastructure is old and outdated and lacks the capacity to serve residents and businesses. Now is the time to make investments that will modernize and upgrade water and sewer infrastructure, leading to future success for all South Carolina counties.

By cooperating with the municipalities and other utilities that provide residents and businesses access to water and wastewater services, counties can play a crucial leadership role in these investments. Coordination among local governments is key to directing this funding to the highest-impact projects, which are often large and can benefit multiple jurisdictions through careful planning.

In addition to the local fiscal recovery funds directly allocated to counties and local governments by the American Rescue Plan Act, the state of South Carolina will receive \$2.5 billion in state fiscal recovery funds that can also be used on water infrastructure projects. There are still many details to be settled by the South Carolina General Assembly in terms of how much money will be dedicated to this purpose, what types of projects will be eligible and what the timeline will be. But we can be certain that this will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make transformational impacts on the infrastructure that provides critical water, sewer and stormwater services to residents across South Carolina.

What does that mean for your county? How do you prepare to take advantage of opportunities while you are waiting on more information? The first step—which you should start now—is planning. The South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) is encouraging counties to meet with their water and sewer providers, which may be

local cities, towns, special purpose districts or not-for-profit utilities. Counties can offer guidance and assistance in identifying the needs of the community—whether it is to encourage regionalization, address public health issues or support economic development. By partnering with these utility service providers, counties can be part of the process

as capital improvement plans are developed that prioritize funding needs.

As counties and providers work together, it is important

to think about how grant-funded improvements will be maintained and upgraded over time. Consider large, transformational projects that will address critical long-term needs or encourage economic opportunities. Be sure that for each identified project, there are up-to-date cost estimates, timelines and maps that reflect current pricing, potential material delays and any necessary right of way or easement acquisition. You should also evaluate additional sources and amounts of funding that can supplement grants. Even if matching funds are not required, leveraging of additional funds—including the county's allocation of local fiscal recovery funds—demonstrates local commitment to the project and multiplies the impact of the grant dollars.

As an agency that finances water, sewer and stormwater projects, RIA has been closely following news of this federal funding that is

on its way to our local communities so that we can be informed and prepared together. The General Assembly is expected to determine how these funds will be allocated in the next few months.

RIA is here to help you make the most of any


federal funds available to you. As you think about projects that could be eligible for ARPA funding—either local or state fiscal recovery funds—it may be helpful to learn more about the federal legislation. ARPA-funded projects are subject to the eligibility requirements established for the State Revolving Fund (SRF) programs. These are detailed on the EPA's web pages for the two programs: drinking water (epa.gov/dwsrf) and clean water (epa.gov/cwsrf), which addresses both sewer and stormwater. It is important to note that drinking water projects



that are solely for growth are ineligible under these guidelines. Sewer and stormwater projects focused on growth, however, are allowed.

ARPA also establishes an important deadline: projects must be completed no later than December 2026. It is vital to establish realistic project timelines that allow for delays in order to meet this deadline. It may not be possible to complete some of the largest, most complex projects in that timeframe. The U.S. Department of the Treasury is administering the funds and its website is the primary source for official information and regulations. Other organizations, such as the Environmental Finance Center at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, have published helpful information on their websites. If you have trouble finding information you need, contact RIA staff who can direct you to the appropriate resources.

Separate from ARPA, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (signed this past fall) will significantly increase the funding for the SRF programs. It is estimated that the funding increase to South Carolina's SRF programs could be more than \$100 million per year for five years.

With additional infrastructure funding on the horizon, counties have an opportunity to partner with their municipalities and other utilities to make long-overdue investments in water, sewer and storm drainage. Please monitor ria.sc.gov for updates, and do not hesitate to contact us at (803) 737-0390 or info@ria.sc.gov with any questions. Together, we can make the necessary investments to transform our state's critical infrastructure and continue to protect the health of our residents and quality of our environment for years to come. 

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NEW OPPORTUNITIES ...

The South Carolina Association of Counties (SCAC) offers a NEW 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. It is never too late to join the 40 other companies that made the investment during the inaugural year, 2021.

ACCESS ...

If you are looking for ways to build and strengthen relationships with county governments, this new 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 — Mid-Year Conference in February, Annual Conference in August, and County Council Coalition Fall Meeting in October. In addition, 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 at SCAC's Annual Conference available to partners only.
- 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
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To learn more about SCAC's Corporate Partner Program, please visit:

SCCounties.org/corporate-partner-program

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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.

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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:

- **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 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 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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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.

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Splash Pad or Liability Pad?

By Van Henson, CPM
SCAC Risk Manager

Splash pads have become a popular addition to parks and recreation offerings across the country. They can provide a sensory rich environment for children as well as a fun and exciting way to stay active and cool off during the hot summer months. However, they do come with challenges related to minimizing your liability risk exposures. Many of these can be successfully mitigated through proper preplanning and design. This article will consider a few of the most common issues regarding surfaces, sanitation and water sources.

The most common surface is concrete. The obvious hazards associated with concrete surfaces are falls that result in abrasions, contusions and broken bones. Concrete surfaces are also expensive to properly maintain and repair without creating more hazards. You can't just patch the surface if it becomes damaged or fill in cracks. Believe it or not, concrete can also be difficult to clean and deter algae growth. Poured-in-place resilient rubber surfaces may be a better option. Resilient rubber surfaces are attractive, clean, smooth, a safe play surface for all ages, handicap accessible and require minimum maintenance over its life span.

Sanitation and water sources are also a concern for operators and

must be approached diligently. The surface type along with the water source will dictate your sanitation approach. A properly installed resilient rubber surface normally only requires a monthly wash and rinse of the surface with a sanitizer. Concrete will likely result in more frequent cleanings with multiple cleaners. Another major step to prevent

the growth of bacteria and algae is to ensure that you have proper drainage to prevent the pooling of water on the play surfaces and edges. Preventing storm water and debris from running onto the play surface from adjacent areas is also a must. Your two water source choices are recirculation or fresh water. There are pros and cons to both, but fresh water may be your best choice.

Recirculation can more easily control long term algae and bacteria growth while also minimizing the daily amount of water needed to operate, but it's costly to install and maintain. It requires having fully trained and certified staff to constantly monitor the water quality, regulate chemicals or maintain your UV sanitation systems. The use of chemicals may require special certifications, licenses, equipment, personal protective equipment for your employees and pose a potential hazard for chemical burns to

(Continued on next page)



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children. This type of system comes with a high monthly operating cost. A fresh water source (non-recirculating) option only requires that proper drainage is created and maintained. This option does not require daily chemical applications and monitoring, as the water being used is potable and not being reused. Your only costs are the water and routine sanitation of surfaces. You can minimize the water usage by installing manual timers so the water is not constantly running throughout the day. It also comes with a lower construction price tag since you're not installing expensive water sanitation equipment. Also keep in mind who your primary users are. A lot of soiled diapers and clothing are present daily! Young children will also view a stream of water emitting from fixtures as something fun to place their mouth over or squat and hover over.

Overall, splash pads can be a great addition to a county's recreation resources for residents, but must be carefully researched and planned. Site selection, extensive construction preplanning, choosing an experienced and qualified contractor and being prepared to pay for ongoing annual maintenance costs are absolutely critical in determining if this is a project your county is willing to undertake. Your risk management team at the S.C. Association of Counties is always available to assist you in the evaluation and guidance of new and existing projects. Contact Robert Benfield at RBenfield@scac.sc or Van Henson at VHenson@scac.sc or call (803) 252-7255. 

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County PIOs Explain How Their Counties Are Planning for Hurricane Season

Hurricane season officially runs from June 1 to November 30, and hurricanes and tropical storms threaten counties across South Carolina every year. Twenty-one named storms, seven hurricanes and four major hurricanes swept across the state during the 2021 Atlantic hurricane season.

All counties can sustain damage due to the high winds, heavy rains and tornadoes (cyclones).

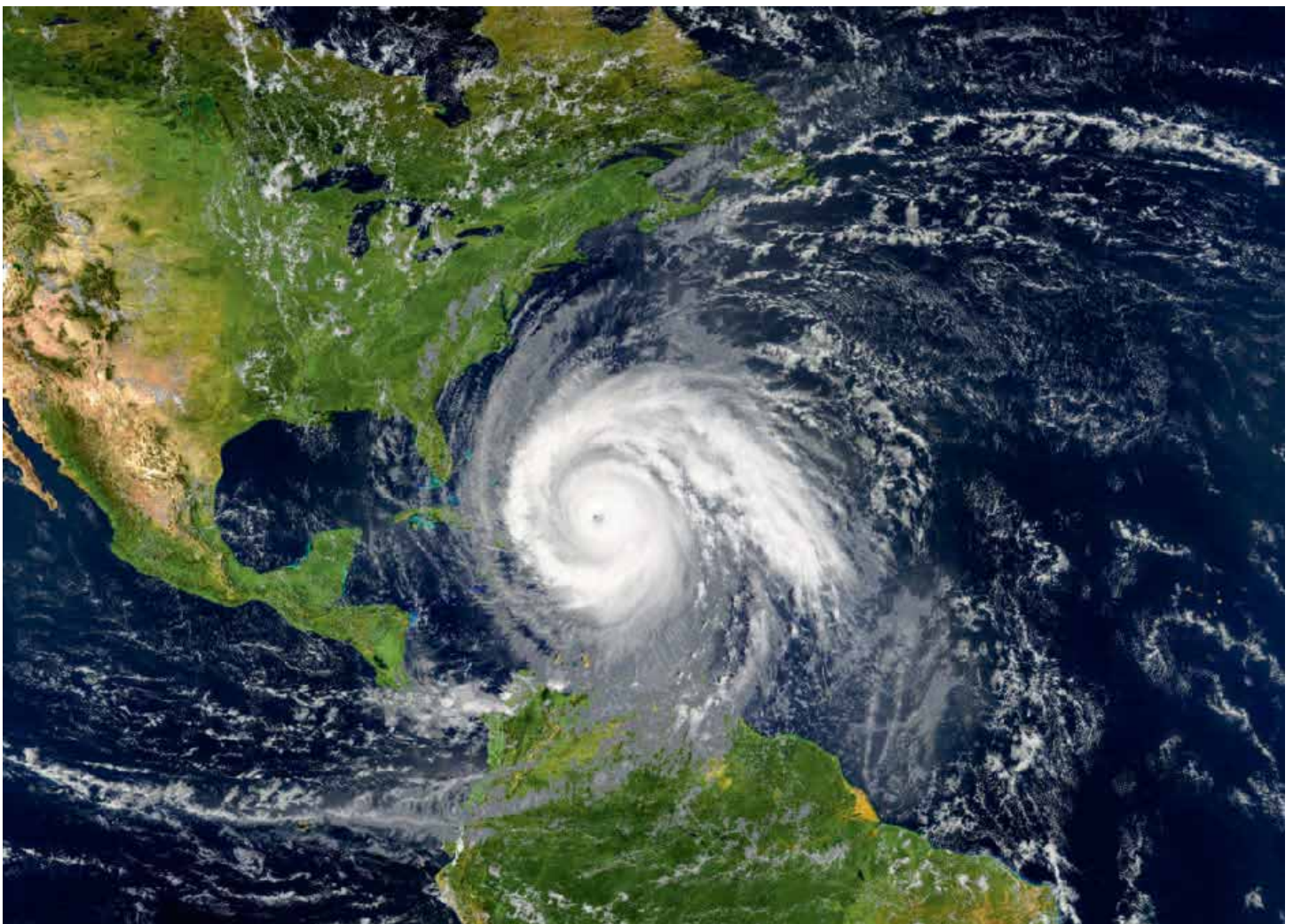
But four counties bordering the Atlantic Ocean—Horry, Georgetown, Charleston and Beaufort—are particularly vulnerable to damage due to storm surges when hurricanes and tropical storms make their

landfalls along the coast. So, public information officers for these four counties were asked to explain how their counties were preparing for this year's upcoming hurricane season.

HORRY COUNTY

By Thomas Bell, Public Information Officer

Horry County is no stranger to hurricanes. This season was the first one in seven years where Horry County did not have to activate the county's emergency operations center for a tropical system (as of



writing this piece).

Horry County Emergency Management stands operationally ready at all times, but operates in a heightened state of preparedness starting in May as hurricane season approaches. Horry Emergency Management staff begins checking with partners within the county's municipalities, volunteer groups and state agencies to ensure everyone is on the same page for the season.

These pre-season touchpoints are critical to update partners about any logistical or operational changes. This can include changes to emergency operations functions, sheltering operations or if any new

staff need to be introduced to the appropriate contacts. The goal is to minimize any potential disruptions, questions or issues before Horry County is under threat from a tropical system.

At the same time all of this pre-season activity is occurring for Horry County Emergency Management, through the Horry County Public Information Department,

messaging on preparing for tropical threats is amplified both on social media and at in-person, educational presentations. The department is a consolidated structure of administrative, public safety, infrastructure and regulation communicators working together daily so when a tropical system is threatening Horry County, establishing a joint information center takes less time. The Horry County Public Information Department also takes inventory of its pre-scripted messaging and graphics to ensure everything is ready for quick dissemination as needed.

When it comes to specific plans for hurricanes, Horry County Emergency Management leans on past storm experiences, but recognizes that each storm is different. The department relies on its partners in and outside the county to coordinate and provide support, but also on the residents and visitors to follow directions of public safety officials and make preparations for incoming storms.

Horry County Emergency Management and Horry County Public Information work year-round to provide proper preparedness information so residents and visitors know what they need to do when a storm threatens the county.

With good communication, strong partnerships and experienced staff, Horry County stands ready for all hazards. Knowing the threat of a hurricane is the same for the county every year, regardless of how many storms are predicted in a season, keeps the county on standby to respond and recover as best it can.

In 2022, the county's capabilities for responding to tropical threats will be enhanced by the new Horry County Operations and Communications Center where the Horry County Emergency Operations Center and 911 call center will be housed.

Horry County was fortunate during the past hurricane season, but now it's time to focus on preparing for next year.

GEORGETOWN COUNTY

By Jackie Broach, Public Information Officer

The first day of Hurricane Season on June 1 seems like a long time away. But Georgetown County is already getting ready.

"We start in January," said Brandon Ellis, Georgetown County's director of Emergency Services and Emergency Management. "The season lasts six months, but hurricane preparedness is really a year-round operation for us. There isn't any down time."

The cycle begins at the start of the year with an annual review of the county's emergency operations plan, along with supporting plans. During this process, the county seeks feedback from supporting agencies that can be incorporated to any plan updates.

Then come coordination meetings with the S.C. Emergency Management Division and other agencies that assist the county during disasters.

These groups all work together to ensure sheltering and transportation needs will be met, evacuation procedures are up to date and solidified, and that there are no gaps in planning when the next hurricane approaches.

"We always know it's a 'when' and not an 'if.' That just comes with living on the coast," Ellis said. "You know eventually you're going to get hit with a devastating storm. It could be 10 years from now, or it could be just around the corner. So, you always have to be ready and plan like it's happening tomorrow."

As hurricane season draws closer, Emergency Management begins public outreach campaigns. Georgetown County introduced a Build-a-Bucket campaign in 2021 to help residents build hurricane kits. These outreach events can be a refresher for those who have resided on the coast for many years.

But in an area with a high population of retirees and transplants, the campaigns can be the first taste for some folks of the threats that come with living in a coastal county. Many residents have never been through a major hurricane before. The county has to find ways annually to get new residents and veteran residents alike to take the threats of hurricane season seriously. It's also a hard task to get the public to stop equating the overall threat posed by a storm with wind speed. Even a Category 1 Hurricane or a tropical storm can cause major devastation through flooding.

"It's not all about wind," Ellis said. "That's the main misconception people have—they just focus on the wind. There are other things you have to look at. Hurricane Joaquin, which brought major flooding to Georgetown County in 2015, is an excellent example."

Before the season starts, the county also has to have "refresher training" for staff in the Emergency Operations Center, as well as individual planning workshops with municipalities, communities and first response agencies, such as the Sheriff's Office and Fire-EMS departments.

When the season actually begins, it is a continuous process of not

(Continued on next page)



only monitoring the Atlantic for tropical activity, but also continuing to review plans while still making sure the county is prepared for any other disaster or emergency that may arise.

"Then it's over and we start all over again," Ellis said.

CHARLESTON COUNTY

By Kelsey Barlow, Public Information Officer, and
Taylor Green, Communications Coordinator

Charleston County's Public Information Office knows it is never too early to begin preparing for hurricane season. Our office begins working with the county's Emergency Management Department on preparedness campaigns each year in April.

By the time Atlantic hurricane season begins on June 1, our Public Information Office has already started sharing information

with residents via social media (Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor, and Instagram) and the county's website. Our office encourages the public to have a hurricane plan in place before the first storm is named.

Charleston County campaigns include preparedness videos, links to our hurricane guide, and connecting local media

with Emergency Management personnel.

The Lowcountry is now home to many who have never experienced a hurricane, so we make sure our annual campaigns include all aspects of hurricane preparedness. This includes reviewing evacuation zones and routes, preparing homes for a storm, building an emergency kit, and knowing where to find a local hurricane shelter.

Each year, the county holds a full-scale exercise in our Emergency Operations Center at the beginning of hurricane season, and the PIO invites the media to cover the drill. This way the public can see how seriously the county prepares for hurricanes.

Once a storm threatens the coast, our Public Information Office begins sharing updates with storm related information through news releases, social media, and charlestoncounty.org.

We work closely with Dorchester and Berkeley Counties, local municipalities, and law enforcement to give joint news conferences with the media. The county holds daily news conferences about the threatening storm until it is unsafe to travel to the Emergency Operations Center.

The Public Information Office then utilizes our social media outlets, radio partners, and Everbridge to share pertinent information with the community. Everbridge is a mass notification system used to get important information to residents who do not have social media or have lost their internet connection during the storm.

The county also provides a phone number connecting residents to a Citizen Information Line. Staff uses the line to disseminate important information and control rumors. All information is distributed in Spanish, and a deaf interpreter is present at all news conferences.

Fortunately, Charleston County has not had to activate the Emergency Operations Center in the last two years. However, our Public Information Office has continued a preparedness campaign throughout the 2020 and 2021 hurricane seasons. To ensure the safety of staff and our partners during the COVID-19 pandemic, the county is set to host virtual or outdoor press events to allow for social distancing.

We are always open to new and innovative ways to encourage hurricane preparedness.

This year, the Public Information Office worked with our floodplain manager to create several videos about readying properties for potential flooding, and our Emergency Management staff participated in a Latinx community event where they distributed hurricane guides in Spanish.

Charleston County's goal is to provide every resident with the tools necessary to protect their loved ones and property in the event of a hurricane.

BEAUFORT COUNTY

By Laura Fanelli, Communications Manager

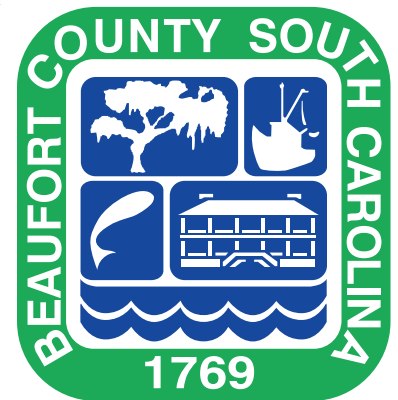
Media markets have fractured, and advertisements are expensive. Social media can be a cesspool for even the most positive message, and they seem to get lost among the cute cats and political banter. It seems essential topics like hurricane preparedness that could save lives get lost in the white noise.

Beaufort County Communications tackled the challenge last year by developing a hurricane preparedness information campaign, which began airing on multiple gas station pumps around the county about mid-way through the 2021 Hurricane Season. When residents and visitors filled-up at one of 17 contracted gas stations, a 30-second commercial created and produced by the Communications and Broadcast Services departments aired on the TV screen.

"It's literally the only place you're not allowed to use a cell phone. For those two minutes of pumping, we have a highly captive audience," said Beaufort County Public Information Officer Christopher Ophardt. "I've seen the Kardashian videos updates so many times. Still, it just got us all thinking that this really can be a useful medium and a new way to get important messages to a mass of people."

According to Gas Station TV, Beaufort County is the first in the state to contract with them for hurricane preparedness, family and pet evacuation.

"We're pleased to partner with Beaufort County as its media partner for the Hurricane Preparedness campaign. We know that nearly 90 percent of people who visit stations with GSTV are paying attention to the content on our screens and offer us their undivided attention, so we're honored to be a part of keeping Beaufort County safe by sharing these important messages with our South Carolina



viewers,” said Laura Bishop, Senior Vice President, Client Partnerships, GSTV.

The three hurricane preparedness spots, which ran from Sept. 1 to Nov. 30, began running after the first contract was signed with Gas Station TV.

The first spot focused on hurricane preparedness awareness. The spot reminded everyone to prepare their family, pets, and their home for an impending hurricane. Families were advised to create an evacuation plan, practice it if they had pets, start making an evacuation list for them, secure yard items, and plan a final evacuation location to stay for at least several days.

The second spot focused on evacuation with pets. It is against the county ordinance to leave pets behind, tied up, or running loose during a hurricane. It is considered cruel and abandonment. Some evacuation shelters don’t accept pets, so the spot recommended checking to determine if the shelter or hotel of choice was pet friendly.

Besides food, water, leashes, crates, medications, kitty litter, treats, toys, and other day-to-day supplies, medical information must be packed and identification included on the pet collars and leashes. Photos are helpful, too; in case Fluffy or Fido panic and escape, they could quickly be reunited with their humans.

The third spot focused on creating a hurricane preparedness disaster supplies kit. Items can include a first aid kit, flashlight, extra batteries, cash, phone charger, family and pet medications, important documents, and Ziplock bags. Every family needs to decide what’s best for their hurricane preparedness supplies kit and have it ready to go.

Beaufort County is experiencing explosive population growth. Many new residents (and visitors) have not experienced a hurricane in the Lowcountry, and the preparation must be done.

Hurricane preparedness spots, similar to those that ran last year, are scheduled to run during the entire upcoming 2022 Hurricane Season (June 1 to Nov. 30). These spots will help educate everyone on safety, family evacuation plans, pet evacuations, putting together an evacuation/disaster supply kit, and re-entry protocols.

In addition to the GSTV spots, an information campaign will be included on all of Beaufort County’s social media platforms. The information campaign will provide appropriate sources for information to follow before, during and after a hurricane, and the episodes will be rotated on The County Channel and County Channel Radio.

Residents and visitors will be encouraged to sign up for news and announcements at beaufortcountysc.gov, as well as NIXLE alerts through the Beaufort County Sheriff’s Office.

Once hurricane season ends, the spots will pivot to promoting county departments and programs such as mosquito control, available county jobs, capital projects, animal services updates, and more.



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Lancaster County Partners for Youth Receives \$24 Million Grant!

By W. Stuart Morgan III

Lancaster County Partners for Youth received a \$24 million grant on September 22 from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) that will benefit the Lancaster County School District (Clinton Elementary, AR Rucker Middle School and Lancaster High School).

The funding, released in January, will benefit Lancaster Promise Neighborhood, a network of public, private, civic and faith-based organizations that is partnering with Lancaster County's Operation Significant Impact (OSI), winner of SCAC's 2021 Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Award, to transform the Lancaster community. (See previous issue of County Focus Magazine, Vol. 32, No. 3).

"Lancaster Promise Neighborhood, and OSI are simply two strands of the same rope," said Dr. Paul McKenzie, Director of Research and Development for the Lancaster County School District, who tried four times over a 10-year period to obtain the USDE grant before succeeding on his fourth try. "Lancaster Promise Neighborhood focuses on education, health and social supports, and OSI targets public safety and addiction. Both partnerships work hand in hand, sharing data, exploring solutions, and coordinating services with the goal of transforming the community."

Dr. McKenzie's perseverance as a grant writer paid off.

"I am greatly thankful and most humble to be part of this important endeavor (Lancaster Promise Neighborhood), and I am grateful that we didn't receive the grant the first three times," Dr. McKenzie said. "You see, it forced us to strengthen our partnership, Lancaster Promise Neighborhood, to collect extensive data, and to seek out potential solutions that would help transform our community. We didn't stop after the first three rejections. Since we couldn't do the 'big things,' we focused on what we could do—recruiting 700 volunteers, painting 17 homes, collecting 70 tons of litter, installing over 250 smoke alarms, installing many handicap ramps and mowing countless lawns.

"I believe that our story over the past decade demonstrated to the U.S. Department of Education that we were serious, and that it wasn't about a grant," he added. "It was about making a difference."



The five-year USDE grant will help fund the first five years of what is essentially a 23-year-long cradle to college and career program. The program will provide extensive services beginning at birth before transitioning into elementary school, then middle and high school and through college, as follows:

- Baby College (a 14-week-long program for new parents)
- High-quality childcare
- Home visits twice per week for two years
- Health and nutrition services
- World-class afterschool programming
- School on Saturday
- More rigorous school courses
- Case management
- Parenting classes
- Adult education and vocational supports
- Visits to college campuses in the region, and more.

The \$24 million USDE grant requires that local sources contribute a minimum of 10 percent cash.

But Lancaster Promise Neighborhood has already met the challenge.

"We have already raised \$3.5 million in cash pledges," Dr. McKenzie said. "We did this in two weeks during the Coronavirus pandemic and prior to submitting the grant, which is a testament to the level of partnership in this community. Since we had been working for a decade with a highly visible history of services, it became much easier to raise the matching funds for Lancaster Promise Neighborhood in cash pledges from local sources—individuals, businesses, civic organizations and foundations.

"This USDE grant will fund services from 2022 through 2026, however, we plan to continue this project into perpetuity," he added. "We understand that the greatest benefit will be derived from children and families who complete the entire pipeline of services to be provided from beginning to end. So, our major task therefore is to continue to secure the funding necessary to maintain the project."



Lancaster Promise Neighborhood is a private foundation (a fiscal agent) created by the Coalition for Healthy Youth, a network formed more than 20 years ago, that represents 40 local public, private, civic and faith-based entities.

"The Coalition for Healthy Youth has had a profound impact on the Lancaster community," Dr. McKenzie explained. "It focused early on addressing problem youth behaviors such as substance abuse, violence, dropout, teen pregnancy, etc.

"Members include law enforcement, county government, non-profits, the school district, the health department, the university, churches and many more," he added. "The Coalition hosts the National Rural Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Conference, now in its 15th year, and conducted locally at the University of South Carolina Lancaster. The Coalition has met monthly for more than 20 years with several key values: partnership, strong evaluation, science-based solutions, and cultural competence."

Charlene McGriff, Lancaster County Council Member, co-chairs

Lancaster Promise Neighborhood with Dr. McKenzie, and Bruce Brumfield, Chief Financial Officer of Founders Federal Credit Union.

McGriff said receiving the \$24 million USDE grant provides "an incredible opportunity for children and families in the community."

"I grew up in this area, and well understand the challenges facing these individuals," she added. "As a politician, I'm rarely speechless. But when we heard about our award, I couldn't speak. I could only cry. I will tear up almost every day since then."

McGriff, involved in the early formative meetings of Lancaster Promise Neighborhood and OSI, said her reaction to receiving the USDE grant was similar to McKenzie's. Like Dr. McKenzie, she described both partnerships (Lancaster Promise Neighborhood and OSI) as "two strands of the same rope."

"If done correctly," McGriff said, "these two communities will significantly improve the quality of life for families in Lancaster County and serve as an economic driver for future business development."



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A Roadside Guide to Fairfield County

The County's Role in the American War for Independence

By Alexia Jones Helsley
www.historyismybag.com

Centrally located, Fairfield is one of several South Carolina counties founded in 1785. Settled in the 18th century, by the time of the American Revolution, settlers had congregated in a settlement first known as Winnsborough (Winnsboro), later the county seat of Fairfield County. At the time of the Revolution, Fairfield was part of Camden District.

When the British occupied the town in 1780, according to some estimates, there were 20 houses in the area. British troops under the command of Lord Charles Cornwallis remained in Winnsboro for several months from October 1780 to January 1781. Traditionally, the county owes its name to Cornwallis' remarks: "What fair fields."

Fairfield was the site of several significant engagements during the Revolutionary War, including Mobley's Meetinghouse, Rocky Mount, Brierley's Ford, and Dutchman's Creek. The area also contributed such Patriot leaders as General Richard Winn, Captain Thomas Woodward, Captain James Kincaid, and Major John Pearson.

Mobley's Meeting House, S.C., June 10/11, 1780

Mobley's Meeting House, due to an entry in Richard Winn's notes is, at times, confused with Gibson's Meeting House. The two churches were distinct entities in different locations. Kenneth Shelton has made an extensive study of the engagement and the controversy. This discussion adopts his findings as to the site and possible dating of this battle. According to Shelton, the battle occurred between "the Battle of Beckhamville (June 6/7) and the burning of the Rev. John Simpson's home on June 11." Shelton contends that, "the exact date was June 10, 1780, given the start date in the Reverend John Simpson's audited account."

Following Major General Benjamin Lincoln's disastrous surrender of the southern Continental army in May, Loyalists in the interior became bolder in attacking and harassing Patriots. In Fairfield County, Colonel Charles Coleman led such a group of Loyalists. The Loyalists congregated in the Mobley's Mill community located on a creek of the Little River and established a base camp there. From their camp, they looted Patriot homes and possessions in the area.

These Loyalists under the command of Colonel Coleman raided the Hamptons and seized 30 slaves, several wagons with their team,



30 riding horses and household furniture. They also captured two former Patriot officers, Captain John Hampton and Captain Henry Hampton. Their captors sent the two Hamptons "under a strong guard" to the British Headquarters at Camden.

In response to these depredations, Colonel Richard Winn wanted to attack the Loyalists. With Lincoln's surrender in May, the organized military response evaporated in South Carolina. Units

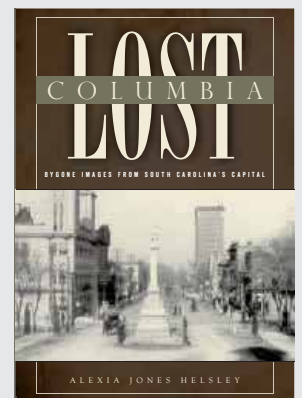
disbanded and many officers and men took British protection. Fortunately, Winn, a former member of the 3rd Regiment of SC Rangers, had not given his parole.

While Winn had difficulty raising troops in his home area, by June 7th, he had made common cause with Colonel William Bratton
(Continued on next page)

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

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of the New Acquisition and a force of 100 or more Patriot militia, commanded by Bratton, approached Mobley's Meetinghouse. There, Bratton, Winn, and Captain John McClure found the Loyalists with their loot camped near a fortified blockhouse. The Patriots planned and executed a successful surprise attack and dispersed the Loyalists. Witnesses described men jumping from windows to escape the Patriot attack. The Patriots suffered no casualties and captured 30 prisoners who were sent to North Carolina. In addition, the Patriot militia recovered and returned most of the looted items.

Among those possibly involved was James Collins. Collins was a 17-year-old South Carolinian who fought with General Thomas Sumter and other militia leaders after the fall of Charleston through the Battle of Cowpens. He kept a journal that offers a unique view of the war in South Carolina. According to Collins, the men who fought with Sumter, Bratton and Winn fought with no "promise or expectation of any pay" and had to furnish their own clothing (generally a hunting shirt), horses and other equipment. According to J.D. Lewis, when Fairfield County Loyalists learned of Winn's role in the attack, they burned his house and drove out his wife and two small children. Winn wrote, "It is no more than I expected." The victory at Mobley's Mill improved Patriot morale in the dark days after Lincoln's surrender in May.

Rocky Mount, July 30, 1780

Rocky Mount was a fortified British post in old Camden District, now Fairfield County. The post sat on a small hill that was surrounded by a ditch abatis. According to Lt. Colonel Banastre Tarleton's memoirs,

"the defenses of Rocky Mount consisted of two log houses, a loop-holed building, and an abatis [sic] placed on an eminence." An abatis was a defensive obstacle formed by tree trunks or branches with their sharpened ends pointed outward toward potential attackers. Lt. Col. George Turnbull commanded the fort. Turnbull and his New York Volunteers with other militia units mustered about 300 men.


Following the fall of Charlestown, Colonel Thomas Sumter had contacted South Carolina Governor-in-exile, John Rutledge, and determined to organize a resistance movement in South Carolina. Rocky Mount was Sumter's first attempt to take the field against the British. Earlier, Sumter had served as a colonel in the 6th Regiment, SC Continental Line. In September 1778, he resigned that position and retired to his home in the High Hills of the Santee. Consequently, he was not in active service when General Lincoln surrendered Charlestown. At South Carolina's lowest point, the British managed to "pluck defeat from the mouth of victory." In May 1780, in an ill-fated effort to subdue the countryside, British troops burned Sumter's home. Outraged and affronted, Sumter returned to the campaign. For months, he was the face of South Carolina resistance.

Having raised a force of approximately 500, Sumter planned an attack on Rocky Mount. On July 30, he asked Turnbull to surrender the post. Turnbull refused and battle ensued. Yet despite three valiant efforts, Sumter's troops could not penetrate the abatis nor stage a major attack. Attempts to set fire to the buildings also failed. Heavy rainfall doused the last efforts. In disgust, Sumter withdrew. The eight-hour conflict came to a wet, disappointing end.

Brierley's Ferry (Shirar's Ferry), Fairfield/Newberry County Line, Nov. 18, 1780

In November, Lt. Colonel Banastre Tarleton, the Green Dragoon, and his dragoons plus two three-pound cannon were in hot pursuit of General Thomas Sumter. On November 18, Tarleton rendezvoused with other British forces already at Brierley's Ferry on the Broad River. On the opposite side of the river was a scouting detail sent by General Sumter. Sumter's riflemen were no match for Tarleton's cannon who not only successfully dispersed the scouts, but also camouflaged the dragoon's distinctive green coats so that Sumter was not aware Tarleton was in the area. Following the victory, Tarleton crossed the river and continued his pursuit of Sumter.

Dutchman's Creek, March 21, 1781

Captain William Gray commanding a detachment of New York men, ambushed a Patriot force near Dutchman's Creek east of Winnsboro. The Loyalists attacked and routed the Turkey Creek militia commanded by Captain Benjamin Land. During the skirmish, 18 men were killed, 18 were captured, and the Loyalists later killed Captain Land as well. With the attack at Dutchman's Creek, major Revolutionary engagements ended in Fairfield County on a dark note. As the 17th century English theologian Thomas Fuller noted: "It is always the darkest just before the day dawneth." The tide in South Carolina was shifting and the Siege of Yorktown, which began September 18, 1781 would, in time, inaugurate a new day for South Carolina and the United States. 

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A New SCAC and NACo Partnership: Take Your Leadership Skills to the Next Level by Attending NACo's Leadership Academies

SCAC is pleased to announce a new partnership 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 General Colin Powell, Dr. Marshall Goldsmith, and many other executives from both private industry and government agencies.

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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.

\$1,545 per enrollee for South Carolina counties. The retail price is \$2,495.

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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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

Bamberg County

● Bamberg County is the fifth county in South Carolina to implement a next generation 911 emergency telephone response system. The upgraded system, which comes at no cost to the county, will allow for Bamberg County to participate in the statewide initiative of modernizing a critical emergency service that was built on technology from the 1970s. Next Generation 911, or NG911, will transition Bamberg County's current 911 infrastructure to an Internet Protocol-based system. These technological changes include the ability for 911 centers to receive and communicate via texts, images, videos, and even streaming video messages from citizens.

● Bamberg County Council and the Bamberg County Fire Advisory Board hosted the first annual Bamberg County Fire Service Banquet at 6 p.m. on Nov. 13. Almost 100 people with ties to the Bamberg County Fire Service gathered at Andrew Jackson Academy to honor first responders who serve, save lives and property, and care for the sick and injured. The appreciation banquet began as **Paul Eubanks**, Bamberg County Fire Coordinator, extended a hearty welcome to all in
(Continued on next page)

Most Recent Additions – Level II: Financial Management and Level II: The Property Taxation Process

SCAC has now made **Level II: Financial Management** and **Level II: The Property Taxation Process** Institute classes available online.

Both courses were recorded at SCAC's office after the Annual Conference. Upon completion, participants will receive credit in the Institute of Government for County Officials. There is an \$80 registration fee for each course.

Financial Management focuses on understanding the basic elements of financial management and the role elected officials have in county financial decisions. The various budgeting methods of local governments will be explored with particular emphasis placed on the connection between financial decisions and council policy-making and goal setting.

The Property Taxation Process is examined in this course including an emphasis on the most recent changes in South Carolina. Participants will learn the history of property taxes in the state; legal considerations; how to compute millage rates; and updates to property tax statutes. Roles and responsibilities of key players, such as county council, the auditor, and treasurer, will be covered.

In order to access the courses on SCAC's Learning Portal, officials will need to first have an account with SCAC. For assistance, please contact Ryan Tooley at rtooley@scac.sc or (803) 252-7255.



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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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HIDDEN HISTORY OF GREENVILLE COUNTY

attendance and led the Pledge of Allegiance. As the firefighters and their families took their seats around decorated tables in the school's gymnasium, a program began to recognize them for their selfless bravery and unwavering commitment to the fire service in Bamberg County.

Kenneth Utz, Chairman of the Bamberg County Fire Advisory Board, who also serves as the Chief of the Govan Fire Department, led the celebration. The following volunteer firefighters were honored: **Keith Black**, Bamberg Fire Department; **Doc Summers**, Hunters Chapel Fire Department; **Frank Boardman**, Ehrhardt Fire Department; **Mary Polasky**, Denmark Fire Department Auxiliary; and **Gidget Stanley**, Denmark Fire Department Auxiliary.

William "Timmie" Taylor and **Malcolm "Mack" Clayton** received Lifetime Achievement awards.

Taylor, a state-certified fire marshal and fire inspector, served as fire chief for the City of Bamberg for more than two decades, among other posts, and participated in civic activities during his 31-year fire service career.

Clayton, who retired in October as the chief of the all-volunteer Colston Fire Department after more than 30 years as its leader, was also recognized for his distinguished leadership since joining the service in 1989.

- An article on Bamberg County Airport was featured in the Fall 2021 edition of *Palmetto Aviation*, the official quarterly of the S.C. Aviation Association. The article, "Out With the Old and In With the New," focused on the history of the airport, and the many improvements that are being made at the facility, which opened in 1992.

A new weather station is being installed, a new pilot training program is being developed with Denmark Technical College, and a partnership with 1200. Aero will provide ADS-B plane tracking services. Future development plans include improving lighting around the ramp, providing a courtesy vehicle for pilots, extending the runway, adding hangar space and acquiring surrounding airport property for new business/industrial development. Collaboration with Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative will ensure availability of fiber connectivity for future tenants and area businesses.

The 94-acre airport has an asphalt paved runway of 3,603 feet X 60 feet. Aircraft ar-

rivals and departures have increased significantly since 2015. The number of aircraft arriving and departing the airport was 40 in 2015. In the 12-month period ending on July 29, 2020, that increased to 700. For 2021, an average of three aircraft arrived and departed the airport each day.

- On September 17, Bamberg County Airport participated in S.C. Aviation Association's Project Discovery.

SCAA's president, **Terry Connorton**, visited Bamberg County Airport and many of the other 58 publicly-owned airports in South Carolina to learn more about the many unique public airports throughout South Carolina. Project Discovery will be used by SCAA to assist in the organization's advocacy and promotional activities on behalf of the state's airports.

Connorton met with several Bamberg County elected officials and five Mayors of Bamberg County; County Council Members **Spencer Donaldson** and **Sharon Hammond**; Bamberg County Council Chairman **Larry Haynes**; representatives of Southern Carolina Alliance, **Kay Maxwell**, **Garrett Dragano**, and **Laura McKenzie**; **Dr. Willie Todd**, Denmark Technical College President and CEO; Bamberg County Administrator **Joey Preston**; Bamberg County Clerk to Council **Rose Shepherd**; and **Allen Cook**, Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative Engineer.

- On September 21, Denmark Technical College held a ceremony to celebrate the graduation of 11 Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) from the inaugural class of the Denmark Tech EMT Academy.

Medshore, which serves communities in Bamberg County, selected the top 11 applicants to participate in the first class. Students then completed 200 hours of instruction, which started on June 21 and ended on September 15. Graduates began working as full-time EMTs upon completion of practical and written testing. Students also participated in an apprenticeship program, which allows them to work for Medshore while attending class and training.

Students were able to take the \$2,500 EMT course at no cost, thanks to a grant provided by the S.C. Department of Labor through Apprenticeship Carolina. The EMT Academy is a collaboration between Denmark Technical College and Medshore Ambulance Service.

Bamberg County Councilman **Evert**

Comer Jr., who attended the ceremony, congratulated graduates and thanked Denmark Tech, MedShore and Bamberg County officials for developing the program, addressing the problem of trained EMT professionals to hire. Also attending the ceremony were: **Dr. A. Clifton Myles**, executive vice president of Denmark Tech, **Robert Crenshaw** of ReadySC, **Phillip Clarke** and **Shawanda Boulware** of Medshore Ambulance Services, **Shelby Elise Simmons**, director of workforce development, and a host of family and friends.

The second EMT class began in October at Denmark Tech.

- In September, the Bamberg County Board of Elections announced the hiring of **Athena Moorer** as the county's new director of voter registration and elections.

Moorer previously worked for Dorchester County as manager of elections and voter registrations and has multiple years of experience working in county voter registration and elections. She possesses a certificate in Voter Registration and Elections and degrees in Early Childhood Education from Trident Technical College and South Carolina State University.

Moorer works in the office of Voter Registrations and Elections in the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex, Isaiah Odom Building, in Bamberg.

- In September, the Bamberg County Department of Solid Waste announced that all county convenience and recycling centers would begin accepting glass for recycling. Residents were asked to separate their glass from their other trash for recycling and remove all plastic bags from glass.

Each of the eight county convenience sites has a separate, marked container for glass; labels can still be affixed to the glass containers, but glass should be as clean as practical. All colors of glass will be accepted and recycled.

- On September 7, the S.C. Department of Public Safety announced that the Bamberg County Sheriff's Office had received more than \$14,000 in grant funds to purchase body-worn cameras and any associated storage and maintenance costs. The funding was awarded by the S.C. Carolina Public Safety Coordinating Council, which oversees the state's Body-Worn Cameras Fund.

Charleston County

- Belimed Life Science, Inc., a leading supplier of steam sterilizers and parts washers, announced on Dec. 6 plans to establish operations in Charleston County. The more than \$750,000 investment will create 22 new jobs. Founded in 2019 in Switzerland, the company provides Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMP) sterilizers and washers for the pharmaceutical and biotech markets. Specializing in machine process solutions for cleaning and sterilization, the company supplies customers on a global scale. Located at 2154 N. Center St., North Charleston, the company's new facility will provide product sales and support to the company's North American customer base.

- Beyond Distilling Company, a craft spirit and distilling company, announced on Dec. 1 plans to establish operations in Charleston County. The more than \$767,000 investment is expected to create 63 new jobs. Founded in 2019, the company produces world-class spirits emphasizing both local and exotically sourced ingredients of the highest quality, reimagining classic recipes with a unique twist.

Located at 2157 Rich St., North Charleston, Beyond Distilling Company's new facility will increase its capacity to meet growing demand. The company will also have an on-site restaurant and event space. The new facility is expected to be completed in early 2022.

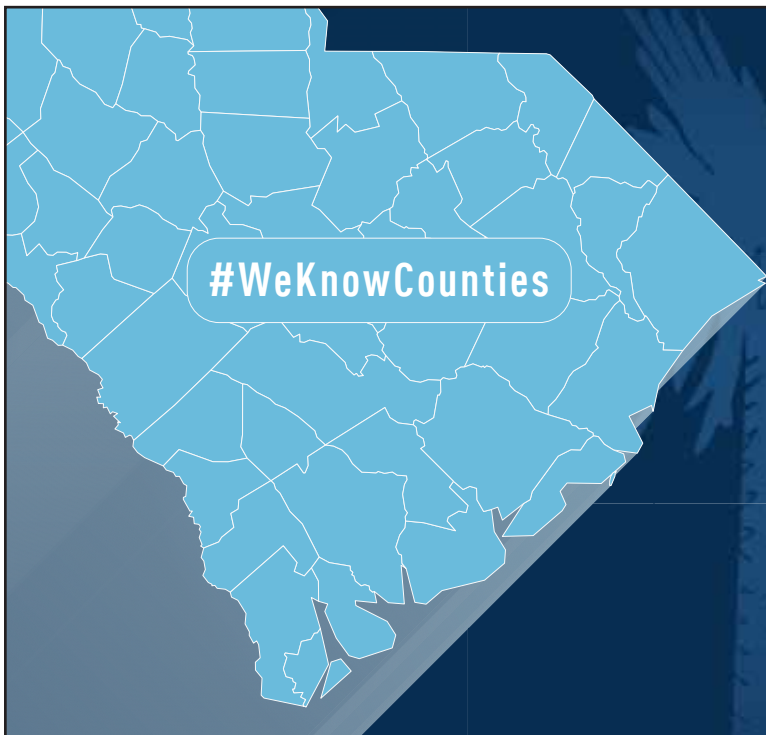
- Barzan Aeronautical, LLC, an aerial intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) systems company, announced plans on Nov. 12 to establish operations in Charleston County. The company's \$14.7 million investment is expected to create 34 new jobs. Founded in 2018, Barzan Aeronautical, LLC, a Qatari-owned, U.S.-based company, works with U.S. and NATO governments and top national defense and aviation companies to support the deployment of aerial ISR systems for defense, security and environmental use. Locating at 2744 Fort Trenholm Road, Johns Island, Barzan Aeronautical, LLC's new facility will focus on engineering and manufacturing of technology-based unmanned aircrafts. Operations are expected to be online in late 2022.

- Cannonborough Beverage Company, a craft soda company, announced plans on Nov. 22 to expand operations in Charleston

County. The project will create 22 new jobs. Founded in 2012, Cannonborough Beverage Company produces craft sodas and mixers made from whole ingredients including fruits, herbs, and spices. Located at 1750 Signal Point Road in Charleston, Cannonborough Beverage Company's expansion will increase the company's capacity and production capabilities. The company also plans to add a commissary kitchen. The expansion of the company's production facility is currently in progress.

- Evolt, a digital body composition analytic company, announced plans on Nov. 30 to establish operations in Charleston County. The more than \$100,000 investment is expected to create 80 new jobs. Founded in 2015 in Gold Coast, Australia, Evolt is a global innovative wellness company that uses an evidence-based approach to its development and practical use. The company offers unique, end-to-end solutions that track body composition, activity and nutrition including sophisticated data analytics. Located at 2457 Aviation Avenue in North Charleston, the facility will serve as the company's North


(Continued on next page)



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● Elbit Systems of America, LLC, a subsidiary of Elbit Systems Ltd., announced on Nov. 9 plans to establish operations in Charleston County. The expansion is expected to create 302 new jobs.

Founded in 1983, Elbit Systems of America, LLC is a leading provider of high-performance products and system solutions focusing on the defense, homeland security, commercial aviation, and medical instrumentation sectors.

The company's new facility, located at 9028 Palmetto Commerce Parkway in North Charleston, will increase the company's

manufacturing capacity and support future growth for new products. The new facility is expected to be operational by fall 2022.

● In September, the Charleston County Greenbelt Program announced **Eric Davis** as its new director. Davis, who has 13 years of diverse local government experience, most recently served Dorchester County as its first-ever parks and recreation director. During the seven years he served in that position, he worked with stakeholders to plan, implement, and program the Dorchester County park system and also led the organization's efforts in conservation, greenways, and blueways.

Davis replaces **Cathy Ruff**, who is retiring after serving Charleston County for 25

years. Ruff began her work with the Greenbelt Program after it was created in 2005. At the time, the program was part of zoning and planning. She became the director when the Greenbelt Program was organized as a

separate department in 2008. The Charleston County Comprehensive Greenbelt Plan was named the S.C. American Planning Association's Outstanding Planning Project for Large Jurisdictions in 2006. Ruff was named the 2007 Charleston County Employee of the Year. In 2009, the Greenbelt Program received the U.S. Forest Service's Partnership Award. Since the program's inception, Ruff has overseen the protection of over 20,000 acres of land.

● On Oct. 8, Charleston County announced that the county's Public Safety Directorate and School District are partnering to create a new program for high school students interested in a career in public safety. The two-year program includes four to six weeks of paid training in the summer months for high school juniors and another four to eight weeks of paid training for returning seniors the next summer.

Training consists of classroom setting, field trips, ride-alongs, as well as meet and greets with elected officials, department heads, and county directors. Applicants who complete the certification courses will be eligible for a fast track to employment with our 9-1-1 Consolidated Dispatch Center or



SCAC is partnering with South Carolina Women in Leadership on MatchBoard, a new web-based platform through which counties can manage their boards and commissions. This dynamic application will digitize and streamline your boards and commissions management allowing you to post information about boards, recruit diverse qualified applicants, review applications, communicate directly with citizens, and more. MatchBoard is launching November 1st and will be free for a year for the first 30 counties and municipalities to sign up. Learn more and sign up today at MatchBoard.Tech.

"I think MatchBoard will be a great tool for Orangeburg when trying to recruit qualified applicants for our boards and commissions. It will let citizens know that the appointment process is impartial and not political."

— **Johnny Wright, Orangeburg County Council Chairman**

"Beaufort County currently has 29 agencies, boards, and commissions consisting of 211 members. The clerk's office has the daunting task of keeping up with applications, appointments, reappointments, resignations, rosters, meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes while also serving the needs of the 11-member county council. I am incredibly excited to move away from the antiquated excel spreadsheet tracking method and into MatchBoard, a program that will streamline the clerk's operations and better serve our agencies, boards, and commissions, while saving us time and creating consistency expected in 2021."

— **Sarah Brock, Beaufort County Clerk to Council**



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There is no cost to the student to join this program. Depending on the Public Safety department the student chooses to follow, he or she must be 18 years old and have successfully completed all the career requirements of that department in order to be considered for a full-time position. The program is currently available for careers in our 9-1-1 Consolidated Dispatch Center and EMS department.

● On Sept. 17, Charleston County announced that it had hired **Shaun R. Gadsden** as the new Awendaw McClellanville Fire Chief. A native of Mt. Pleasant, Chief Gadsden began his career in fire service 24 years ago as a volunteer with the Sullivan's Island Fire Department. He served as a captain, battalion chief on the operational level, and division chief of training during his career. Gadsden has worked for several emergency service agencies, including the City of North Charleston Fire Department and Dorchester County Fire-Rescue.

He received his Bachelor of Arts in Disaster and Emergency Management from Columbia College and graduated from the S.C. Firefighters Association's Leadership Institute. Gadsden earned the distinguished Chief Fire Officer Designation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence and Fire Officer IV certification from the Maryland Fire-Rescue Institute. He also serves on several public safety advisory committees.

● TELUS International, a customer experience innovator that designs, builds and delivers digital solutions for global brands, announced plans on Aug. 23 to establish operations in Charleston County. The \$3.4 million initial investment is expected to create approximately 1,200 new jobs by 2022.

TELUS provides multilingual digital customer experience and digital IT solutions to clients all over the world. The company has more than 56,000 team members, operates in more than 25 countries and partners with brands across high-growth industry verticals, including technology and games, communications and media, eCommerce and fintech, and healthcare, and travel and hospitality. In the U.S., TELUS International also has operations in Folsom, California and Las Vegas, Nevada.

The company's new facility in North Charleston will increase its operating capacity to meet growing customer demand.

Georgetown County

Georgetown County Public Services recognized three of its most outstanding employees in November. **George Montgomery**, GIS Division, received the Customer Service Award; **Nancy Wall**, GIS Division, received the Professional Achievement Award; and **Sheryl Gibbs**, with the Judicial Courthouse and most recently, the Historic Courthouse, was named Public Services Employee of the Year.

● **Tiffany Harrison**, a Columbia native with more than 20 years of diverse economic development experience, was recently hired to serve as director of Georgetown County's Economic Development Department. She assumed her new role on Jan. 3. She started her career with the S.C. Department of Commerce where she worked for three years and became program director. She then served as director of economic development for Fairfield County for nine years, as executive

director for Midlands Education and Business Alliance for one year, and as deputy director of Richland County Economic Development (her previous position) for five years. She graduated from Columbia College and completed courses offered by the International Economic Development Council. She is also a certified S.C. Economic Developer.

● **Doug Eggiman**, Midway Fire-Rescue Chief, retired on Dec. 31 after serving the department for 36 years, including 18 years as Chief.

● Midway Fire Rescue Chief **Doug Eggiman** will retire in December after more than 30 years of service. Eggiman joined the department as a volunteer in 1985, and became one of the department's first three paid firefighter/EMTs.

● Georgetown County Fire-EMS Chief **Mack Reed** retired in September after serving 32 years of service. He volunteered as a fireman for the City of Georgetown Fire De-


(Continued on next page)



**SOUTH CAROLINA
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**

Conference Calendar

Feb. 23	Mid-Year Conference
Feb. 24 & 25	Institute of Government Embassy Suites, Columbia
Aug. 1 & 2	Institute of Government
Aug. 2 - 4	Annual Conference Wild Dunes Resort, Isle of Palms



**NACo's 2022
Conference Calendar**

Annual Conference
Adams County, Colorado
July 21 - 24

partment for seven years before leading the Georgetown County Fire Department as fire chief for 32 years. The Georgetown County Fire Department merged with the county's EMS department in 2005.

● Georgetown County Library Director **Dwight McInvaill** was part of a ceremony on Nov. 9 that celebrated the renaming of the Georgetown Post Office in honor of **Joseph Rainey**. Born enslaved, Rainey was the first African American to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, the first to preside over the House, and the longest-serving Black lawmaker in Congress during Reconstruction. The ceremony, held in Rainey Park on Front Street, included presentation of a proclamation to **Lorna Rainey**, a descendant of Joseph Rainey. A portrait of Joseph Rainey was presented to McInvaill and will be displayed permanently at the Georgetown Library on Cleland Street.

● Georgetown County had a ribbon cutting ceremony at Midway Fire-Rescue on November 3 to celebrate the newly-installed Opticom system. The system includes traffic pre-emption emitters installed in fire and rescue vehicles across the county. These devices work with traffic signals to let the signals know when an emergency vehicle with lights and sirens activated is approaching.

The traffic light will be signaled to change to green to allow the vehicle to pass safely. The goal is to improve traffic safety and shave time off of emergency response times, potentially saving lives. Opticom was purchased and installed by the county following a grassroots effort by members of the community. One of those members, **Karen Yaniga**, was the featured speaker during the ribbon cutting, along with County Council Member **John Thomas** and Midway Fire Rescue Chief **Doug Eggiman**.

● **John D. Watson** began working as Georgetown County attorney on Sept. 27. Watson, born and raised in Florence, has been a licensed member of the Bars of South Carolina and North Carolina since 1995. He is also a certified mediator with the courts of South Carolina and North Carolina.

Watson has practiced law for more than 26 years. He graduated from Campbell University School of Law, and Regent University, where he earned a Master of Arts in Public Policy.

● **Lt. Lesley Eastham**, Georgetown County Fire-EMS, retired on Sept. 29 after serving more than 30 years. Eastham, who

began her career with Georgetown County in August 1991, has been an integral part of the Fire and EMS community through her actions as an EMT/Paramedic, as well as her efforts to train and educate her fellow first responders in pre-hospital emergency care. Although Eastham is retiring, she plans to continue serving as a volunteer firefighter/paramedic in the Pleasant Hill Community.

● Emergency responders and a civilian who recently rescued a man and a dog from a submerged car in a pond in Litchfield were recognized for heroism on Sept. 22.

Midway Fire Rescue presented firefighter **Thomas Doyle** with the Medal of Valor for his actions. Meritorious Action Awards were presented to firefighter **Dustin Kilpatrick**, firefighter/paramedic **Steven Vankirk**, S.C. Highway Patrol Trooper **Adam Marshall** and a civilian, **Blake Marsh**.

Other firefighters, on the scene that day, received Unit Citation Awards: Battalion Chief **Jerry Liberatore**, Master Firefighter **Santini Washington**, Captains **Jeremy Skinner** and **Ben Dussault**.

● **Harold West**, an employee of the Public Works and Construction Division for 17 years, has been named Georgetown County's Employee of the Quarter for the third quarter of 2021. As a special projects supervisor, West performs numerous tasks, such as resolving and installing drainage systems throughout the county. He assists all area supervisors in maintaining their area's roads and roadside ditches. He helps other departments in the Department of Public Services investigate and resolve issues when beyond their capacity. He is also skilled in operating all equipment in the Public Works Department.

● On Nov. 5, six candidates from the Georgetown County Sheriff's Office graduated from the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy. Capt. **Ernest Hampton**, Lt. **Melvyn Garrett**, and Sgt. **Chuck Weaver** congratulated the following graduates: **Daniel Caprar**, **Mike Yilmaz**, **Brian Waincott**, **Robert Amon**, **Javier Castro**, and **Matthew Watkins**.

● On Sept. 29, Georgetown County recognized employees celebrating milestone service anniversaries in 2020. The ceremony was delayed from last winter due to COVID-19.

Employees with the highest number of service years were: **Ricky Rowe** of Georgetown County Parks and Recreation and **Cynthia Howard** of the Clerk of Court's Office, each with 45 years.

Also honored were: 35 years—Judge

Isaac Pyatt Sr.; 30 years—**Jeanette Alston** and **Sharon Moultrie**; 25 years—**Tony Hucks**, **Deborah Johnson** and **Priscilla Johnson**; 20 years—**Annie Bowers**, **Holley Causey**, **Rhonda Stone**, **Sheila Gardner** and **Michael Thacker**; 15 years—**Jeffrey Bialecki**, **Adam Porter**, **Steven Richards**, **Peter Copeland**, **Henry Hulit**, **Holly Richardson**, **Harrison Walker**, **Mark Cox**, **Joanne Clarey**, **Angela Carter**, **Tanya Cumbee**, **Deborah Huggins**, **Pamela Pope**, and **Samantha Point**; 10 years—**Jennifer Lawrence**, **Susananna Wilson**, **Michael Derenzo**, **Alexander Roman**, **Vanunderia Brave**, **Rose Lewis**, **James Crawford**, **Kevin McLaughlin**, **Henry Betts**, **Bryan McKay**, **Alma Sierra** and **Tanisha Stanley**. Five years: **Patrice Cohen**, **Derek Harrelson**, **Alice Cribb**, **Jeanie Goodwin**, **Erin Hayes**, **Cynthia Kinder**, **Steve Goggans**, **John Thomas**, **Ethan McDaniel**, **Scott Walker**, **Hailey Davis**, **Aaron Bostic**, **Joshua Deleuze**, **Christopher Holmes**, **Josann Welch**, **Art Baker**, **Randy Welsh**, **Iteia Cooper**, **Folona Duncan**, **Michelle Brown**, **Jeremy Colbert**, **Caitlin Lavoie**, **Stephanie Johnson**, **Candice Lilly**, **Judge John Love**, **Rhonda Cunningham**, **Tiffany McBride** and **David Murphy**.

● Georgetown County Sheriff **Carter Weaver** accepted his agency's fourth Certificate of Accreditation from S.C. Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc. in Columbia on Sept. 3. During the accreditation process, all areas of the Sheriff's Office were inspected to determine if the policies, standards and performances were in line with recognized best practices.

The final step was an inspection where South Carolina Law Enforcement Accreditation Inc. assessors visited the Sheriff's Office to see the operations firsthand and solicit public input on the agency's performance. The Georgetown County Sheriff's Office is one of 30 law enforcement agencies in South Carolina to receive state accreditation. Weaver says reaccreditation allows his department to measure itself against the highest standards in law enforcement and improve its delivery of services.

● On Sept. 8, the Georgetown County Board of Elections and Voter Registration selected **Aphra M. McCrea** of Georgetown as the new director of Georgetown County Elections and Voter Registration.

McCrea, selected from 16 applicants, has worked as a clerk in the Elections and Voter Registration office since February 2020

and was promoted to interim director last month when the previous director, **Kristie Richardson**, resigned. McCrea's prior experience includes both customer service and management. She is a Holly Hill native and a graduate of Francis Marion University.

● Georgetown County Administrator **Angela Christian** will join a network of more than 2,300 leaders committed to creating social and economic progress in South Carolina. She has been selected to join other distinguished leaders from across the state to participate in the Diversity Leaders Initiative, an award-winning program of Furman University's Riley Institute.

Now in its 18th year, the program equips participants with tools and perspectives to leverage diversity as a way to improve organizational outcomes and drive social and economic progress in South Carolina. Christian is one of 42 individuals to be a part of the 15th Lowcountry cohort.

Christian will take part in a highly interactive curriculum consisting of case studies, scenario analyses and other experiential learning tools that maximize interaction and discussion among classmates and facilitate productive relationships. Working along-

side classmates, Christian will also develop a capstone project that raises awareness of community need.

Horry County

● On Oct. 2, the Horry County Solid Waste Authority (SWA) celebrated the completion of a 653-ft bridge in Conway connecting the SWA's landfill property to its 1187-acre parcel where the Material Recycling Facility is located. The SWA provides comprehensive solid waste management services for the citizens of Horry County.

In the late 1990s, the SWA established the goal to maximize the use of the Highway 90 landfill property for long-term disposal operations with the 1187-acre parcel providing resources to support the operations. Sterritt Swamp separates the two parcels and presented a challenge for the SWA to access the 1187-acre parcel's resources. The SWA concluded construction of a bridge suitable for heavy construction traffic was the most efficient way for direct access between the two HCSWA parcels while minimizing traffic impact to Highway 90.

The bridge project pushed forward at

a remarkable pace. The HCSWA obtained all regulatory approvals by September 2020. Engineering design for the 653-foot precast cored slab bridge was completed by December 2020. Bridge construction began in February 2021 and was completed on-time in August 2021 when it opened for traffic. The bridge project was also completed on-budget at a total construction cost of approximately \$3.17M.

The SWA named the bridge the W. Norfleet Jones Bridge, honoring his invaluable service and vision as a long-serving member of the SWA Board of Directors.

Lancaster County

● Lancaster County Sheriff's Office Lt. **Christine "Christy" M. Rogers** was named the S.C. Law Enforcement Officers Association Officer of the Year for 2021 on November 19 at an awards ceremony in Myrtle Beach. The award recognizes her accomplishments and acts of heroism. Lt. Rogers, employed by the sheriff's office for more than 24 years, has served as a patrol deputy and as an investigator, and now supervises the Crime Scene (See *County Update*, P. 47)



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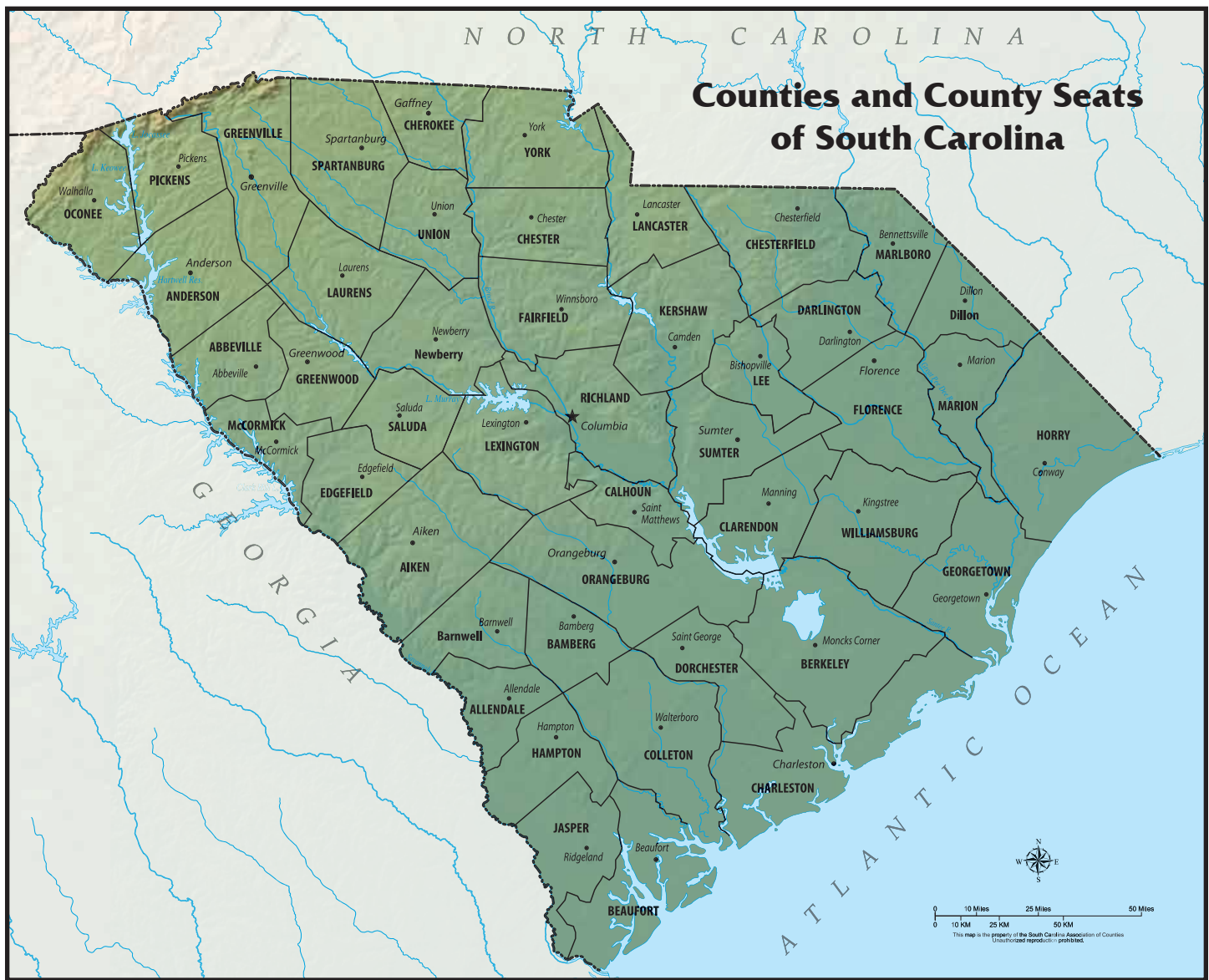
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County Update ... (Continued from P. 45)

and Evidence Unit. She graduated from the National Forensic Academy in Knoxville, Tenn.

- **Lancaster County Sheriff Barry S. Faile** received the S.C. Law Enforcement Officers Association 2021 Jackie Swindler Award for Ethics and Excellence in Law Enforcement at an awards ceremony on Nov. 19 in Myrtle Beach.

Sheriff Faile, who has served the Lancaster County Sheriff's Office for 32 years, served as a patrol deputy, criminal investigator, narcotics investigator, Multijurisdictional Drug Task Force commander, patrol captain, chief deputy, and has served as sheriff for the past 13 years. Sheriff Faile is the fourth recipi-

ent of the Jackie Swindler Award for Ethics and Excellence in Law Enforcement.


Williamsburg County

- **Mitch Fulmore**, director of emergency management of Florence County and president of NENA/APCO, recently presented the Supervisor of the Year Award to **Joseph Phillips**, a dispatcher and shift supervisor at the Williamsburg County Emergency Management/E911 Center in Kingstree. Phillips received the award for displaying discipline and professionalism under extremely emotional circumstances when handling a call on Oct. 10, 2020.

- **Chantal Patrick**, who has served as dispatcher for only two years for Williamsburg

County EMD/E911, received SCAPCO/NENA Palmetto Award for the impeccable work ethic and the exemplary call-taking and dispatching skills she has displayed during the Coronavirus Pandemic, personifying the motto of Williamsburg County EMD/E911, "Giving Our Best, At Your Worst."

York County

- **Rick Jantzen**, York County Tax Assessor, recently retired. He has served the county since 2017. 

SCAC/NACo Partnership Offers New Online Leadership Academy

SCAC recently announced a new partnership with NACo to build strong county leaders. The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy is an online 12-week program that empowers 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, IT, and risk management. Through the SCAC/NACo partnership, South Carolina

counties are eligible for a registration fee of \$1,545 (instead of the \$2,495 retail price).

For more information about High Performance Leadership Academy, visit: naco.org/resources/education-and-training/naco-high-performance-leadership-academy.



SCAC's 2022 Directory of County Officials

SCAC's 2022 *Directory of County Officials* will be published and distributed in February. So, order a copy if you want to know "Who's Who" in South Carolina county government.

Cost: \$25.00 per copy (including tax, postage, shipping and handling). To order your copy of the 2022 *Directory of County Officials*, please contact:



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