



2020 Annual Report

MASC Municipal Association
of South CarolinaSM

From the Executive Director

The Annual Report traditionally takes a look back to celebrate the Municipal Association's accomplishments, recognize the great work of our staff and reflect on the vision set forth by our board of directors. While we still intend to do those things, it doesn't feel right to jump right into it. Not this year.

First, let me say that it is truly an honor to serve you as executive director of the Municipal Association. When I started this job in November, I was not prepared for what 2020 would bring. While I thought that I was well versed in what the Association offers and what our cities and towns do every day, my time thus far has been filled with learning and amazement.



In working with our wonderful board and staff, I was prepared to start 2020 with a number of new initiatives and organizational changes. Then, terms that I had never heard — but will never forget — began to enter the conversation. COVID-19. Social distancing. “We can't hear you, you're muted.” They seem so much a part of us now that it is hard to believe they were not even a thought just a few short months ago.

From March 17 until June 2, the Association's offices were closed and our employees worked from home. They never missed a beat. Our IT and support departments immediately sprang into action and hopefully our members did not notice much of a difference. As with our cities and towns, we've worked hard to keep our employees safe.

As the federal government addressed the nationwide pandemic with stimulus assistance in the CARES Act, it was a privilege to be able to work with two subcommittees of accelerateSC, the governor's task force to reopen the state, to represent your interests. Mayor Knox White of Greenville and Mayor Marilyn Hatley of North Myrtle Beach were appointed by the governor to serve on the committee and represented you well.

As we navigated through the new normal, we began to formulate a plan to return to our offices. The date we set was June 1. Then, another short phrase rattled our country and forced us to step back and refocus: “I can't breathe.” The words uttered by George Floyd while a police officer knelt on his neck. The senseless and needless taking of a life. A nationwide conversation of justice and equality. A needed time of introspection for us all.

As most of our members have a police department, we all know that there are kind and decent public servants who work in our communities. However, a new emphasis has to begin on how police handle those who are in their custody. It is my hope that next year's message will be one of health, recovery and healing. As leaders of your cities and towns, you will play a critical role in leading that charge.

The Association accomplished a great deal in the last year. Although I did not point it out in this letter, I hope you will take the time to look at this report to see the hard work of your Association. We work every day for you and with you, and we're happy that when times get tough, the future of our state is in your hands. I wouldn't want it any other way.

Todd Glover
Executive Director

COVID-19 Response

As COVID-19 cases rose dramatically in South Carolina in March, the Municipal Association joined many cities and towns in transitioning quickly to a work-from-home operation. The Association had already begun creating online resources for local officials by that time, but staff also began creating other resources, all developed out of the office. The work to address COVID-19 and recover from it will continue, with the Association working through many unknowns to put together a virtual Annual Meeting this year devoted to the topic.

Resources

The *Municipal Resources for COVID-19* videocast series, assembled with recordings and video calls, tackled a wide variety of critical topics. The series began with a look at the legal and practical aspects of moving public bodies into a virtual format. It then moved into guidance for virtual public hearings, pandemic-related changes to business licensing and handling the disruptions to the municipal budgeting process.

The series was highlighted as a resource to share by Gov. McMaster's accelerateSC task force. Municipal Association Executive Director Todd Glover also advised members of the governance and resources subcommittees of that task force. Material for the videocast series came from the greater volume of questions that the Association's field services managers, Charlie Barrineau and Jeff Shacker, were receiving. It also came from the legal guidance created by the Association's General Counsel Eric Shytle, who additionally handled explanations of the governor's many executive orders during the emergency.

The Association also moved its weekly *Uptown Update* email to a daily email to more quickly share the large volume of COVID-19 information that circulated, including guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration and others. Both the *Uptown* and *RiskLetter* publications dedicated issues primarily to COVID-19 topics.

Conference calls

Staff also assembled conference calls with cities and towns as another means of distributing information, including calls with city managers and administrators, and Main Street South Carolina calls with downtown development directors. A series of 21 calls with mayors, with three calls happening a day, brought together an average of 40 mayors a day.

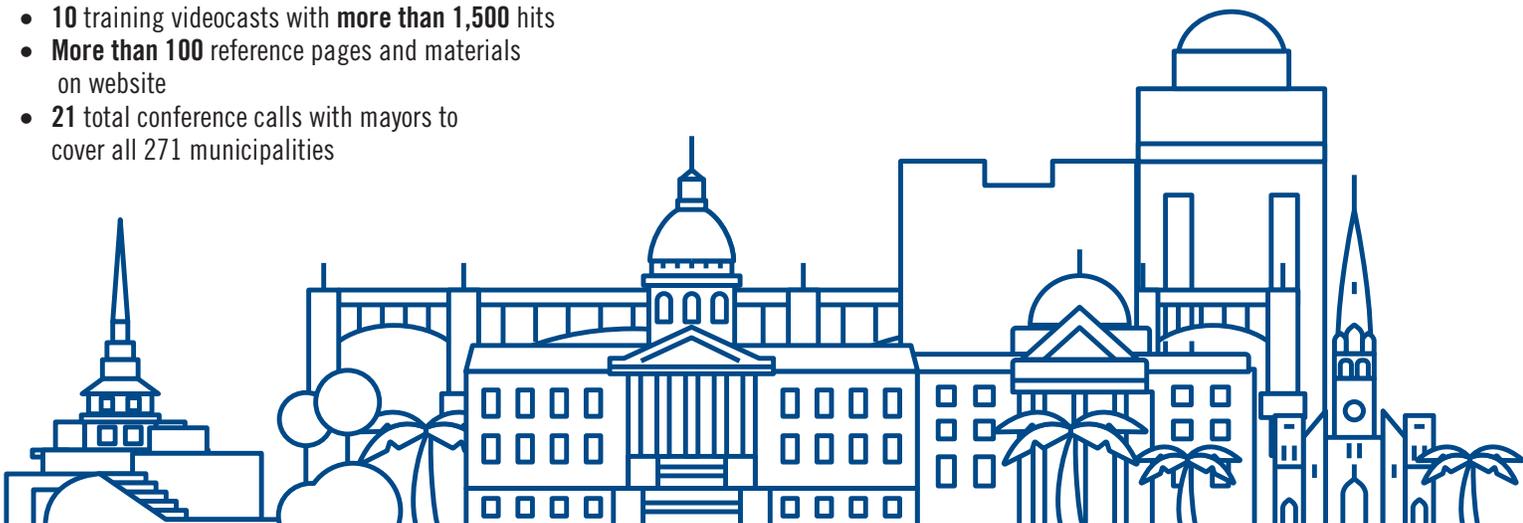
Beginning in April, the SC Municipal Human Resources Association, a Municipal Association affiliate, hosted weekly virtual meetings. In these, its members discussed critical topics including risk management, unemployment and furloughs, privacy for health checks on employees, pay for employees unable to work from home, personal protective equipment and social distancing in public spaces. Many of the calls brought together 60 or more human resources officials.

Risk management

To help cities and towns with the costs of cleaning materials and personal protective equipment, the SC Municipal Insurance Trust funded a \$200,000 emergency grant program for members, available in amounts of up to \$2,000 with no application needed. Risk Management Services Loss Control also assisted some members with obtaining PPE from different suppliers.

By the numbers

- **10** training videocasts with **more than 1,500** hits
- **More than 100** reference pages and materials on website
- **21** total conference calls with mayors to cover all 271 municipalities





Voices

South Carolina cities and towns created the Municipal Association of SC in part because officials knew collaboration would greatly amplify and strengthen their messages.

“Standardization: Fair for All” business license campaign

Business licensing reform served as a major concern for the General Assembly before COVID-19 disruptions. The Association successfully negotiated a strike-and-insert amendment to H4431, the business license bill, replacing unacceptable provisions that would have greatly reduced city and town revenue with language that would standardize the business license process. This new, acceptable version of the bill moved through the House and into the Senate — further than such a bill has ever moved before. Throughout the process, the Association built and improved relationships with critical legislators and interest groups that can help the cause of cities and towns in the future.

Many mayors and other officials advocated forcefully against the first version of the bill through letters, calls and testimony. In January, Aiken Mayor Rick Osbon appeared before a House subcommittee to testify against the original bill. Osbon noted that the business license tax represents more than \$400 million in general fund revenue for cities and towns. The original H4431 proposed changing the basis for calculating the tax from a business’s gross income to its net income. This change would have dramatically cut municipal revenues and force municipalities to choose between raising the business license tax rate or cutting important services, he said.

“The bill was on a fast track until our Municipal Association advocacy team identified and clearly articulated to our General Assembly members the unintended consequences it would have on municipalities and businesses alike,” Osbon said. “Their approach was open, engaging and successful in stopping this bad legislation.”

Hospitality and accommodations tax flexibility

The Association also successfully worked with the hospitality industry to create a compromise on S217, a bill giving municipalities the ability to use revenues from hospitality and local accommodations taxes to control and repair flooding and drainage in tourist-related areas.

Edisto Beach Mayor Jane Darby is one of the officials who has advocated on this issue. Darby noted that Edisto Beach’s economy is based in tourism, but the economy and the town’s ability to provide services can be damaged when heavy rains leave its roads and other areas submerged for extended periods.

“Tourists do not like an inconvenience or any impediment to their free movement, as well as home foundations being flooded,” she said. “We’re involved in conversations and work groups to seek solutions to sea rise and climate change, and any solution will require funds.”

The General Assembly continued to consider bills, including the two discussed above, after publication of this report.

City Quick Connect podcast

The Municipal Association revived its podcast series at the beginning of 2019. During the General Assembly’s session, the podcast provides another way for audiences to receive the *From the Dome to Your Home* legislative report. At other times, it covers a variety of topics, with some of the most popular being First Amendment legal issues, downtown revitalization as well as risk management and education for local officials.

In the past year, *City Quick Connect* has provided more guests, more information, new hosts and new topics from around the Association’s operations. The legislative episodes have dug more deeply in to the background of particular bills and the lawmaking process. As the podcast has expanded, the audience has grown with it, climbing to a monthly average of 534 in early 2020 compared to 216 in 2019.

Voices By the Numbers

631 municipal and state officials at Hometown Legislative Action Day

336 attendees at **10** Regional Advocacy Meetings

464 bills tracked before COVID-19 interruption of legislative session

4,021 email subscribers to *From the Dome to Your Home*, the weekly legislative update.

More than 2,000 webpages and **more than 2,000** documents at **www.masc.sc**

47 episodes on the *City Quick Connect* podcast with **more than 4,000** impressions

185 legislative advocacy tweets with **more than 140,000** impressions

261 tweets on other Municipal Association topics with **325,000** impressions





Knowledge

Education is a core tenet of the Association with multiple training opportunities available throughout many programs and services.

Training and support

The LocalGovU online courses, made available through the Association’s Risk Management Services, provided COVID-19-specific sessions. The past year brought the second year of orientation training for newly elected officials, “You’ve been elected, now what?” as well as the second year of the Advanced Continuing Education track of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government, which has seen increases in enrollment. In March, the Municipal Association launched an online, six-hour Planning and Zoning Orientation Training as an alternative to the mandated use of facilitated, in-person group training. The timing of this launch relative to the pandemic, while unintentional, ended up providing officials with a useful way to complete training requirements from their homes.

St. George Mayor Anne Johnston has been one of the most active participants in the MEO Institute at all levels. She retired at the end of her term in 2019, and expressed gratitude for the help she has received from the Municipal Association throughout her tenure.

“There is no way to count the times I have called — usually with a problem, possibly always — and every time I have found the support I needed, and always so willingly given,” she said.

This year, the Municipal Court Administration Association of SC introduced MCAA 101, a three-part municipal court staff training program. Pam Larson, operations manager for the City of Greenville’s municipal court, as well as Kirsten Pressley, municipal court administrator for the City of Greer developed the material. The first session in February sold out.

Field services training and planning sessions

The Association’s field services managers answer technical assistance questions from cities and towns every day, and conduct informational and work sessions with councils. In the last year, they attended 97 council meetings to facilitate planning retreats, present information and conduct training sessions on everything from the role of councilmembers to planning laws, tax revenue and forms of government. They also conduct strategic planning work sessions to help councils identify agreed-upon goals for councils.

The City of West Columbia council is one of those where Field Services Manager Jeff Shacker leads a goal-setting session annually. “It is without a doubt the most effective group planning practice that I have ever been a part of,” Mayor Tem Miles said. “The process allows all members’ voices to be heard and considered in regard to the priorities for each year. Mr. Shacker does an excellent job of moderating to make sure that all members are able to participate. At the end of the event, there is a clear list of priorities for city staff to work on achieving instead of them having to weigh the input and requests of individual members. The event is crucial to our planning for the whole year.”

Main Street South Carolina

Main Street SC is a technical assistance program empowering communities as they revitalize their historic downtowns and build their local economy. The program improved many services for its member communities in the past year through new strategy development workshops, a new program director guide and a fresh approach to new member orientation. During COVID-19, Main Street SC transitioned its resources and conference calls more to business resiliency and reopening plans.

Main Street Cheraw joined in early 2019 and now has Rob Wolfe as its director.

“Main Street South Carolina has been instrumental in providing timely information that can be relayed down to the local level, allowing local program directors to efficiently assist our innumerable small businesses,” he said. “In addition their knowledge of state projects and resources is invaluable when planning for our community.”

Knowledge By the Numbers

816 total MEO Institute participants, compared to 672 in 2019

254 completed on-demand MEO Institute courses

More than 825 in-person contacts made by the Municipal Association's field services managers

More than 80 technical assistance requests received on average per week by field services managers

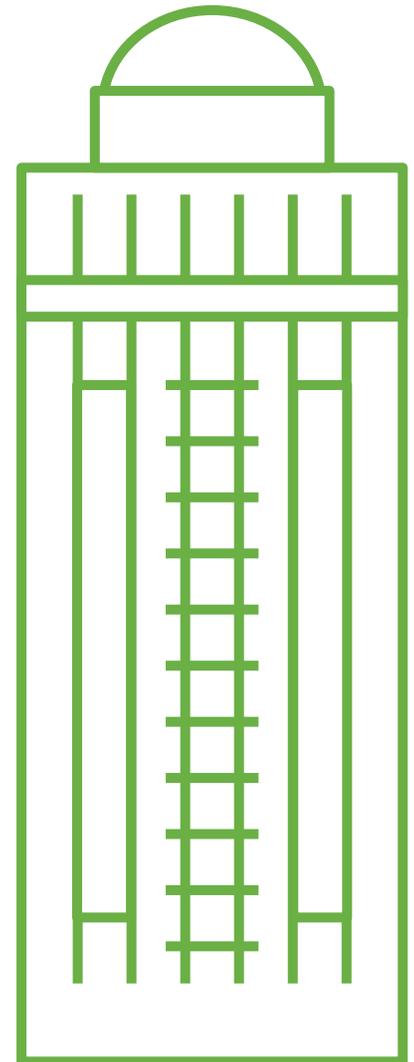
30 Achievement Award entries. This year's winners:

- Camden
- Columbia
- Edisto Beach
- Greer
- Lexington
- Rock Hill
- Seabrook Island
- Walterboro
- West Columbia



In calendar year 2019, Main Street SC's reinvestment statistics show:

- 709 net new jobs,
- 153 new businesses,
- 94 historic buildings rehabilitated, and
- private investment of more than \$1.5 million and public investment of more than \$26 million.





Cities and towns from across South Carolina face common challenges, municipal officials can find efficient solutions by working together through the Association.

Business license standardization

Maintaining business licensing as a critical funding source means that cities need to show to businesses and lawmakers that they are committed to business-friendly practices, such as standardization of licensing around the state. The Municipal Association has worked with many cities and towns to move them to the Association's model business license ordinance, which promotes standardization. At least 130 municipalities have achieved a partial or complete level of business license standardization.

The City of Anderson began the process of standardizing business licensing in July 2019. Finance Director Margot Martin described the city's work in the fall, which included council work sessions to explain the financial effects as well as the differences between the city's existing ordinance and the model ordinance. Council passed the new ordinance in December. The business license due date moved from an existing March 31 date to the standard due date of April 30. In an effort to be business friendly, the city issued notices to all of its businesses explaining what had happened and where they could find more information.

Martin said she received a great deal of help from Melissa Harrill, research and legislative liaison for the Municipal Association. "She performed our revenue review with the new rate classes as well as helped us present to our council at one of our work sessions," Martin said.

Public works grants

The Association's Risk Management Services, in consultation with public works directors from around the state, created an initiative to reduce the frequency and severity of public works and utility claims for both the SC Municipal Insurance Trust and SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund. The effort has included a new public works toolkit to help officials understand the issues and resources involved in public works risk management.

It also involved the creation of a new \$100,000 SCMIRF public works property and liability reduction grant for eligible expenses including sewer cameras, collision avoidance systems and training, among others. The public works initiative also led to an increase in the existing SCMIT public works safety grant to a new total budget of \$100,000. The grant can cover items ranging from air monitoring devices to hardhats, hearing and eye protection, trench boxes and others.

Safety audits

Risk Management Services Loss Control has worked with several cities and towns to perform safety audits in some of their operations and identify ways to reduce injuries. For the City of Hardeeville, the audit took a look at a new welding school, while in the City of Hartsville, it looked at that city's Neptune Island Water Park. In the City of Florence, Loss Control looked at the city's written safety and health programs as well as the public works garages, water and wastewater treatment plants, fire stations and raw water intake.

"The safety audit process works great and is a valuable benefit in identifying areas of concern and ways we might be able to reduce our losses," Florence assistant fire Chief Jeff DeLung said. "It's certainly a benefit to have them review the big picture with us. Through these audits we have identified training and documentation needs, and most importantly they are very knowledgeable in all aspects of the review and the operations of the City of Florence."

Solutions By the Numbers

128 SCMIT members

128 SCMIRF members. New members:

- Elko
- Greenwood Commissioners of Public Works
- James Island
- Jefferson
- Wagener
- Windsor

\$4.4 billion in total insured value in SCMIT and SCMIRF

19,128 employees and volunteers insured for workers' compensation through SCMIT

300,000+ debt- and tax-related records reviewed by the Municipal Association's Collections Programs

11,837 LocalGovU courses taken

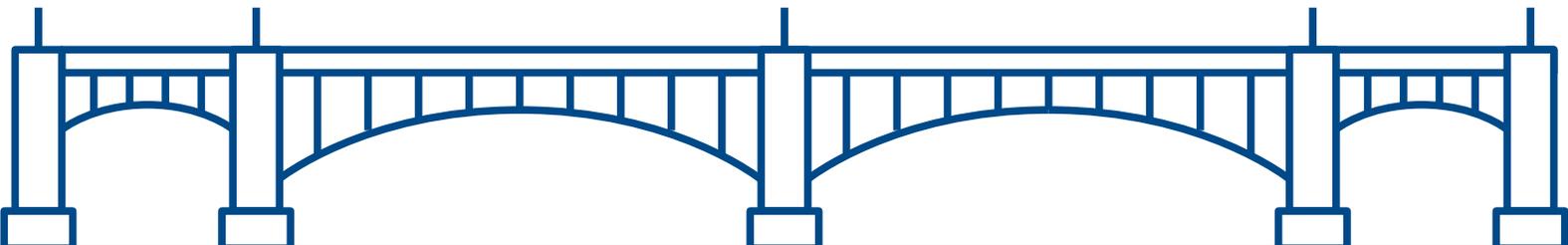
663 attendees in Risk Management Services training

450 officers participated in law enforcement simulator training, representing **13** departments

\$450,000 available in SCMIT and SCMIRF grants, up from \$350,000 in previous year. More than **\$3.4 million** in grants awarded to date

More than **\$350,000** awarded through 14 Hometown Economic Development Grants. **Winners:**

- Abbeville
- Awendaw
- Calhoun Falls
- Cheraw
- Dillon
- Edgefield
- Inman
- Jackson
- Jonesville
- Marion
- Prosperity
- Sellers
- Six Mile
- Union



The internal services of the Association, such as technology, finance and human resources, play a critical role in providing support to the staff so that the organization can deliver valuable services to South Carolina’s cities and towns and continue to seek ways to improve its efficiency.

The Municipal Association’s Finance department has pursued banking and investment changes which have improved its income. A bank transition created a three-year savings of \$105,000 for the Association, while a change in short-term investment strategies created a 612% increase in extra earnings over a three-year period.

The Association is continuing to digitize operations whenever possible and improve the ease of use of its publications and products. It began using a new mass email system to make email messages more dynamic, clearly branded and responsive to display on computers or mobile devices. The new tool has improved the development and delivery of emails and has provided staff with analytics to measure engagement. Many of the affiliate associations, which had provided printed and mailed brochures for their meetings, switched to online-only registration brochures, reducing costs without creating a drop in registrants.

Ongoing computing improvements greatly helped during the Association’s transition to working from home in March. The IT department moved quickly to obtain new portal licenses to allow staff to access the computer system remotely while also setting up virtual meeting accounts. The Association’s finance department had transitioned to paperless credit card statements by the time of the work-from-home transition, making credit card accounting much easier. Once Association staff was working from home, IT staff streamlined the process of nearly 200 credit card refunds for affiliate meeting cancellations, while also transferring many Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government classes from in-person events to online training.

Risk Management Services staff pursued several automations to enhance their services. They worked with the Association’s technology partner VC3 to create automatic monthly loss control reports, keeping staff from manually generating these reports while on member visits. Also, monthly raw loss reports are now emailed to SCMIT and SCMIRF loss control contacts, fire chiefs and police chiefs, helping them better understand the sources of insurance claims. Staff also automated the deductible analysis in its policy system, allowing underwriting staff to generate visually interesting deductible information for member consideration immediately.



Directory of Services

More than 90 years ago, a small group of local elected officials realized they had to work together to meet the challenges of the changing times. With this mission in mind, they organized the Municipal Association of South Carolina.

The Municipal Association is still dedicated to the principle of its founding members: to join together to pursue initiatives cities and towns can carry out more efficiently and effectively by working together through the Association than by working individually.

A nonpartisan, nonprofit association representing all of the state's 271 incorporated cities and towns, the Municipal Association fulfills its mission through **shared voices, knowledge and solutions**.

Voices

From the very start of the Association in the early 1930s, South Carolina municipal officials understood that only by working together could they effectively communicate the needs and views of municipal government to state and federal lawmakers.

Lobbying the State Legislature and Congress

The Association advocates for changes in state law that give cities more authority to better serve residents and businesses and testifies against legislation that would harm cities. Partnerships play an important part in the Association's advocacy efforts. The Association monitors federal legislation through the National League of Cities and advocates on behalf of South Carolina cities and towns when federal issues affect the state.

Staff Contacts: Casey Fields, Melissa Harrill, Joannie Nickel, Scott Slatton, Erica Wright

Regional Advocacy Meetings

Each fall, the Association hosts 10 Regional Advocacy Meetings around the state to talk about the challenges facing cities and towns and how changes to state law could help meet those challenges. Based in part on input gathered during these conversations, the Association's legislative committee and board of directors set the Association's annual Advocacy Initiatives. *Staff Contact: Casey Fields*

Legislative Tracking and Reports

During the South Carolina legislative session, the Association actively monitors bills that affect cities and towns and updates the Association's online tracking system to reflect relevant daily bill activity. The online tracking system gives municipal leaders another tool they can use to follow subcommittee, committee and floor action.

Each Friday during the legislative session, municipal officials receive *From the Dome to Your Home*, which recaps the week's major legislative events and previews the upcoming week's activities. The report is also posted on the Association's website and shared with more than 5,000 social media followers. The legislative team expands on the report with additional information through weekly episodes of the *City Quick Connect* podcast during the legislative session.

At the end of the legislative session, the Association produces 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

In February, Hometown Legislative Action Day draws local officials from all over the state to Columbia to receive updates on current legislative issues, visit their local legislators at the State House and connect with legislators at the Association's annual legislative reception. *Staff Contacts: Scott Slatton, Ken Ivey*

Public Engagement

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

Social Media Channels

The Association's Twitter (@MuniAssnSC) and Facebook (MuniAssnSC.StrongSCcities) accounts provide up-to-the-minute information on State House activity and share good news stories about cities and towns. A regular schedule of social media posts highlighting *Uptown* stories amplifies the online version of the monthly newsletter and to the Association's website. The Association's Instagram (StrongSCcities) account highlights the strength and services of South Carolina's 271 cities and towns. *Staff Contact: Meredith Houck*

Publication Partnerships

Several successful publication partnerships spotlight ways strong cities underpin the state's economic development success.

The Association partners with *Columbia Business Monthly* and *Greenville Business Magazine* by providing a bimonthly column highlighting business-friendly practices in cities and towns. The partnership with *SC Biz* magazine to publish the Association's biannual *Cities Mean Business* magazine highlights how city amenities, initiatives and services improve residents' quality of life, which helps attract economic investment.

Through these partnerships, the value of cities to the state's economic health reaches a wide audience of business leaders and state policy makers. *Staff Contact: Russell Cox*

City Connect Blog and City Quick Connect Podcast

The *City Connect* blog offers short, timely updates on a variety of issues. The blog packages information in a format that is useful not only to local officials but also to the news media, legislators and the public, and can be subscribed to through www.masc.sc. The *City Quick Connect* podcast gives listeners a chance to hear the latest from Municipal Association staff and others about the issues, the legislation and the support services impacting cities and towns. *Staff Contact: Russell Cox*

Knowledge

The Association plays an important role in developing municipal elected officials' and employees' knowledge and skills through a wide range of training programs, publications and meetings.

Affiliate Associations

The Municipal Association supports 12 affiliate organizations by providing training and networking for a variety of local government positions with specialized training needs.

In addition to traditional face-to-face training and networking opportunities, the affiliate associations offer online communities for members to share best practices and to pose specific questions related to their local government responsibilities. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

Association of South Carolina Mayors

The Association of South Carolina Mayors provides 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. *Staff Contact: Casey Fields*

Building Officials Association of SC

The Building Officials Association of SC is a professional development organization of building and code enforcement officials. Members are dedicated to safeguarding life, health and property through the uniform application, interpretation and enforcement of building codes adopted by local governments. BOASC offers education and training opportunities to its members, promotes the importance of building codes and their enforcement, monitors issues before the SC Building Codes Council and the General Assembly, and provides technical assistance to local government officials. *Staff Contact: Elizabeth Copeland*

Municipal Court Administration Association of SC

The Municipal Court Administration Association of South Carolina offers training at two workshops for 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 recognize these workshops for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Sara Whitaker*

Municipal Technology Association of SC

The Municipal Technology Association of SC promotes municipalities' effective use of technology. MTASC exposes its members to a broad range of technology systems, platforms and solutions. The training serves IT staff and those with GIS responsibilities, in addition to employees who work in other departments but have technology-related duties. *Staff Contact: Sara Whitaker*

SC Association of Municipal Power Systems

Twenty of the municipal electric utilities are members of the SC Association of Municipal Power Systems. Originally, SCAMPS existed solely for its members to help one another during times of disaster. Although mutual aid is still the backbone of SCAMPS, the affiliate's scope also includes legislative initiatives and training. *Staff Contact: Elizabeth Copeland*

SC Association of Stormwater Managers

The SC Association of Stormwater Managers offers its members quarterly training on stormwater management policies and best practices. The SC Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors recognizes the quarterly training sessions for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Sara Whitaker*

SC Business Licensing Officials Association

The South Carolina Business Licensing Officials Association promotes best practices for administering and enforcing the local business license tax. Through rigorous training sessions, members learn skills and practices that make licensing in their cities and towns more efficient and business friendly.

The professional designation programs of Accreditation in Business Licensing and Masters in Business Licensing reflects members' dedication to continuing education. *Staff Contact: Elizabeth Copeland*

SC Community Development Association

The South Carolina Community Development Association provides educational forums for its members to address economic and community development needs. Members include municipal, county, regional and state community development professionals; employees of private companies with an interest in community development; elected officials; and volunteers. *Staff Contact: Sara Whitaker*

SC Municipal Attorneys Association

The South Carolina Municipal Attorneys Association's annual meeting covers issues important to municipal attorneys, whether working as municipal staff or as a municipality's outside counsel. The Supreme Court of South Carolina Commission on CLE and Specialization approves this training session for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Eric Shytle*

SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association

The South Carolina Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association offers training programs covering the diverse responsibilities of its members. All of the training sessions qualify for a combination of 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: Elizabeth Copeland*

SC Municipal Human Resources Association

The South Carolina Municipal Human Resources Association promotes sound human resources administration and encourages innovative programs. Through its training programs, MHRA provides information and the opportunity to exchange ideas among its members. The national Human Resources Certification Institute and the Society for Human Resources Management recognize this training for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Sara Whitaker*

SC Utility Billing Association

The South Carolina Utility Billing Association provides training and networking opportunities for its members, including billing clerks, meter readers and department managers. SCUBA's meetings encompass a variety of topics focused on customer service, safety in the workplace, and new technologies to increase the efficiencies of utility billing and collections. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

Training Institutes

Educational opportunities are available to municipal officials through four training institutes.

SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

The SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government trains elected officials to increase their understanding of local government operations. Elected officials take seven required courses to complete the institute. The required courses consist of two day-long sessions held each February in Columbia the day after Hometown Legislative Action Day and five additional classes, held yearly at the 10 councils of governments' locations or through an on-demand format found on the Association's website. *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. Advanced Institute graduates also have the opportunity to participate in an Advanced Continuing Education program. *Staff Contact: Urica Floyd*

Business Licensing Training Institute

The Business Licensing Training Institute educates municipal and county officials on the basics of administering a business licensing program. To complete the institute, officials must complete three day-long training classes, which are offered across three years. Once they complete the training classes, officials may take an exam to earn the Accreditation in Business Licensing credential. The SC Business Licensing Officials Association sponsors the institute. *Staff Contact: Elizabeth Copeland*

Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute

The Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute offers instruction in several areas, including forms of government, financial management, the role of the municipal clerk and business licensing. The Association sponsors MCTI 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. *Staff Contact: Elizabeth Copeland*

Annual Meeting

Each summer, the Annual Meeting brings municipal officials together for training, networking and discussion of issues of common interest. Officials hear from state and nationally known speakers, participate in sessions, and learn about new technology and developments in local government. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

Technical Assistance

Field Services

The Association's two field services managers travel the state to offer hands-on technical assistance, training and consultation to help municipalities address challenges. *Staff Contacts: Charlie Barrineau, Jeff Shacker*

Main Street South Carolina

Main Street SC helps its members revitalize their downtowns into vibrant centers of commerce and community by using the National Main Street Center's "Main Street Approach," which emphasizes organization, promotion, design and economic vitality. Main Street SC empowers member programs, of varying levels of preparedness and resources, with the knowledge, skills, tools and organizational structure necessary to succeed in downtown revitalization. At the startup level, members build capacity for downtown revitalization. At the Aspiring Main Street level, participants receive three years of intensive technical assistance and training, and then transition into a Classic Main Street program. Members at the highest level meet national accreditation standards.

Each year, Main Street SC honors exceptional member accomplishments through its Inspiration Awards. *Staff Contact: Jenny Boulware*

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.

- *Annexation Handbook*
- *Comprehensive Planning Guide for Local Governments*
- *Election Handbook*
- *Forms and Powers of Municipal Government*
- *Handbook for Municipal Officials in South Carolina* (updated in 2017)
- *The Municipal Association of South Carolina 1930–2015: A History of Shared Voices, Shared Knowledge, Shared Solutions*
- *How to Conduct Effective Meetings* (updated in 2017)
- *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
- *South Carolina Business Licensing Handbook* (updated in 2019)
- *Tips for Hometown Media Success*

Staff Contact: Eric Budds

Website

The Municipal Association's website, www.masc.sc, offers more than 2,000 pages; 2,000 documents, presentations and links to external resources; and more than 600 in-state municipal job postings. With a responsive design to fit the needs and formats of mobile and desktop devices, the site includes a powerful search engine and information center to help users navigate to specific resources of interest. *Staff Contact: Meredith Houck*

Uptown

Uptown is a monthly magazine-style newsletter in print and electronic formats that features articles on a variety of topics important to municipal officials. Each issue's special section looks in depth at a topic central to local government. Subscribe to the email edition of *Uptown* at www.masc.sc.

A weekly e-newsletter, *Uptown Update*, informs municipal officials about a variety of timely opportunities, including meeting registrations, training events and grants. A regular feature, "In Case You Missed It," gives *Uptown Update* readers a second look at past articles and posts from the Association's publications. *Staff Contact: Russell Cox*

Daily News

The *Daily News* email provides links to news stories about the state's smallest rural towns to its largest cities. The articles highlight how local governments deliver services. Subscribe at www.masc.sc. *Staff Contact: Russell Cox*

The Uplift

The Uplift is an email delivering a collection of news links every Wednesday showcasing South Carolina cities and towns at their best. Subscribe at www.masc.sc. *Staff Contact: Russell Cox*

Achievement Awards

The Achievement Awards recognize successful and innovative projects that improve the quality of life for residents and add value to communities. The program also encourages municipal officials to share ideas. *Staff Contact: Meredith Houck*

Solutions

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 provides an online portal for cities participating in the insurance, brokers, and telecommunications tax collection programs as well as the Setoff Debt program to securely access current and past collection program documents.

Broker's Tax Collection Program

The SC Department of Insurance collects the municipal broker's premium tax, and cities and towns contract with the Municipal Association to disburse the tax. *Staff Contacts: Caitlin Cothran, Kaylee Summerton*

Insurance Tax Collection Program

The Municipal Association collects municipal business license taxes due from insurance companies and distributes the taxes owed to municipalities.

The Association notifies all insurance companies of the payment process, uses industry data to confirm all companies paid according to municipal ordinances, and provides a portal for the reporting and payment of the tax. Cities save time and money by contracting with the Association for these services rather than all duplicating the same processes. Insurance companies save time and money by reporting to and paying one entity rather than multiple cities and towns. Many pay the tax through the Association's portal. *Staff Contacts: Fran Adcock, Caitlin Cothran, Anita Lancaster, Kaylee Summerton*

Setoff Debt Collection Program

In cooperation with the SC Department of Revenue, the Association collects delinquent debts, such as utility bills, taxes and court fines. These payments are remitted to participating entities to whom the debts were owed. The Association provides software to all participating entities to streamline their program administration and ensure compliance with state regulations. *Staff Contacts: Caitlin Cothran, Anita Lancaster*

Telecommunications Tax Collection Program

The Association collects business license taxes owed to participating municipalities from telecommunication companies.

Cities and towns contract with the Association to collect the tax as provided for in state law. The contract streamlines the payment process for telecommunications companies. It also saves cities and towns time and money by eliminating the need for each to perform the same processes. *Staff Contacts: Caitlin Cothran, Kaylee Summerton*

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 program 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 as well as property and automobile coverage.

The SC Municipal Insurance Trust, provides workers' compensation coverage for municipal employees.

RMS provides grants, attorney hotlines, employee training and loss control services to members. These services help members improve risk management efforts, prevent claims and reduce the cost of insurance. *Staff contact: Heather Ricard*

Training

RMS members have access to online and in-person training at no charge.

- Customized, on-site training: RMS provides training for members in their hometowns, allowing city employees to attend sessions together.
- Online training: The online training opportunities include a variety of risk management, human resources, safety and law enforcement topics, including use of force and pursuit driving.
- Statewide and regional training: RMS offers members regional training sessions on topics such as law enforcement liability, OSHA confined space training, risk management 101 and defensive driving.
- Risk Management Institute: RMI offers participants from SCMIT- and SCMIRF-member organizations specialized training in the role of risk manager and safety coordinator.
- *RiskLetter*: The quarterly e-newsletter provides information on a wide range of risk management topics.
- Law enforcement simulator: RMS offers members access to a law enforcement training simulator that allows officers to practice their decision-making skills and responses to resistance.

Loss Control/Technical Assistance

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

- Model policies and procedures manuals for law enforcement and fire services: SCMIT and SCMIRF members receive updated fire and law enforcement policies.
- One-on-one technical assistance visits: The loss control staff meet with member organizations to evaluate their safety and loss control programs.
- Legal hotlines: SCMIRF members can access up to 10 hours of free legal advice on each legal hotline for labor and liability issues.
- Education tools: SCMIRF members have access to cybersecurity services through the online tool, eRisk Hub, in addition to specialized toolkits, including parks and recreation liability, public officials' liability, sewer backups, special events liability and workers' compensation.

Grants

The RMS grant program helps RMS members purchase products or equipment to reduce the frequency and severity of claims.

- SCMIRF awards the Law Enforcement Liability Reduction Grant Program grants to member law enforcement agencies to purchase stun guns or Tasers, Taser cameras, body cameras and equipment.
- SCMIRF awards the Public Works Property and Liability Reduction Grant Program grants to member public works and utilities departments to purchase items to address the frequency and severity of claims, including back-up cameras, collision avoidance systems, concrete scarifiers, sewer cameras, meter locks and other equipment.
- SCMIT awards grants to member law enforcement, fire and public works departments to purchase work-zone safety equipment, soft body armor and other protective gear.

South Carolina Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust

The South Carolina Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust allows cities to set aside funds for nonpension benefits, such as retiree healthcare, as required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. Each member shares in the Trust's administrative and investment related expenses, lowering the overall cost of compliance for each local government. *Staff Contact: Heather Ricard*

Hometown Economic Development Grants

The Municipal Association's Hometown Economic Development Grants provide cities and towns with funds to implement economic development projects that will have positive effects on the quality of life in their communities. The Hometown Economic Development Grants are awarded annually. *Staff Contact: Scott Slatton*

Technology Services

The Association, in partnership with VC3, provides discounted 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 security, disaster recovery, strategic technology planning and voice communication services. *Staff Contact: Jake Broom*

Cable Franchise Assistance and Telecommunication Infrastructure Siting Program

The Association continues to partners with Local Government Services LLC, to assist members with cable franchises, pole attachment agreements, and cellular and small cell antenna leases and ordinances. This program gives local governments access to the expertise required to negotiate benefits and services with reasonable terms. *Staff Contact: Eric Budds*



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