



2016 Annual Report

MASC Municipal Association
of South CarolinaSM

Highlights from the Executive Director



Miriam Hair
Executive Director

Last year at this time, we were eagerly looking forward to our 85th Annual Meeting. It turned out even better than we imagined. Not only were the speakers and learning opportunities exceptional, but we also reflected on and celebrated the Association's 85-year history by unveiling our history book and honoring our past presidents, 21 of whom were in attendance.

What continues to resonate with me is that although only six of these past presidents still held municipal office, all of them showed their belief in and continued support of the Association by accepting our invitation to the meeting.

These individuals and many others built a solid foundation for the Association. In this Annual Report, read about four highlights of our work this year as we continue to build on this rich history.

Shared Voices: Successfully advocating for municipalities at the state and federal levels requires the shared voices of officials from all cities and towns. To amplify our shared voices, we must **cultivate partnerships**. This year, we worked closely with the SC Chamber of Commerce, a task force of business licensing professionals, and other stakeholders on business licensing legislation.

Shared Knowledge: From the early days of the Association, municipal officials have come together to share their knowledge and best practices. This year, we **expanded training opportunities** available to municipal officials. Our Advanced Institute for Municipal Elected Officials reached two milestones. We added a fall training date to the schedule and recognized our first graduating class of 28 mayors and councilmembers during February's Hometown Legislative Action Day.

Shared Solutions: Cities and towns working together to find solutions to common challenges is an important goal of the Association. Recognizing that limited resources often prevent local officials from reaching their economic development goals, we **created the Hometown Economic Development Grant program**. We will begin accepting grant applications this fall.

Internal Services: The Association's internal operations play a critical role in effectively delivering services to cities and towns. In particular, we continued to **leverage technology** to offer additional and improved resources to members.

I invite you to read the Annual Report to learn more about these highlights.



Shared Voices

Highlights from the Executive Director ...

Cultivated partnerships

This year, we continued to cultivate and strengthen partnerships with other associations and organizations to promote legislation favorable to cities, towns and the state. Most notably, we worked with the SC Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders to address business licensing concerns raised by the business community. After months of study, collaboration and research, the partners identified potential solutions to streamline the business licensing process.

Another key player in the process was a business license task force formed to help ensure proposed legislation took into account the day-to-day aspects of administering a business license ordinance. Fifteen business licensing professionals, finance directors and a city manager serve on the task force.

Additionally, our board of directors agreed to make an investment on behalf of all cities and towns to build an online portal so businesses will have an easier way to renew their business licenses.

During the coming year, we will continue to work with our partners on legislation that streamlines the businesses licensing process while retaining local officials' policymaking role.

From the early days of the Association in the 1930s, South Carolina municipal officials understood their collective voices were essential to advocating for the needs of cities and towns.

Lobbying the State Legislature and Congress

With recommendations from the Association's legislative committee, the board of directors set the Association's 2016 state advocacy initiatives. The Association advocated for changes in state law to address these initiatives and sought out partnerships and coalitions to support its advocacy efforts. The Association also provided training and education for municipal officials and legislators on topics related to these initiatives and conducted research to support its advocacy positions.

The Association also monitored federal legislation through the National League of Cities. *Staff Contact: Reba Campbell*

Regional Advocacy Meetings

The Association hosted a series of Regional Advocacy Meetings during the fall of 2015. More than 300 municipal officials met at 10 different locations to talk about the 2016 legislative session and challenges facing cities and towns. These conversations were the starting point for building the Association's 2016 advocacy initiatives which included streamlining business licensing processes, clearing blight, embracing the sharing economy and fixing roads. *Staff Contact: Casey Fields*

Nearly 550 bills, 15 percent of all bills introduced during the two-year legislative, impacted cities and towns.

2016 advocacy initiatives

- Streamline business licensing processes
- Clear blight
- Embrace the sharing economy
- Fix roads

Legislative Tracking and Reports

During the 2015-16 South Carolina legislative session, the Association actively monitored 548 bills impacting cities and towns. The Association updated its online monitoring system daily during the legislative session to allow municipal leaders to track the progress of these bills.

Emailed to more than 4,000 municipal elected officials and staff each Friday during the legislative session, *From the Dome to Your Home* recapped the week's major legislative events and previewed activities for the upcoming week.


At the end of the legislative session, the Association produced its annual Legislative Report recapping work on the advocacy initiatives and legislative action on major bills of municipal interest. *Staff Contact: Casey Fields*

Hometown Legislative Action Day

The annual Hometown Legislative Action Day held in February updated municipal officials on current legislative issues and gave them an opportunity to visit their legislators at the State House.

This year, 564 officials from 149 cities attended the event. They heard from a panel of leaders from partner organizations who discussed the value of diverse interests working together on legislative issues and from State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman about partnerships between cities and schools. Attendees also heard from a panel of five legislators who gave their perspectives on priorities for the 2016 legislative session.

To increase participation from legislators, the Association “shook up” the legislative reception. The event highlighted local foods and craft brews. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*



A flowchart developed with the SC Press Association illustrates the new process required when adding items to a public meeting agenda.

Public Engagement

Legislators, business leaders and the news media learn about successes in cities and towns through online and print resources from the Association.

Social Media Channels

The Association’s Twitter (@MuniAssnSC) and Facebook (CitiesMeanBusiness) pages provided up-to-the-minute information on State House activity and shared good news stories about cities and towns. The Association’s Twitter followers doubled this year. *Staff Contact: Reba Campbell*

Cities Mean Business magazine

The Association published the biannual *Cities Mean Business* magazine that spotlights how strong cities are important to the state’s economic success. Targeted to business leaders and policy makers, the magazine had a circulation of 15,000 readers. Topics included downtown revitalization, business-friendly practices, farmers markets and redevelopment successes. *Staff Contact: Reba Campbell*



Shared Knowledge

Highlights from the Executive Director ...

Expanded training opportunities

In February, we recognized the first graduating class of the South Carolina Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government. Twenty-eight mayors and councilmembers received their certificates during the Hometown Legislative Action Day. Another first for the Advanced Institute was the addition of fall classes in October attended by 104 elected officials.

The Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association offered more concurrent sessions at its meetings. This change gave attendees more education on topics relevant to their day-to-day job responsibilities.

Risk Management Services visited members of the SC Municipal Insurance Trust and the SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund to deliver customized training.

In total, we offered 55 training opportunities this year.

The Association plays an important role in building municipal and professional capacity through a wide range of training programs, publications and meetings that encourage the most efficient and effective municipal government operations.

Affiliate Associations

The Municipal Association supported 11 affiliate organizations by providing training and networking opportunities for a variety of local government positions with specialized training needs. This year, these 11 affiliates had a combined membership of 1,800 municipal officials and together offered 31 meetings/events, providing more than 200 hours of training.

In addition to traditional face-to-face training and networking opportunities, the affiliate associations used listserves for members to share best practices and to pose specific questions related to their local government responsibilities. *Staff Contact: Eric Budds*

More than 2,200 officials attended 31 training events offered by affiliate associations.

Association of South Carolina Mayors

The Association of South Carolina Mayors provided opportunities for its members to more fully engage in advocating for issues that affect cities and towns, to network, to take part in educational activities, and to share ideas and best practices. In 2016, 110 mayors were members of ASCM.

This year, ASCM hosted its third annual city tour to the City of Greenwood and a bonus tour of the Town of Lexington during its November membership meeting.

Staff Contact: Casey Fields

Municipal Court Administration Association of SC

The Municipal Court Administration Association of South Carolina gained 38 new members this year, bringing its total membership to 284. MCAA offered training to court administrators, clerks of court, municipal judges and other municipal employees involved in court administration. The Supreme Court of South Carolina Commission on CLE and Specialization and the Office of Victims Services recognized these training sessions for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Bill Taylor*

Municipal Technology Association of SC

With 110 members, the Municipal Technology Association of SC promoted the effective use of technology by municipalities. This year, MTASC offered its members training on cybersecurity, body-worn cameras and GIS in emergency response scenarios. *Staff Contact: Sara Johnson*

SC Association of Municipal Power Systems

All of the state's 21 municipal electric utilities are members of the SC Association of Municipal Power Systems and were supported by 49 associate members this year. SCAMPS maintained a mutual aid network to help each other (and other municipal electric utilities in the Southeast) restore power in the event of weather emergencies.

Training sessions emphasized the effective, efficient, reliable and safe operation of municipal electric systems. SCAMPS continued to participate in the process to establish a state energy plan. The annual lineman training event drew 141 participants and 11 exhibitors. The group's annual meeting drew 150 meeting registrants and exhibitors, representing 19 municipal utilities and 38 associate members. *Staff Contact: Eric Budds*

SC Association of Stormwater Managers

The SC Association of Stormwater Managers offered its 206 members quarterly training on stormwater management policies and best practices. It also provided a forum for members to share ideas and keep current on state and federal laws and regulations. The SC Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors recognized this training for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Sara Johnson*

SC Municipal Human Resources Association

The South Carolina Municipal Human Resources Association promoted sound human resources administration and encouraged innovative programs. Through its training programs, MHRA provided information and the opportunity to exchange ideas among its 232 members. The HR Certification Institute approved the training for recertification credit hours. *Staff Contact: Sara Johnson*

Cities' participation in the survey of municipal salaries increased across all population categories.

SC Municipal Attorneys Association

The South Carolina Municipal Attorneys Association's annual meeting tackled important issues facing cities and towns across the state. The Supreme Court of South Carolina Commission on CLE and Specialization approved this training session for continuing education credits. This year, the annual meeting was preceded by an event for municipal attorneys to network. *Staff Contact: Tigerron Wells*

SC Business Licensing Officials Association

Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2016, the South Carolina Business Licensing Officials Association played a critical role in developing the SC Business License Tax Standardization Act that was introduced in the General Assembly in 2016.

In addition to their advocacy efforts, BLOA's 331 members, through rigorous training sessions, learned skills and practices to make licensing in their cities and towns more efficient and business-friendly. BLOA offers a two-level accreditation program for members, the Accreditation in Business Licensing and Masters in Business Licensing. These designations indicate a commitment to professionalism and continuing education. This year, five business licensing professionals received the ABL designation, and six received the MBL designation. *Staff Contact: Scott Slatton*

SC Community Development Association

The South Carolina Community Development Association provided educational forums for its 151 members to address economic and community development needs and to enhance members' professional performance. Members included municipal, county, regional and state community development professionals; employees of private companies with an interest in community development; elected officials and volunteers. SCCDA presented its annual Award of Excellence to the City of Hartsville for its downtown revitalization efforts. *Staff Contact: Sara Johnson*

Day-long training session for public information officers featured a panel of local PIOs discussing best practices when facing the national spotlight in a crisis.

SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association

The South Carolina Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association offered its 270 members, representing 142 cities and towns, training programs covering the wide range of responsibilities of its members. Many of these training sessions qualified for continuing education credits for certified municipal clerks, certified public accountants and certified public treasurers. MFOCTA sponsors the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute with the Municipal Association and the College of Charleston's Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities. *Staff Contact: Jeff Shacker*

SC Utility Billing Association

The South Carolina Utility Billing Association provided its 205 members training on billing, collections, personal safety, technology and customer service. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

Training Institutes

Additional educational opportunities were available to municipal officials through three training institutes.

Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute

The Association sponsors the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute in partnership with the SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association and the College of Charleston's Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities. The Institute provides specialized training for municipal clerks and treasurers. Twelve individuals completed the Institute, and 62 municipal employees attended the semiannual sessions. *Staff Contact: Jeff Shacker*

MEO Institute graduated 48 mayors and councilmembers. The Advanced Institute graduated its first class of 28 municipal elected officials.

SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

The SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government offered specialized training for elected officials to increase their understanding of local government operations. Elected officials must take seven courses to complete the Institute. Forty-eight mayors and councilmembers graduated this year.

The required courses consist of two day-long sessions held in Columbia each February, the day prior to the Hometown Legislative Action Day. Five additional classes are available online through the Association's website or by attending sessions held at the 10 councils of governments' locations throughout the year.

Staff Contact: Urica Floyd

SC Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

Offered exclusively for graduates of the MEO Institute, the Advanced Institute gives elected officials the opportunity to continue their education. To complete the Advanced Institute, participants must take four of the six offered courses that explore in greater depth topics included in the MEO Institute and other topics critical for effective municipal operations. More than 300 elected officials attended the advanced courses this year, and 28 graduated in the first class. *Staff Contact: Urica Floyd*

Timely training topics

- **Association of SC Mayors:** building community relationships, parliamentary procedure and crisis communication
- **Municipal Court Administration Association of SC:** court financials; bond estreatments; and fundamentals of bond hearings, jury trials, pretrial intervention and conditional discharges
- **Municipal Technology Association of SC:** cybersecurity, body-worn cameras and GIS in emergency response scenarios
- **SC Association of Municipal Power Systems:** future of distributed generation in South Carolina, best practices in utility debt administration and revenue bonds, new lighting technology and OSHA regulations
- **SC Association of Stormwater Managers:** illicit discharge detection and elimination, collaborative water quality monitoring, and flood response and recovery
- **SC Business Licensing Officials Association:** one-stop shops, duties and responsibilities of a business licensing official, and contractor licenses
- **SC Community Development Association:** brownsfields redevelopment, regional consolidation of water systems, and generational diversity
- **SC Municipal Attorneys Association:** Freedom of Information Act changes, indigent defense, the sharing economy, enterprise fund transfers, and Securities Exchange Commission continuing disclosure requirements
- **SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association:** wage and hour laws, Affordable Care Act reporting requirements, borrowing options, GASB Statement 68, enterprise fund transfer policies and procedures, and municipal elections
- **SC Municipal Human Resources Association:** employee health and wellness plans, workplace violence and generational diversity
- **SC Utility Billing Association:** challenges of difficult people, team dynamics, cash handling procedures, verbal judo and cybersecurity
- **Main Street SC:** abandoned and dilapidated buildings, creative placemaking, economic development resources and business-friendly cities
- **Municipal Association Annual Meeting:** reducing police liability, body-worn cameras, the future of cities, cyber liability, the sharing economy and business licensing
- **Hometown Legislative Action Day:** business licensing, advocacy partnerships, the economic impact of the craft beer and food truck industries, and public safety
- **Risk Management Services:** defensive driving, law enforcement liability, emergency management, employment liability, and trenching and excavation safety standards

Orientation Training for Local Government Planning and Zoning Officials

The South Carolina Local Government Planning Act established mandatory training requirements for all appointees and staff involved with local planning and zoning. These individuals must complete, within the first year of service, a six-hour orientation course approved by the State Advisory Committee on Educational Requirements. The Association offers an approved orientation course and provides transcripts to officials completing the training. The Association awarded certificates to 81 individuals who completed the training. *Staff Contact: Lea Ann Mitchell*

Annual Meeting

The Association celebrated its 85th anniversary during the 2015 Annual Meeting, which drew 600 municipal officials to Hilton Head. Each received a copy of the Association's history book unveiled during the Opening Session. While celebrating the past, the Association also looked toward the future. Keynote speaker Rebecca Ryan, author, economist and futurist, held the standing-room-only crowd's attention as she discussed the future of cities and towns. Attendees also got a first-hand look at new technology by attending drone demonstrations, test-driving a Tesla and exploring Microsoft products. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

The four newest Main Street SC cities—Georgetown, Sumter, Aiken and Moncks Corner—were previous members. Each returned to the program during the last two years to take advantage of the training, networking and technical assistance.

Technical Assistance

Field Services

Assigned a specific region in the state, the field services managers received feedback from members and helped municipal officials address issues of local concern. This year, the field services managers made more than 1,000 in-person contacts with municipal officials and staff through one-on-one visits, council meetings and retreats. *Staff Contacts: Jeff Shacker and Bill Taylor*

Field services managers averaged 90 technical inquiries per week from municipal officials.

Main Street South Carolina

Main Street SC added Aiken and Moncks Corner to its Boot Camp program, bringing the number of communities participating in the program to 15. Main Street SC helps its members revitalize their downtowns into vibrant centers of commerce and community by using the National Main Street's Four Point Approach—organization, promotion, design and economic vitality. Members received one-on-one training and technical assistance from staff and nationally recognized specialists.

Main Street SC presented five Inspiration Awards for exceptional member accomplishments. *Staff Contact: Beppie LeGrand*

Information Resources

The Association's print and online resources address hundreds of topics related to municipal government.

Publications

The Association publishes a variety of manuals and handbooks on topics of municipal interest. *How to Conduct Effective Meetings* was updated this year.

- *Annexation Handbook*
- *Comprehensive Planning Guide for Local Governments*
- *Election Handbook*
- *Forms and Powers of Municipal Government*
- *Handbook for Municipal Officials in South Carolina*
- *The Municipal Association of South Carolina 1930-2015: A History of Shared Voices, Shared Knowledge, Shared Solutions*
- *How to Conduct Effective Meetings*
- *Incorporation Handbook*
- *Model Employee Handbook for SC Municipalities*
- *Municipal Officials and Legislative Directory*
- *Public Official's Guide to Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act* (published by the SC Press Association)
- *Raising Hometown Voices to a New Level of Influence*, an advocacy guide
- *SC Business Licensing Handbook*
- *Tips for Hometown Media Success*

Staff Contact: Sarita Chourey

Website

The Municipal Association's website, www.masc.sc, offers more than 2,000 pages; provides access to more than 1,500 documents, presentations and links to external resources; and posts information about more than 500 in-state municipal job openings each year. With a responsive design to fit the needs and formats of mobile and desktop devices, the site's search engine and information center help users navigate to specific resources of interest.

The Association's site was recognized this year by the South Carolina Press Association, the South Carolina Society of Association Executives and the South Carolina chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. The Press Association judges remarked that "the site is attractive and organized with the search functions well-incorporated throughout the site."
Staff Contact: Meredith Houck

Uptown

The monthly newsletter in print and electronic formats featured articles on a variety of issues of municipal interest. Each issue's feature section looked in-depth at a municipal service area. This year's sections focused on risk management, infrastructure, the role of elected officials, law enforcement, fire service, utilities, parks and recreation, economic development and public works.

More than 320 individuals opted to receive electronic notifications when new issues were posted online. A weekly e-newsletter, *Uptown Update*, provided information about upcoming training opportunities and other timely topics. *Staff Contact: Sarita Chourey*

***City Connect* blog and *City Quick Connect* podcast**

The Association launched the *City Quick Connect* podcast this year as an addition to the *City Connect* blog. The podcast featured short interviews with Association staff, leaders of partner organizations and experts. The blog and podcast packaged information in a “quick read and listen” format for local officials. Topics were timely and often related to court cases and issues being considered at the State House or on Capitol Hill. Subscriptions to the blog increased 25 percent over last year.

Staff Contact: Reba Campbell

Daily News

Daily News provides a quick, “at a glance” email summary of news stories of municipal interest from around the state and country. Almost 600 individuals subscribed to the service this year. *Staff Contact: Sarita Chourey*

Achievement Awards

In 2016, 26 cities and towns entered the annual awards program. Since its creation in 1987, 833 municipal projects have vied for the awards which recognize successful and innovative projects that improve the quality of life for residents and add value to communities. The program also encourages sharing ideas among municipal officials. *Staff Contact: Meredith Houck*





Shared Solutions

Highlights from the Executive Director ...

Created economic development grant program

Limited resources often prevent local officials from reaching their economic development goals. Recognizing this challenge, we created the Hometown Economic Development Grant program. Cities and towns can apply for grants up to \$25,000 to fund local projects. The board of directors earmarked \$200,000 for 2016 grant awards.

Cities and towns face many of the same challenges and can find solutions by pooling resources and ideas through the Association.

Collection Programs

Municipalities contract with the Association to collect delinquent debts and certain business license taxes on their behalf. These programs provide centralized and efficient collections for participating municipalities and streamline the tax payment process for businesses. The Association collected more than \$172 million in 2015 on behalf of cities and towns.

Brokers Tax Collection Program

The Municipal Association serves as the municipal agent to disburse to the appropriate cities and towns the municipal broker's premium tax collected by the South Carolina Department of Insurance. The Association disbursed \$11.2 million during the 2015 license year to 268 participating municipalities. *Staff Contacts: Melissa Brown, Brenda Kyzer*

Insurance Tax Collection Program

The Municipal Association collected \$150 million in business license taxes from insurance companies owed to municipalities. The Association distributed taxes collected to 268 participating municipalities. *Staff Contacts: Brenda Kyzer, Melissa Brown, Susan Gainey*

Setoff Debt Collection Program

In cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Revenue, the Association collected \$2.5 million in delinquent debts (utility bills, taxes, court fines, etc.) owed to 168 participating entities. *Staff Contacts: Melissa Brown, Brenda Kyzer*

Telecommunications Tax Collection Program

The Association collected \$8.2 million in business license taxes from telecommunications companies owed to 268 participating municipalities. *Staff Contacts: Susan Gainey and Brenda Kyzer*

Risk Management Services

The two self-funded insurance programs administered by the Association's Risk Management Services staff are prime examples of strength and efficiency through combined efforts of member cities. Each fund operates under the direction of a board of trustees composed of representatives from its membership.

The SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund provides all lines of property and casualty coverage including tort liability, law enforcement liability, public officials' liability, and property and automobile coverage while the SC Municipal Insurance Trust provides workers' compensation coverage. RMS processed approximately 2,500 new claims this year.

For a decade, RMS maintained or reduced rates while also returning surplus funds to the members of the two programs. RMS's work to locate quality vendors at the best available pricing is a major contributing factor to stable rates. This year, RMS issued an RFP for a new pharmacy benefit management provider, which resulted in cost savings and improved customer service for members.

SCMIT and SCMIRF also provide grants, training and loss control services that help members enhance risk management efforts and prevent claims. *Staff contact: Heather Ricard*

More than 500 municipal officials participated in training sessions offered by SCMIT and SCMIRF

Training

- Customized, on-site training: RMS provided training for members in their hometowns, allowing departments to attend training together. Staff conducted 16 on-site classes on topics including defensive driving, incident investigation, mindfulness in safety and Risk Management 101.
- LocalGovU: Participation in online training continued to grow with more than 11,000 courses taken this year. The online training covered a variety of risk management, human resources, safety and law enforcement topics.
- Statewide and regional training: SCMIT and SCMIRF offered members 12 training sessions on topics including employment liability, emergency management and defensive driving.

SCMIRF insured property valued at \$3 billion

- Law enforcement training videos: Through a partnership with the Public Agency Training Council, SCMIT offered online training videos on constitutional law and use of force, deadly force and pursuit driving policies.
- Risk Management Institute: SCMIT and SCMIRF offered members specialized training on the roles of risk managers and safety coordinators. Nine graduated from the Institute.
- *RiskLetter*: The quarterly e-newsletter provided information on a wide range of risk management topics. Special sections this year focused on emergency management, public works and public safety.

Loss control/technical assistance

RMS helps its members build effective safety programs and loss control capacity.

- Model policies and procedures manuals for law enforcement and fire services: SCMIRF members received updated law enforcement policies including a model policy for body-worn cameras that meets the state standard.
- One-on-one technical assistance visits: The loss control staff met with member organizations to evaluate their claims experience.
- Legal hotlines: SCMIRF provided member organizations up to 10 hours of free legal advice on each legal hotline for labor and liability issues.
- SCMIRF provided member organizations specialized cybersecurity and disaster recovery and business continuity services in addition to toolkits for sewer backups, parks and recreation, public officials and special events liability.

Grants

The grants program is designed to help SCMIT and SCMIRF members purchase products or equipment to reduce the frequency and severity of claims.

- Law Enforcement Liability Reduction Grant Program provided a total of \$50,000 to member law enforcement agencies.
- Public Works Sewer Backup Liability Grant Program provided members of SCMIRF a total of \$20,000 to purchase equipment to reduce liability claims associated with sewer backups.
- SCMIT awarded a total of \$182,000 to member law enforcement, fire and public works departments to purchase work-zone safety equipment, soft body armor and other protective gear.

SCMIT provided workers' compensation coverage for more than 16,000 municipal employees, representing an annual payroll of \$550.2 million.

South Carolina Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust

The South Carolina Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust is a qualified irrevocable trust available to local governments to prefund retirement benefits other than pensions. The Trust pools funds, allowing members to reduce costs by sharing administrative and investment-related expenses and to take advantage of negotiated rates for actuarial reports. Forty-three local governments are members.

Staff Contact: Heather Ricard

Technology Services

The Association, in partnership with VC3, provided affordable technology services to cities and towns. VC3, an information technology company headquartered in Columbia, designs and hosts municipal websites; designs and implements computer networks; and provides disaster recovery, strategic technology planning and voice communication services. Through VC3's private cloud, cities and towns can limit their investment in hardware and software while providing employees full access to applications and data from any computer linked to the Internet. The cloud also gives cities and towns access to disaster recovery and online backup services. *Staff Contact: Miriam Hair*

Cable Franchise Assistance Program

The Association continued working with Local Government Services, LLC to provide members technical assistance with cable franchise management. The technical assistance gave local governments access to the expertise required to negotiate benefits and services with reasonable terms and conditions. *Staff Contact: Miriam Hair*





Internal Services

Highlights from the Executive Director ...

Leveraging Technology

Our programs and services flourish because of the infrastructure (technology, human resources and financial management) supporting them. We have always prided ourselves on our proactive use of technology that allows us to work efficiently and offer exceptional member services.

Ten years ago, we invested in an association management system to better manage member information. We have strategically added functionality to the AMS over the years and integrated it with other internal systems to give members greater access to services and information.

This year, the collections and IT staff worked together to integrate our setoff debt collections system with the AMS. This was the final integration needed to allow members to have one user name and password to access all the Association's online services and resources.

Our Risk Management Services staff took on numerous technology-related projects this year to better serve members of the workers' compensation and property/liability programs. RMS unveiled a revamped annual report card made possible by integrating several systems including underwriting and claims. This provides members with a 360-degree look at their loss control history. Members can also use the report card to analyze their loss history over time.

IT staff used videoconferencing for the first time to allow a speaker unable to attend an affiliate meeting to present his information remotely. The Association also implemented a photo archiving system to store and catalog the Association's thousands of digital photographs.

Other highlights

- The finance staff restructured the Association's reserve fund to finance the Hometown Economic Development Grant program.
- The Association received awards from the SC Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America, the SC Society of Association Executives and the SC Press Association for the Association's history book.
- Mary Brantner, former communications manager, received the Retiree Service Award in recognition of her 28-year career with the Association. The award recognizes Association staff retiring with more than 28 years of service.



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Connie Martin

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