

# UPTOWN

## Annual Hometown Legislative Action Day a success

The timing for MASC’s Hometown Legislative Action Day could not have been better when more than 550 municipal officials descended on the Statehouse February 22. Several major legislative initiatives were on the front burner in the General Assembly that day, and delegates had the chance to make their case on property tax, eminent domain, cable franchising and billboard legislation.

The day started with MASC President Elouise James, councilmember from the City of Clemson, welcoming a room packed with delegates representing more than 120 municipalities. Following the recognition of the 23 graduates of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government, James rallied the troops with the theme of “singing with one voice.”

“Many voices collectively singing are much stronger than everyone humming along by themselves,” James said. “Nothing is more important than letting our legislative delegations know — loud and clear — how their actions in Columbia are affecting our citizens back home.”

James outlined the three major legislative challenges for local governments during this session — property tax reform, changes in eminent domain legislation and threats to oversight of local franchising authority.

“We are facing a challenging and difficult legislative session this year,” James said. “Home Rule is being threatened on many levels by proposed changes in property taxes and eminent domain and by the deep

pockets of big business trying to take away our constitutional authority to control the use of our local streets and rights of way.”

Following James’ remarks, Dr. Holley Ulbrich, alumni professor of economics at Clemson University, continued the “one song, one voice” theme with her remarks about the challenges facing local governments in articulating our message to the General Assembly.

“A fair distribution of the property tax burden that generates enough revenue for local public purposes and doesn’t burden the poor with excessive sales taxes is way too big a message to try to sing in unison, let alone fit on a bumper sticker,” Ulbrich said. “It’s up to us to reframe the debate and engage

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### Important Annual Meeting dates and deadlines

- **May 11** Brochures mailed and information posted on MASC Web site
- **May 30** Housing deadline for Palmetto Dunes Villas
- **June 24** Housing deadline for Hilton, Crowne Plaza, Marriott and Holiday Inn
- **July 5** Registration deadline for Annual Meeting
- **July 27-30** Annual Meeting

**April 2006**

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enough of our fellow citizens and our legislators to stop that freight train called property tax relief.” (Find complete text and video streaming of Ulbrich’s comments on the HLAD page of the MASC Web site at [www.masc.sc/education/06HLAD.htm](http://www.masc.sc/education/06HLAD.htm))

Following Ulbrich’s discussion of property tax issues, MASC Executive Director Howard Duvall and Gary Cannon, director of intergovernmental affairs, briefed the delegates on the specifics of MASC’s top three legislative issues of property tax, eminent domain and cable franchising.

The day before HLAD delegates came to town, municipal interests had a major victory when Governor Sanford vetoed flawed billboard legislation. Since the veto was up for an override vote the day of HLAD, Cannon encouraged delegates to meet with legislators and persuade them to sustain the veto.

Before heading to the Statehouse, James continued the music theme by introducing a specially produced music video with a song focusing on the value of city governments. She said, “Many great causes have rousing songs

associated with them. Look at how college fight songs rally the fans. Clemson has ‘Tiger Rag’ to get team members and fans stirred up on game day. USC’s ‘2001’ never fails to bring the crowd to its feet. So now we need to strike up the band with our own rallying cry — with a little bluegrass twist.” (Visit the HLAD Web page to access the music video.)

By the end of the video presentation, delegates were tapping their toes and singing along, ready to march to the Statehouse. Upon arrival at the Statehouse, delegates spread out to meet with senators in their offices and representatives in the lobby.

After a walk back from the Statehouse, where delegates had buttonholed legislators on property tax reform, cable franchise legislation, eminent domain and the billboard veto, they returned to the Marriott for a lunch presentation by George Fletcher, executive director of the South Carolina Council on Competitiveness.

Fletcher focused his comments on why cities are such a valuable component of South Carolina’s efforts to become more competitive in the nation-

al and global marketplaces. Particularly, he noted the importance of attracting young people to cities. For them, he said, “The quality of life and the sense of place are hugely important.”

Don Borut, president of the National League of Cities, addressed the delegates on federal issues. He observed that the legislative problems we face in South Carolina regarding telecommunications, property tax and eminent domain are the same challenges faced in many other states.

Before delegates adjourned to the Legislative Reception, they participated in the two final breakout sessions of the day. Holley Ulbrich gave a detailed presentation of her property tax study for the Palmetto Institute (See the HLAD Web page for her slides), and Reba Campbell, MASC’s director of communications, rolled out plans for the Vision SC initiative (see article below).

*For photos, copies of handouts, streaming video of presentations and information on the music video, visit the “Featured Links” section of the MASC Web site, or go to [www.masc.sc/education/06HLAD.htm](http://www.masc.sc/education/06HLAD.htm).*

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## Vision SC initiative introduces first phase of plans and resources at HLAD

In her opening remarks to delegates during February’s Hometown Legislative Action Day, MASC President Elouise James articulated the challenge facing municipalities in the General Assembly.

“There is obviously a disconnect between what we do to make our cities and towns quality places to live

and how the legislators in the General Assembly perceive what our intent is,” James said. “What’s often missing in the debate is the recognition and understanding of the value to the state that comes from having strong cities and towns. We have to turn the focus toward talking about valuable services and quality of life for our citizens instead of just dollars and cents.”

James made the connection that citizens and legislators need to see and understand the value derived from their tax dollars wisely invested in services and spent based on their own community needs. What works in Columbia or Clemson might not work in Spartanburg or Summerville.

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“So we’re doing something about this challenge,” James said. “Last year at this meeting, we started talking about the idea we’re calling Vision SC. Bottom line, Vision SC is our avenue to really sing with one voice — not just today, but for years to come.”

At a session later in the day at HLAD, Reba Campbell, MASC’s director of communications, laid out the plans for this long-term initiative. Mayor Bill Barnet of Spartanburg kicked off the session, noting that municipal governments can no longer afford to let others frame our story. Barnet was one of the 14 mayors in the “25K” cities (those cities with a population of more than 25,000) who initiated the idea of Vision SC as a way for all municipalities to communicate our message with one voice.

Campbell outlined the three primary messages of Vision SC to be woven through all aspects of the initiative:

- **Value** — Strong cities and towns are essential to jobs, prosperity and quality of life for all South Carolinians.
- **Partnerships** — South Carolinians reach their full potential when all levels of government, business, education and community organizations work together.
- **Resources** — Different conditions around the state require cities and towns to have flexible resources and authority to meet citizen needs.

“This is not a short-term ad campaign or marketing plan,” Campbell stressed. “Rather, it’s a long-term approach to change the mindset of our state’s opinion leaders to understand and appreciate the value cities and towns bring to the state’s economic viability.”

Every city and town has individual strengths, varying resource needs and different ways to tell their own story. The plan for Vision SC is for MASC to develop a variety of resources that can be adapted by any city. Campbell rolled out the first four steps in the Vision SC planning process.

First is the recently launched Vision SC Resources Toolkit on the MASC Web site (see the “Featured Links” section at [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc)). The online toolkit showcases “best practices” used by cities and towns to communicate with citizens. Visitors can find sources for data used for comparisons in making the case on various issues. The toolkit also contains helpful professional development resources for municipal staff charged with public information duties.

The second step is hiring a communications agency to develop an overarching campaign for Vision SC. The campaign will incorporate the three Vision SC messages with a consistent look, strong visuals and catchy creative. MASC will contract with an agency to develop this adaptable toolkit that can be incorporated into any city’s communication efforts.

“We are competing for our citizens’ attention every day. If we are to be successful, our message must cut through the clutter of information overload,” Campbell said. “It must be consistent, and it must be memorable.” Look for some of the initial promotional elements of the campaign to be rolled out at the Annual Meeting in July.

The third part of the initial plan is to develop a statewide observance to celebrate cities and their value. Early plans call for a kickoff of a “Celebrate Cities” week in February 2007, possibly to coincide with next year’s Hometown Legislative Action Day.

MASC would develop a working template of ideas that cities and towns could customize for their own use — anything from curriculum packages to local observances to “mayor for a day” events. There are infinite possibilities to make this an engaging and far-reaching effort that could grow every year.

The final part of the initial plan is a stepped-up media relations effort. This includes developing ongoing partnerships with *South Carolina Magazine* and Clemson University’s “Your Day” program on ETV Radio. The online toolkit previously mentioned includes an editorial calendar that will allow coordinated planning for media pitches around the state on similar issues at the same time. Finally, MASC will take a more aggressive and pro-active role in using technology to get information to reporters and editors around the state.

Linda McConnell, assistant city manager in Anderson, noted the Anderson City Council is already looking at ways to better communicate the value of its city to citizens and legislators. “Vision SC is right on target for where we want to go,” she said. “I’m very excited MASC is providing us with tools so we can all speak with one voice around the state and learn from what others are doing.”

*Through the public information officers (PIO) listserve, MASC delivers a weekly e-mail with Vision SC resources and ideas. Elected officials and municipal staff are encouraged to sign up at [www.masc.sc/resources/listserves.htm#available](http://www.masc.sc/resources/listserves.htm#available).*

# Snapshots of Hometown Legislative Action Day



## A bridge to the future

The South Carolina Community Development Association's (SCCDA) theme for its 2006 Annual Meeting, "A Bridge to the Future," describes exactly what the Association aspires to be. The Association's goal is to become a conduit in the state as it collaborates with other organizations to provide the best and newest tools, resources and information to South Carolina communities.

To kick off this year's Annual Meeting, George Fletcher, executive director of the South Carolina Council on Competitiveness (SCCOC), will deliver the keynote, making the connection between the importance of strong cities and towns to the state's efforts to boost its competitiveness.

The Council on Competitiveness is the result of collaborations spearheaded by the Palmetto Institute and the South Carolina Department of Commerce. The Council includes representatives from more than 50 business, government and education organizations intent on ratcheting up the state's economy. Spartanburg Mayor Bill Bamet was one of the initial appointees to this group and serves on the Council's executive committee. The focus of the Council is developing industry clusters, increasing collaboration among industries, encouraging educational initiatives and promoting South Carolina successes.

Fletcher has proven to be a strong advocate for communicating the value of

cities and towns as an important part of the Council's efforts to boost the state's competitiveness. He addressed more than 500 municipal leaders at MASC's Home-town Legislative Action Day in February, clearly making the connection between the Council's competitiveness efforts and the services and quality of life provided by cities and towns. At the SCCDA meeting, Fletcher will focus on public policy and its impact on community development issues.

The SCCDA Annual Meeting will also be the scene of a debate on "big box" issues in South Carolina. Big box development is said to encourage sprawl and have a negative impact on downtown development and smart growth policies. Community leaders on both sides will air their opinions.

Carole Mason McMeekin, SCCDA president, said, "It doesn't matter which side of the fence you are on — when you hear the terms 'big box,' 'smart growth' or 'sprawl,' there is a strong and immediate reaction."

As elected officials, community developers and citizens ponder the future of development, one point that continues to be made is smart growth is better for the local economy than big box and sprawl growth. Research shows smart growth costs less than sprawl — 25 percent less for roads, 15 percent less for utilities and 5 percent less for schools. Smart growth

attracts businesses and a skilled workforce and increases property values.

"Yes, big box development can provide a short-term economic pop," McMeekin said, "but studies show this type of growth drags down local economies over the long term."

Big box development eventually leads to the decline of locally owned businesses and downtown commercial centers, increases traffic and can deter new businesses and new home owners — resulting in reduced tax revenue, fewer overall jobs, lower property values and higher expenses for local government.

Smart growth is not an argument for or against growth. The question boils down to shaping and managing growth in line with community values. Which side of the fence do you sit on? Or are you negotiating the sharp edges of the picket fence?

Other Annual Meeting topics include funding, planning and implementing a master plan; legislative overhaul of economic development; trends in community development; and stress and time management.

*The SCCDA 2006 Annual Meeting will be held May 21-23 at the Embassy Suites at Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach. For more information, contact Beppie LeGrand, MASC's Main Street SC manager, at 803.933.1231 or [blegrand@masc.sc](mailto:blegrand@masc.sc).*

### News Briefs



■ The 2006 *Municipal Officials and Legislative Directory* is now available. Each municipality will receive one complimentary copy of the *Directory*. For additional copies, contact Michelle Willm at 803.933.1259 or [mwillm@masc.sc](mailto:mwillm@masc.sc), or visit the MASC Web site ([www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc)) for an order form.

■ MASC is hosting a meeting for law enforcement and public safety communications professionals, municipal public information officers and other municipal staff with communications responsibilities to exchange ideas and share best practices on May 16 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the MASC offices in Columbia. For more information, contact Reba Campbell, MASC director of communications, at 803.933.1245 or [rcampbell@masc.sc](mailto:rcampbell@masc.sc).

■ The National League of Cities is accepting nominations for its 2006 Awards for Municipal Excellence. The awards recognize excellence and creativity in municipal programs. Nomination forms are available on the NLC Web site at [www.nlc.org/resources\\_for\\_cities/awards\\_recognition/7760.cfm](http://www.nlc.org/resources_for_cities/awards_recognition/7760.cfm). The deadline for submission is June 21.

# Focus on technology

by Gary Mullis, PE, Utility Technology Engineers-Consultants

**Question 1:** What is the next big thing in computer applications?

**Definitive answer:** Mobile broadband technology that allows continuous high-speed access to the Internet while traveling in a defined area.

**Question 2:** What is the best technology for mobile broadband applications?

**Honest answer:** No one knows (yet).

**WiFi** – High-speed wireless communication

**WiMAX** – Higher speed than WiFi, more security and less susceptible to interference

Companies from A (AT&T) to Z (Z-Com) with more than a few notables in between (Intel and Motorola) are betting billions of dollars that citizens, industry and the public sector will demand and pay for mobile broadband technology.

Just as the mobile phone has become ubiquitous and indispensable for voice communications within municipal government, the latest mobile broadband technology is surely going to be the next must-have demanded by police, fire and utility managers. The possible applications are numerous:

- Firefighters downloading building plans and information about on-site security hazards en route to an emergency
- Patrol units having real-time access to surveillance cameras
- Police in the field having direct access to driver records, court documents and criminal records
- Utility crews downloading detailed work orders between service calls
- City managers having remote access to the city's network

An infrastructure that could provide mobile broadband connectivity could also provide many fixed-site applications:

- Connectivity for remote sites, such as satellite libraries, neighborhood-based police stations, fire stations and recreational facilities

- Automatic data collection for water, gas and electric meters with real-time modeling
- Real-time traffic monitoring and signal light control
- Remote control and data collection for substations, lift stations, pumping stations and elevated tanks

I have spent the last 15 years designing fiber-optic networks for municipal and utility applications. I was convinced that the unlimited bandwidth and the security and immunity to electromagnetic interference made optical fiber networks the only choice for municipal networks.

While I continue to believe optical fiber is the best choice for network backbones, optical fiber has two unavoidable limitations as a solution for remote municipal sites, businesses and residential users. First, optical fiber is a fixed-site solution. Second, it is extremely expensive to deploy.

With wireless solutions, users can be added incrementally without additional costs once the backbone system is complete — up to the design limit of the base stations. However, until recently, wireless systems also had several important limitations:

- Low bandwidth
- Line-of-site requirements for broadband
- Small coverage areas
- Low-level security

- Fixed site
- Limited real-time applications for voice and video

A variety of companies, industry groups and technical societies are working on new technologies to provide wireless connectivity that is broadband, mobile, long-range and has a high level of security and Quality of Service (QoS), which is important for applications requiring real-time or near-real-time delivery such as voice or video.

The most common wireless computer technology today is WiFi. In fact, most laptops sold today come standard with a WiFi network card. There are more than 100 million WiFi-enabled devices in use today. WiFi-enabled devices allow a user to access the Internet or a private network by connecting to a WiFi access point. These are now common at many hotels, coffee shops and libraries. Areas covered by a WiFi access point are commonly called "WiFi HotSpots."

The latest trend for municipalities interested in providing wireless coverage over larger geographic areas is WiFi mesh network technologies. WiFi mesh networks are a collection of WiFi access points grouped together to provide contiguous coverage in areas as small as a core city center or as large as hundreds of square miles.

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In these networks, one or more WiFi access points acts as the gateway connected directly to the Internet or a private network. The other access points communicate to the Internet by “hopping” network traffic across neighboring access points until a gateway access point is reached. WiFi mesh networks provide support for mobility and allow WiFi-enabled vehicles to travel around the coverage area without losing their connection.

Corpus Christi, TX, has attached 300 wireless access points to traffic signals, street lights, water towers and buildings to provide access across 24 square miles. Within five years, city officials hope to provide access to more than 147 square miles. San Francisco, CA; Tucson, AZ; and Providence, RI, are also building wire-

less mesh networks. In South Carolina, Camden has launched a WiFi mesh network covering its downtown (see related article below).

In 2004, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Inc. (IEEE) published a new wireless standard known as WiMAX. Many news outlets heralded WiMAX as “WiFi on steroids” and speculated WiMAX would begin a revolution in mobile connectivity. WiMAX, while similar to WiFi, is a different technology conceived as a broadband mobile mesh technology with a high level of security and QoS.

The version of the WiMAX standard supporting mobility was published by IEEE in December 2005. Equipment certified to support the newer version of the standard is not expected to be available until 2007 or 2008.

It remains to be seen if WiMAX will become the prevalent standard for mobile broadband, but I am convinced that the market for mobile broadband is enormous and that business, government and individuals will want, get and then come to expect mobile connectivity. I believe the only question for municipalities is, “How is our town going to deploy the technology?” — as a capital purchase, as a leased expense, as an investment in economic development or as an investment that could provide a non-tax revenue stream?

*For more information, contact Gary Mullis at [gmullis@utilitytec.com](mailto:gmullis@utilitytec.com).*

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## Camden launches WiFi mesh network

**I**n March, the City of Camden launched a WiFi mesh network in its downtown business district as a free service to citizens. City Council’s initial goal was to provide wireless Internet in downtown Camden to enhance its image, attract new residents and businesses and stimulate downtown shopping.

The project will support the Kershaw County School district’s initiative of providing laptops for its eighth-grade students and will be used by the City’s public safety department to help it move toward “paperless” administrative procedures. The network also has the potential of being used by the public works department for remote power and water meter reading.

“Council started meeting about the feasibility of broadband over power lines, but concluded pretty quickly the technology was too expensive and not where we wanted to be,” said Frank Broom, Camden city manager. “A more proven technology approach evolved, and Council approved a \$35,000 budget for the pilot project.”

In planning and constructing the system, the Council used industry best practices to ensure future technological advances could be incorporated into the City system. “We know the technology will change and improve,” Broom said. “We are trying to plan a system that can incorporate these future changes.”

Columbia-based VC3 began designing the network in the fall of 2005, using Cisco’s “wireless mesh” product. Seven access points were installed on City-owned utility poles and on a water tower, allowing access over the 12- to 15-block downtown area. The City cut installation costs by using its electrical workers to install the access points.

Acknowledging the advantage Camden has from being a Public Power System, Broom said, “The technology is not so expensive to be beyond the reach of non-power cities. All that is truly necessary is the will of the city council to allocate the resources necessary to develop the system.”

# Billboard vote a clear sign of lawmakers' disdain for citizens

The State editorial writer Cindi Ross Scoppe articulately outlines legislative efforts to further erode local governments' ability to control their own zoning and land use policies. Her February 26 column is reprinted with permission.

Think of it as a sloppy wet kiss for the billboard industry.

Actually, that doesn't begin to capture the excess ... the promiscuity ... the whorishness of our legislators. But I'm simply not going to write the appropriate analogy in a family newspaper.

Suffice it to say that the billboard industry has no reason to respect the General Assembly now that morning has dawned.

Neither do we.

If that sounds like an overstatement, you probably don't realize how far lawmakers went to satisfy the industry. Maybe all you know is that they passed a bill to make local governments pay billboard owners who are forced to relocate their signs, Gov. Mark Sanford vetoed the bill, and lawmakers fell all over themselves in their rush to override the veto.

You might have been surprised that uber-libertarian Mark Sanford would object to that. After all, it doesn't take a libertarian to think the government ought to pay you if it makes you stop using your property the way you've been using it for years.

If that were what the Billboard Promotion Act did, no one would have objected.

But that is not what it does.

As Mr. Sanford explained in his unread veto letter, the new law puts billboards "in a position superior to homeowners, farmers and other businesses."

The new law gives billboard owners the best of both worlds: They pay taxes as if billboards were personal

property, which goes down in taxable value each year. But if the county orders a billboard removed, they get paid as if the signs were real estate, which goes up in value each year.

Except it's worse than that.

The law doesn't just require a city to pay billboard owners what the signs are worth, as it would if I were forced to sell my house to make way for a public park. Cities and counties also will have to pay owners what they would lose by not being able to rent out their space in the future, possibly for as long as 20 years. That could reach \$400,000 per sign, making it all but impossible to force down signs that devalue nearby homes or distract drivers on busy roads.

That's like telling the Transportation Department that if it tears down a restaurant to make way for a highway, it has to pay the owners the profit they expected to make for the next two decades.

Except it's worse than that.

Billboards aren't destroyed when they get zoned out of existence. They simply have to move to another location.

A better comparison would be a business owner who parked an ice cream truck in front of her store and started selling Nutty Buddies to passers-by. If the city told her she had to move the truck, it would have to pay her for the truck and all the money she expected to make selling ice cream for the next two decades.

There's one more "except."

The new law doesn't apply to the Transportation Department, or any other state agency. It only applies to cities and counties.

This should give you an idea of the clout of the billboard industry versus cities and counties: As the bill was speeding through the Statehouse, cities offered to accept the new payment method the billboard owners want — as long as billboards were taxed on the same basis. But the billboard owners were too certain of our legislators' determination to satisfy their every desire even to dignify the offer with a response.

Some have blamed the industry's financial largesse and lobbying might for the result. *Greenville News* columnist Jeanne Brooks has been relentlessly detailing how the industry spent a quarter-million dollars on lobbyists and lavish meals and generous campaign donations for legislators in 2004 and the first half of 2005. One critic suggested that legislators had lined up lemming-like in support of the bill because "I'm a Democrat and I have to support this because (Democratic lobbyist) Dwight Drake is for it, or I'm a Republican and I have to support this because (Republican lobbyist) Fred Allen is for it."

I think all of that played a role. But the bigger problem is that our legislators will pretty much always take sides with pretty much anybody whose petty individual interests collide with those of the entire communities in which they live or do business. We will see that again on Tuesday when the House takes up a bill to force cities and counties to pay any property own-

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# Leadership Training Institute credit available from MASC Annual Meeting pre-conference sessions

**M**ASC will offer two pre-conference sessions during its 66th Annual Meeting, July 27-30, at the Marriott Beach and Golf Resort in Hilton Head Island. Pre-conference workshops are open to all municipal elected officials and anyone working in municipal government. As an additional benefit, participants will receive credit for the National League of Cities' Leadership Training Institute (LTI) for attending a pre-conference workshop.

LTI promotes excellence in municipal leadership through high-quality education and training seminars for local elected officials. Through the Institute, local leaders learn practical leadership skills and strategies to lead change and innovation in their cities and towns.

The Institute offers four certification levels. The first level is Bronze Certification. Sixteen credits are required, and participants usually reach this level in one year. Platinum Certification is the highest level, requiring 67 credits and leadership participation. To learn more about enrolling in the Institute, visit the NLC Web site at [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org) or call 202.626.3170.

Pre-conference sessions are not part of the Annual Meeting, but MASC offers them as an additional learning opportunity for municipal leaders. A separate fee of \$50 is required, and participants can only attend the workshop for which they register.

The two pre-conference workshops offered this year are "Beware of the Good Times" and "Advocacy Skills: Persuasive Communication on Issues of Local Concern." The sessions will be held Thursday, July 27.

## Beware of the Good Times

Being skeptical of the city's good financial years was something Lancaster City Administrator Steve Willis was unfamiliar with until he attended MASC's Annual Meeting pre-conference session, "Beware of the Good Times," last year.

"I am no stranger to budgeting for the worst financial times the city may have," Willis said. "But I learned firsthand during this session that it is precisely during anticipated good times that my city could be the most vulnerable to setting itself up for future painful cutbacks."

Last year, more than 90 municipal elected officials and staff attended "Beware of the Good Times," and this session is back by popular demand. "I highly recommend attending this pre-conference session if you didn't last year," Willis added. "Learning how to minimize the impact of the tough financial years is a good skill for any city administrator and for municipal elected officials."

According to session presenter Len Wood, financial deficits that lead to devastating cutbacks do not develop overnight and most often have roots in decisions made during previous good times. The full fiscal impact of many local government decisions may not be felt until a year or more later.

For example, an aggressive capital improvements program will not show its full fiscal impact until debt service payments are due and operating expenses are required to maintain the new improvements and facilities. Or if a city grants generous wage and benefit increases, the full-cost impact may not be felt until several years later. Or problems may arise from a combination of

decisions that set the stage for severe fiscal problems.

So how do you avoid being forced to make cutbacks?

Obviously, a large, vigorous tax base provides insulation against this problem. But most municipalities do not have this luxury and must face the fact that its financial condition will fluctuate.

Most cities do not have the resources to deflect the blows delivered by intruding forces — natural disasters, federal and state mandates, state takeaways, economic downturns and recessions, community shifts and internal problems.

"How to recognize these forces is important if you want to effectively manage or lead a city," Willis said. "You will definitely learn in this session how to anticipate these problems and aggressively address them when they start."

*Len Wood is president of the Training Shoppe, a local government training and publishing firm. He has written six books about local government that are available at [www.trainingshoppe.com](http://www.trainingshoppe.com).*

## Advocacy Skills: Persuasive Communication on Issues of Local Concern

Getting your ideas across in understandable and memorable ways is just good business, whether you are working in local government or for a private corporation. Teaching people how to do this is what Dr. John Daly, professor in the College of Communications at the University of Texas at Austin, does for a living. When he is not teaching his students the art of persuasion and public speaking, he is enhancing the clarity of

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messages for local government agencies and companies like American Airlines, 3M and Dell Computers.

“The single biggest task of leaders is to advocate for themselves and their ideas,” Daly said. “City employees must pitch ideas to managers and councils. Managers must champion their ideas to everyone. Councilmembers have to persuade others on the council, as well as city management, about the wisdom of their ideas, and everyone must regularly market their community and government to citizens and businesses.”

MASC elected officials and staff will reap the benefits of Daly’s full experience during the pre-conference session, “Advocacy Skills: Persuasive Communication on Issues of Local Concern,” at the 66th Annual Meeting in Hilton Head Island. Daly spoke last year as part of the Texas Municipal League’s Issues and Insights Workshop Series, for which he received outstanding reviews.

“John is an expert on advocacy,” said Gwena Cearley, communications and marketing coordinator of the Texas Municipal League. “Our elected officials learned how important their jobs are and that they are heavy hitters when it comes to influencing legislators, big business, staff and the citizens they represent.”

Daly’s insights and tips on advocacy and communicating the value of our cities tie directly to the MASC Vision SC initiative. Participants can expect to learn the key skills of successful communication and advocacy, including the following topics:

- Getting your ideas across to people in understandable and memorable ways
- Building a great personal “brand” name so people will want to listen to your ideas

- Getting buy-in informally from others by “pre-selling” ideas
- Enhancing persuasiveness in meetings
- Building coalitions of support for your ideas

*John Daly, Ph.D., is a noted researcher and author in the arena of interpersonal communication. He has worked with more than 100 corporations, professional associations and government agencies as both speaker and consultant for developing and implementing improvements in customer service and communications programs.*

*Annual Meeting registration information will be mailed and posted on the MASC Web site ([www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc)) May 11. For more information about the Annual Meeting, visit the MASC Web site or call MASC’s conference manager, Ken Ivey, at 803.933.1205.*

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ers whose property value is potentially reduced by zoning or other land-use rules.

This legislation isn’t quite as extreme as the Billboard Promotion Act. It at least treats property the same way for calculating taxes and compensation.

But it’s still bad. After we wrote an editorial that pointed out how intellectually inconsistent the bill was — it offers no compensation to all the other citizens whose property value drops when the government refuses to protect them from inappropriate land uses nearby — a committee amended the

bill. Now it spells out that inconsistency, so there’s no question about it.

That means if the county rezones a piece of property to keep a landfill out of your neighborhood, it would have to pay the property owner for his lost income. But if it rezones another piece of property to allow a landfill in the middle of your neighborhood, you and your neighbors get nothing — except houses that you don’t want to live in and that nobody else wants to buy.

The bottom line: If you’re a property owner with the money and influence to get heard by our lawmak-

ers, they will go to any absurd lengths to protect your interests. But if you are one of the hundreds or thousands of other individuals whose property values are harmed by that one privileged character exercising his “rights,” tough luck.

*Cindi Ross Scoppe can be reached at [cscoppe@thestate.com](mailto:cscoppe@thestate.com). Read the governor’s veto message and see how your legislators voted at <http://blogs.thestate.com/bradwarthensblog/>.*

# Twenty-three graduate from Municipal Elected Officials Institute

**T**wenty-three municipal officials graduated from the South Carolina Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government during MASC's Hometown Legislative Action Day in February. The Institute is sponsored by the Municipal Association in cooperation with USC's Institute of

Public Service and Policy Research and Clemson University's Strom Thurmond Institute.

Institute topics address a wide variety of issues important to local government such as powers and duties of elected officials, finance and budgeting, and planning/zoning. The next sessions,

"You've Been Elected — Now What?" and "The Freedom of Information Act in South Carolina," will be broadcast via satellite to the 10 regional councils of government May 4. For more information, visit [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc), or contact Natalie Viers at 803.933.1254 or [nviers@masc.sc](mailto:nviers@masc.sc).



The winter 2006 graduates of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government are, in alphabetical order, William W. Blanchard of Moncks Corner, Marcia Bonds of Winnsboro, Jake N. Bookard of Denmark, Caroline Broyles of Inman, Renee Cariveau of Spartanburg, Les Conner of Tega Cay, J.C. Cook III of Clemson, Alfred Mae Drakeford of Camden, Danny Funderburk of Fort Mill, Toby Gladden of Great Falls, Vernie Harney of Allendale, Rebecca J. Hiatt of Surfside Beach, Jackie T. Holman of Blackville, Curtis Inabinett Jr. of Ravenel, Rhonda Jerome of North Charleston, Susan Kelsey of Chester, Harriett M. Lane of North, Gary H. Long of Fountain Inn, Bryan McNeal Jr. of Awendaw, Brad Richardson of Johnsonville, Anna Sue Rivers of Hampton, Earl Taylor of Great Falls and Stephen B. Turner of Ninety Six. (Note: Not all graduates listed appear in photo.)



## Classifieds

■ The Town of Mount Pleasant is accepting applications for the position of deputy town administrator. Apply to Personnel Services, PO Box 745, Mount Pleasant, SC 29465, or e-mail [jeanchandler@townofmountpleasant.com](mailto:jeanchandler@townofmountpleasant.com). For more information, call Jean Chandler at 843.884.8517.

■ The City of Rock Hill is accepting applications for the position of public works director. Submit resumé to Human Resources Department, City of Rock Hill, PO Box 11706, Rock Hill, SC 29731, or call 803.329.5570.

■ The City of Columbia is accepting applications for the position of information technology director. To apply, or for more information, visit [www.columbiasc.net](http://www.columbiasc.net).

■ The Town of Eastover is accepting applications for the position of certified police officer. Obtain an application at Eastover Town Hall, 624 Main Street, Eastover, SC 29044.

■ York County is accepting applications for the position of solid waste recycling/collection supervisor. Submit applications to the York County Human Resources Department, 6 South Congress Street, York, SC 29745 or online at [www.yorkcountygov.com](http://www.yorkcountygov.com).



## Educational Opportunities

### SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association

■ **April 10**, will hold its Spring Meeting at the Embassy Suites in Columbia.

### Main Street South Carolina

■ **April 21**, will hold its quarterly managers meeting at the MASC offices at 1411 Gervais Street in Columbia.

### SC Association of Stormwater Managers

■ **April 21**, will hold its first quarter meeting at the SC Hospital Association in Columbia.

### Hometown Connection

■ **April 25**, municipal officials from Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Lexington, Orangeburg and Richland counties visit with their state legislators. Officials should meet at MASC's office at 1411 Gervais Street in Columbia at 10:30 a.m.

### SC Business Licensing Officials Association

■ **May 2**, will hold its Spring Meeting at the Embassy Suites in Columbia.

### SC Municipal Human Resources Association

■ **May 3**, will hold its Spring Meeting at the Clarion Town House Hotel in Columbia.

### Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

■ **May 4**, will present "You've Been Elected — Now What?" and "The Freedom of Information Act in South Carolina." The session will be broadcast via satellite to the 10 regional councils of government.

### SC Community Development Association

■ **May 21-23**, will hold its Annual Meeting at the Embassy Suites at Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach.

### Hometown Connection

■ **May 30**, municipal officials from Abbeville, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Darlington, Edgefield, Greenwood, Kershaw, Laurens, Lee, Marlboro, McCormick, Newberry, Saluda, Sumter and Union counties visit with their state legislators. Officials should meet at MASC's office at 1411 Gervais Street in Columbia at 10:30 a.m.

For more information about these meetings or other MASC meetings not listed, please call 803.799.9574, or visit our Web site at [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc).



1411 Gervais Street ■ P.O. Box 12109  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211  
Tel: 803.799.9574 ■ Fax: 803.933.1299  
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Editor: **Mary M. Brantner, APR**  
Associate Editor: **Christie M. Zeller**

# Municipal Association of South Carolina's Uptown Readership Survey

## 1. How often do you read *Uptown*?

- a. Every issue
- b. Eight to 10 issues annually
- c. Five to seven issues annually
- d. Three to four issues annually
- e. Rarely

## 2. In general, how do you prefer to receive information? (Your response will not result in a change in how you currently receive *Uptown*.)

- a. In print by mail
- b. E-mail
- c. Fax
- d. Other

## 3. How would you rate MASC's *Uptown*? (1 is poor; 5 is excellent)

1      2      3      4      5

## 4. How timely do you find the information in *Uptown*?

- a. Current and up to date
- b. Somewhat out of date
- c. Old news by the time I read it

## 5. How do you feel about the readability of *Uptown*? (Circle all that apply)

- a. Articles are too long
- b. Articles are too short
- c. Too much jargon and complexity
- d. Too simple for municipal professionals
- e. Articles are easy to understand and clearly written
- f. Needs more color
- g. Needs more graphics/photos
- h. Type, spacing and layout make *Uptown* easy to read

## 6. What type of stories are most useful to you?

- a. Stories on topics that aren't necessarily in my area of responsibility, but are useful to my general understanding of municipal issues.
- b. Stories that relate directly to my job responsibilities.

## 7. What changes would make *Uptown* more useful or interesting to you?

- a. Continuing as a monthly print publication with fewer articles that are longer and go into more detail.
- b. Continuing as a monthly print publication with more articles that are shorter and hit highlights of the issues.
- c. Continuing as a monthly print and online publication; the online version would contain deeper, more detailed content.
- d. Moving to an online publication delivered by e-mail that would include more timely information.
- e. A less frequent print publication that includes longer, more in-depth (but not as timely) information with more color photos.

## 8. What is your occupation as it relates to reading MASC's *Uptown*?

- a. Municipal elected official
- b. Municipal manager/administrator
- c. Municipal department director or attorney
- d. Municipal clerk/public information officer/human resources/finances
- e. Municipal public safety
- f. Municipal public works/utilities
- g. Municipal other
- h. Media
- i. Private business/higher education/not-for-profit organization
- j. Other

## 9. Do you have any other suggestions for improving MASC's *Uptown*?

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## 10. How useful are the following topics to you? (1 is not useful; 5 is very useful)

### a. Legislative

1      2      3      4      5

### b. Municipal finance/taxes

1      2      3      4      5

### c. Land use planning/zoning

1      2      3      4      5

### d. Economic/community development

1      2      3      4      5

### e. Public works/utilities

1      2      3      4      5

### f. Public safety

1      2      3      4      5

### g. Human resources/employment

1      2      3      4      5

### h. Technology

1      2      3      4      5

### i. Risk management

1      2      3      4      5

### j. Job listings

1      2      3      4      5

### k. Calendar/news briefs

1      2      3      4      5

## l. What other topics are useful to you?

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Mail the completed form using the self-addressed information on the back of this page, or go to the "Featured Links" section of the MASC Web site at [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc) to complete the survey electronically.

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