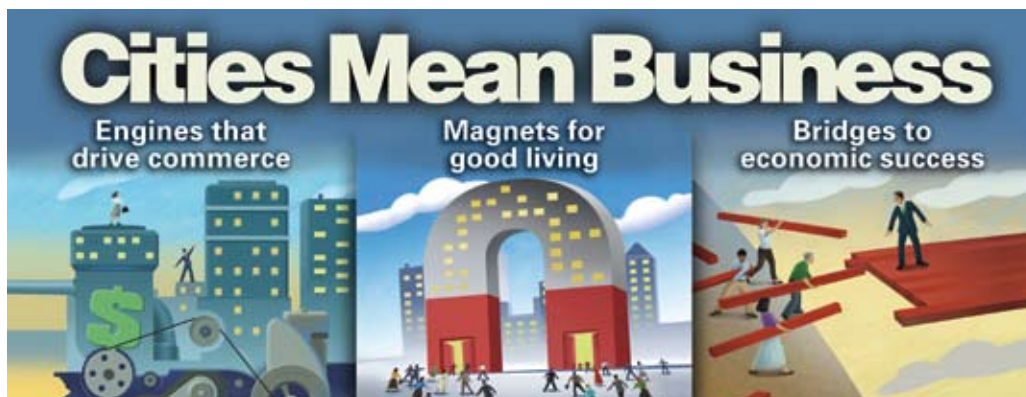


Regionalism: *the new economic reality*

To succeed, South Carolina cities and towns must do several things according to Neil Peirce, nationally known writer and lecturer on American metropolitan regions. “The most important is to form a strong alliance with local businesses.”



Peirce addressed a group of more than 400 municipal officials attending the Municipal Association’s *Hometown, SC* Legislative Action Day in February. Under the banner of “Cities Mean Business,” he cited Silicon Valley as a prime example of the success that happens within a “collective of competition.” Areas of business, universities and cultural organizations all working together within a close proximity will create a “new economic reality” in South Carolina.

Not only will these businesses form such a collective, but they will also aid cities and towns in their annexation struggles, predicted Peirce. After citing the 662 “donut holes” in just the Charleston area, Peirce asked, “How can South Carolina expect to compete globally with eighteenth century annexation laws?”

“Businesses have to understand the relationship is a two-way street. They need to support local governments.”

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For a list of current municipal job openings, visit www.masc.sc/misc/jobs.htm

REGIONALISM: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

February wasn't Peirce's first trip to the Palmetto State; he recalled one of his first interviews conducted in the state more than 36 years ago. He noted the fragmentation of government here. Things have changed – but not too much, he told the municipal officials. South Carolina has maintained “a legislative tradition that is hostile to local government.”


Peirce acknowledged he has gained a respect for what cities and towns can do for themselves, despite such a tradition. “The real power structure for the state is in this room. The leadership of the state resides in localities where people live.”

During his keynote address, Peirce stressed “regionalism matters.” One of America's greatest examples of thriving regionalism is Charlotte, its surrounding cities and Mecklenburg County. Peirce noted that all of Charlotte's outlying suburbs and their services work well with the hub, recognizing and utilizing the reciprocal benefits of such a relationship. He noted Rock Hill has capitalized on the strengths of the region without compromising its local identity by using Charlotte's skyscrapers in the background of a local brochure.

Peirce explained the relationship between urban decline and environmental degradation is directly correlated. Traditionally, people don't move into the cities. They move outside of metropolitan areas, to communities built with little regard to walkability. People must leave their suburban subdivisions to drive to the grocery store, shopping malls and schools. The bright spot, Peirce noted, is that young people seem to be reversing this trend. They are moving in large numbers back to compact centers of commerce where people drive 20 to 40 percent less.

South Carolina also faces a unique environmental quandary because of its port system. The coastal ports “may be critical to future developments of industry,” Peirce said. But he reminded attendees, little is being done to implement a much-needed rail system from these ports inland. Without this system, there will be 7,000 more trucks a day on an already traffic-plagued Interstate 26. This type of traffic will greatly affect air quality in a region where tourism is its most vital industry. “Unless local government becomes informed, the region is in danger of decline,” Peirce warned.

Ports and air quality in the Charleston area are just examples of the unique challenges every region faces and how the services within them can either help or hinder these regions.

“I believe South Carolina could be a major player in expanding world trade, but you must think environmentally and big ... and it needs to start at the metro level,” Peirce concluded. 

“Cities Mean Business”

and

education

Municipal officials were gathered to celebrate “Cities Mean Business” month, but luncheon speaker Dr. Jim Rex reminded the attendees of February’s *Hometown, SC* Legislative Action Day that “cities mean education” too. He told the crowd, “Cities prosper around good schools...the kind of future we have as South Carolinians will be determined by what happens in our public schools.”

Rex stressed the need to allow innovation in schools, update an outdated testing system and address teacher shortages and quality. Additionally, the state will have to take a new approach to funding public schools, what Rex called the “holy grail” of reform. As it is, the state’s funding woes have resulted in, “embarrassing, inexcusable inequalities,” according to Rex. “It is a dishonor what we’re doing or not doing for our children.”

He has appointed task forces to analyze our current tax system and to develop a plan for comprehensive reform of school funding.

Mayor Doug Echols of Rock Hill and Municipal Association Executive Director Howard Duvall served on the funding task force. “It was an eye-opening experience to see the vast differences in the tax base available to our 85 school districts,” remarked Duvall. “Only a major overhaul of the funding system will allow our educational system to be equitable to all our students.”

Rex acknowledged the education community cannot accomplish its goals alone. “It will take a coalition of reform, including the chambers of commerce, religious leaders and organizations such as New Carolina, the Counties Association, the Municipal Association and many others.”

He stressed the urgency to reform the public education system. “Doing the right thing too slowly gives you the same results as doing the wrong thing.”

Following the luncheon, a panel of higher education leaders continued the discussion of the education community partnering with cities and towns. The panelists reinforced to municipal officials there are numerous ways cities and the education community can positively impact one another and simultaneously improve.

Caroline Whitson, president of Columbia College; Mitchell Zais, president of Newberry College; Anthony DiGiorgio, president of Winthrop University; Barry Russell, president



“Cities Mean Business campaign has two meanings. It not only focuses on the business of cities – providing police protection, clean streets and quality of life amenities – but also brings attention to the fact that strong cities support a strong business climate,” explained MASC President Mayor Fred Cavanaugh of Aiken.

of the State Technical College system; and John Parks, director of the University of South Carolina’s Innovista program, participated in a roundtable moderated by Jim Reynolds, education committee chair of New Carolina. They each discussed specific collaborations their institutions have developed with their hometowns and other cities across the state.

Columbia College is part of the Eau Claire community, which is an area with challenged schools. The college offers faculty as resources and provides training to teachers in the community. Eau Claire is also one of the City of Columbia’s primary target areas for redevelopment. In addition to hosting the initial charette planning process, college officials have worked closely with the city to ensure the plans become a reality.

The college shares recreation areas with the community, and students work as coaches. Whitson pointed out the college is also working with the business community to jumpstart the area’s economy.

She explained a unique public-private partnership between the college and the state’s commission on women.

CONTINUED PAGE 4

Through a micro-enterprise program, women business owners across the state can receive small loans to start a business. The college contributes faculty members to help these individuals develop the skills necessary to be successful.

DiGiorgio pointed to Winthrop University’s meaningful and longstanding relationship with the City of Rock Hill. DiGiorgio and Mayor Doug Echols meet quarterly to keep the lines of communication open. Because of the close affiliation and constant contact between officials, the two entities can quickly capitalize on opportunities that benefit both entities.

In a unique move, Rock Hill created a planned education zoning district, which allows the university to carry out “everyday” building projects without having to go through city hall for each. Also, the two entities have developed a town and gown compact that details the expectations for student groups living off campus and residents surrounding them. City and university officials sign the compact annually to reinforce their mutual respect for one another.

With its 16 technical colleges and satellites located in 35 of the state’s 46 counties, the state technical college system is a critical driver of workforce development for all cities and towns. Russell pointed out other facilities are in the planning or construction stage, and soon there will be a technical college presence in all 46 counties.

The technical colleges are increasingly playing a role in community revitalization efforts, Russell noted. Working to revitalize their hometowns and provide citizens with an increased quality of life, the mayors of Batesburg-Leesville and Bishopville approached their local technical colleges about holding classes in their downtowns. The local colleges agreed, and both communities are seeing new life in their downtowns.


Parks echoed the role of higher education in local economic development efforts. He explained the traditional mission of a research institute is teaching, research and service. “A new mission has emerged – economic development,” said Parks.

Quality of life factors play an important role in attracting faculty to higher education institutions as well as residents and visitors to hometowns. Local government officials can help attract professors to higher education institutions by having an attractive package of quality of life attributes: public schools, air quality, arts and entertainment and transportation. Zais talked about the quality of life enhancements his institution provides the residents of Newberry and surrounding communities. Through the college, they have access to fine arts performances and collegiate athletic events.

The panel tackled the tough question of how to retain students in the state once they graduate. Panelists encouraged local officials to have a deliberate hiring program with their local higher education institution. Human resource departments for local organizations need to be linked into career services at colleges/universities. DiGiorgio stressed the importance of the city in creating a college town atmosphere. In Rock Hill, officials are working to physically connect the downtown area and the university.

Russell talked about how the communities surrounding the technical colleges in Denmark and Kingstree had a severe nursing shortage. Local officials urged the colleges to add nursing programs to their curriculum. These programs attracted local residents who are willing to stay in the area.

Communities without institutions of higher learning can still benefit from them. Students majoring in fields such as education and social work need places to intern. Social work majors from Winthrop are working with communities on the I-95 corridor. Panelists stressed local officials should look at their needs and their unique aspects then “sell them” to the colleges and universities. “If it makes sense to them, they may follow up,” said DiGiorgio.

To create successful partnerships with the education community, local officials must work to keep the lines of communication open. “If the communication process is put in place, it will lead to opportunities,” DiGiorgio concluded. 

Canadian visitors assess RMS software package

In January, two representatives from the Alberta (Canada) Urban Municipalities Association visited the Municipal Association to review the Risk Management Services’ new underwriting software, NavRisk.

RMS launched its NavRisk software in August 2007 after a year-long development and implementation process. Jeff Thompson stated, “NavRisk has enhanced SC Municipal Insurance Trust and SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund’s ability to collect and analyze its underwriting data. In fact, we have begun the process of bringing the underwriting function in house within the next six months.

We would never be able to achieve this goal without the NavRisk application.”

NavRisk is a licensed software application of David Corporation, headquartered in San Francisco. The municipal leagues in Iowa, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas and Virginia (as well as other risk-sharing pools) have all implemented the system. “We were pleased to host our Canadian visitors,” said Thompson. “Their interest helps reinforce our belief in the broad appeal of the NavRisk system. We are looking forward to unveiling its capabilities to our members in the coming months.”



Safety pays

Occupational safety winners recognized

Each year, the SC Municipal Insurance Trust sponsors an Occupational Safety Contest for its members. During the Municipal Association's *Hometown, SC* Legislative Action Day, SCMIT recognized 12 local government entities for their safety efforts. The competition is based on OSHA and loss-ratio data. First-place winners receive a \$2,000 credit toward the purchase of safety equipment and/or safety training.

Division 1 (10 to 50 employees)

First Place: Town of Hampton
Second Place: Town of Hemingway
Third Place: City of Woodruff

Division 2 (51 to 150 employees)

First Place: City of Chester
Second Place: Town of Fort Mill
Third Place: City of Cayce

Division 3 (more than 150 employees)

First place: City of Georgetown
Second place: City of Anderson
Third Place: City of Greer

Division 4 (public utilities)

First place: Gaffney Board of Public Works
Second place: Greenwood Commissioners of Public Works
Third Place: Greer Commission of Public Works

The SC Municipal Insurance Trust, a service of the Municipal Association, provides self-funded workers' compensation insurance for municipal employees.



GPS program a winner for Clemson

The City of Clemson won this year's *Safety Idea Contest* for its "PinPoint Public Works" GPS software program. The program has improved productivity and community safety through the use of an affordable GPS technology.

Clemson officials equipped their garbage trucks with Global Positioning System devices. When crews make their routine stops, workers use a picture-coded screen mounted on the truck to record what kind of work needs to be done on a particular street. A work order is created with a map and details of the job, and then it is assigned to a specialized utility crew.

An article explaining this project in more detail appeared in the September issue of *Uptown* and is available on the Association's Web site at www.masc.sc/resources/uptown_September2007.pdf.

The SC Municipal Insurance Trust, a service of the Municipal Association, sponsors the annual contest.

Budget preparation tip: estimating expenses

by Howard Duvall

By definition, an expenditure is the amount of cash paid for a service rendered, goods received or an asset purchased. For a municipality, expenditures fall into three main categories: personnel, operations and capital expenses. Good policies established by the council are the best guide for helping staff estimate future expenditures

Personnel costs are the biggest expense in the municipal budget. City officials must calculate carefully salaries plus the cost of benefits. It is important to remember to add the cost of social security, retirement contributions, health insurance and other benefit costs associated with your employees.

A new expense to figure into the budget this year is the federal requirement to fund other post retirement benefits as they are earned rather than on a pay-as-you-go basis. The Association established the SC Other Retirement Benefits Insurance Trust to assist local governments meet this new responsibility. Contact Heather McBride at 803.933.1258 for information on this program.

Operating expenses include electricity, gasoline, office supplies, telephone, training, travel expenses and all the other costs associated with running the municipal "business." Reasonable estimates of these normal costs will prevent a budget shortfall at the end of the year.

Capital expenses may be the second-highest cost in your budget after personnel. Capital expenses include big-ticket items such as cars, trucks, buildings, land and computer systems. It is a good policy to establish a Capital Improvement Plan that projects capital expenditures for at least five years. Funding the CIP assures money will be available when police cars need replacing or land needs to be purchased for a new fire station.

Employer contribution rate change

Effective July 1, 2008

Beginning July 1, the employer contribution base rate for the SC Retirement System and the Police Officers Retirement System will increase.

	FY '08	FY '09
SCRS	9.06	9.24
PORS	10.30	10.65
State ORP	4.06*	4.24*

*Plus 5 percent to member's account

The rates above do not include contribution amounts for group life insurance or accidental death program coverage.

Last year, the Budget and Control Board approved a 2.4 percent cost-of-living adjustment for eligible retirees.

If you have any questions concerning these or any other retirement issues, contact the Retirement System's customer services at 800.868.9002, 803.737.6800 or cs@retirement.sc.gov.

Tragedy spurs sprinkler legislation

By Warren Harley

The tragedy of nine firefighters dying in a Charleston furniture store fire, coupled with the deaths of several students in a beach house fire, had members of the General Assembly returning to Columbia in January looking for ways to prevent these types of tragedies. House and Senate leaders took on this high-profile, emotionally charged issue and introduced three bills advocating indoor sprinkler systems.

In each of the three bills, legislators proposed incentives to encourage property owners to install sprinkler systems in older buildings that were built before such systems were required. Several groups (the fire service community, home builders, municipal and other private water service providers and the business community) have an interest in this issue and are closely monitoring its path through the legislative process.

The debate is not the issue of whether indoor sprinkler systems are a good idea. All the interested parties support, in theory, the public policy of providing incentives for retrofitting older buildings with sprinkler systems. However, the devil is in the details. The concern is how to proceed in a way that balances the needs of all the groups.

Municipal water service providers simply want to recoup the costs associated with installing sprinkler systems. There is a considerable expense in connecting the system and installing all the related material. If a utility is prevented from recovering these costs, its financial ability to maintain and install the systems is jeopardized. The business community fears there will be a mandate to install the sprinklers, with the financial burden falling back on them. They feel the unfunded mandate could ultimately hinder their ability to survive.

Retrofitting an older building is very costly due to the nature of the structure and the difficulty associated with installing systems in older buildings. At a cost of \$5 per square foot, it would cost nearly \$300,000 to install an indoor sprinkler system in a 55,000-square-foot building.

Visit the Municipal Association's legislative tracking system (www.masc.sc/legislative/legislative_tracking.htm) for the latest information about the indoor sprinkler bills.



Each month, municipal officials have the opportunity to download materials that will help them share the value of cities and towns with the community and more specifically their key influencers. Through each suggested activity and corresponding materials, municipal leadership will form partnerships with the local business community, the media, local non-profit organizations and policy makers.

The Municipal Association posted May *Hometown Happenings* information on its Web site in early April. Let Casey Fields know if you participate in a Hometown Happening by e-mailing cfields@masc.sc or calling 803.933.1256.

National Fitness and Sports Month – With the weather turning warmer, May is a perfect time to get outside and exercise. Many local organizations have special events planned to recognize National Physical Fitness and Sports month. Partner with them to spotlight healthy lifestyles, exercise and sports participation in your community. Show off your municipal sports leagues and encourage hometown leaders to join a city-sponsored exercise program.

National Historic Preservation Week – Use this week (May 4-7) to honor the nation's heritage through preservation of historic monuments, homes and history. This week celebrates community revitalization and the traditions that make each hometown in South Carolina unique and different. Partner with your local Main Street program or downtown development association to highlight the historic buildings in your downtown.

National Tourism Week – This year, National Tourism Week (May 10-18) will use the theme "Discover Great American Traditions." Aimed at encouraging travel around the nation and the world, the observance is designed to showcase tourism's impact on the economy, especially in South Carolina where tourism is a major industry along the coast and recognized as a cluster by the Council on Competitiveness. Take this opportunity to recognize National Tourism Week and support travel, tourism and attractions in your hometown.

New positions

reach out across the state

- The National Trust for Historic Preservation named **Aiken** as one of the National Trust's Dozen Distinctive Destinations because of the city's heritage tourism appeal. In addition to Aiken, Beaufort is the only other city in South Carolina to receive the honor, which was awarded the designation in 2001.

- **The SC Department of Health and Environmental Control** recognized a dozen water systems that have maintained water fluoridation within their communities for more than 50 years. The 12 systems include the cities of Aiken, Darlington, Hartsville, Kershaw, Lancaster, Cayce, Marion, Union, Rock Hill along with McCormick Commission of Public Works, Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities and Shaw Air Force Base.

- **Jenkinsville** residents voted to incorporate in February, becoming South Carolina's 270th municipality.

Deputy Executive Director Miriam Hair introduced two veteran municipal employees as the newest additions to the Association staff during the *Hometown, SC* Legislative Action Day. Chip Boyles, former assistant city administrator in Clemson, and Bill Huggins, former assistant city manager in Aiken, join Wayne George in the newly created field services positions.

Assigned a specific region of the state, the three field services managers will provide technical assistance, discuss municipal issues and coordinate resources with the Association's 270 cities and towns. Also, they will communicate with municipal officials about key legislative issues and promote the Association's programs including insurance services, training programs, affiliate memberships and collection programs.

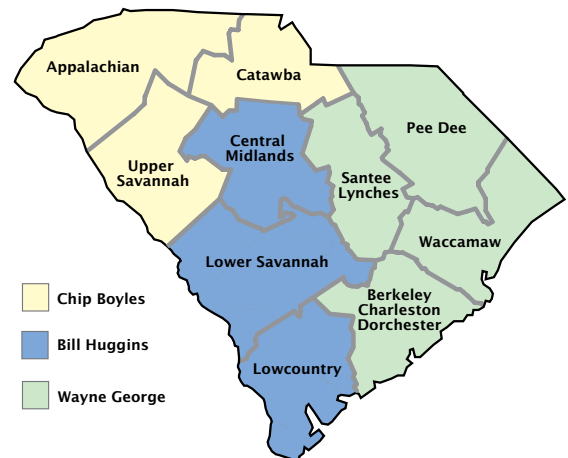
Boyles will cover the region represented by the Appalachian, Catawba and Upper Savannah councils of governments. George will travel in the Pee Dee, Waccamaw, Santee-Lynches and Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester councils of governments' region.

Huggins will work in the Lower Savannah, Central Midlands and Lowcountry councils of governments' area.

Boyles, a Ridge-land native, previously was city manager in Taneytown, Md., for six years and worked as city administrator and community/economic development director in the lowcountry. Huggins has served as a planner for Aiken, Greenville County and the Lower Savannah Council of Governments and the director of planning and community development for Seneca. George, who has been with the Association for three years, is a former mayor of Mullins and a past president of the Municipal Association. He will continue managing the Association's Municipal Insurance Services program and will manage the field services program.

George, who has been with the Association for three years, is a former mayor of Mullins and a past president of the Municipal Association. He will continue managing the Association's Municipal Insurance Services program and will manage the field services program.

"We look forward to offering this new program and are excited about the opportunity to have our field services managers visiting with elected officials and staff in all cities and towns throughout South Carolina," said Hair.



Contact Chip Boyles at 803.354.4750 or cboyles@masc.sc, Bill Huggins at 803.354.4751 or bhuggins@masc.sc and Wayne George at 803.933.1242 or wgeorge@masc.sc.

Cities

show its not so hard
going green



The Greer City Hall, currently under construction, is situated to give stairwells and offices full advantage of natural light.

From constructing new buildings with green considerations to purchasing vehicles that use alternative fuels, cities across South Carolina are taking steps to become more environmentally friendly.

In the City of Union, municipal vehicles run on E-85 flex fuel, and officials plan on adding plug-in electric hybrid vehicles to the fleet, said Mayor Bruce Morgan. In addition, the city's entire diesel fleet – which includes about 40 pieces of utility equipment – has been converted to B-20 fuel, which contains 20 percent bio-products.

Union also has implemented a pinpoint GPS garbage system, which allows crews to enter data about nonstandard waste items that need collecting. (See related story on page 5) This means different utility crews don't have to make random rounds in neighborhoods and has resulted in a 40 percent reduction in fuel consumption, Morgan said.

"We're trying to eliminate our dependence on foreign fuels," Morgan said. While the state and federal governments

have an even larger role to play in this mission, cities may just have to set the example, Morgan added.

The City of Greer is setting its own example by constructing new, environmentally friendly city buildings.

A new police and municipal courts building will be completed in April, while the new city hall will be done in July, said Steve Owens, Greer's communications manager.

The buildings will be energy efficient, using specially designed fluorescent light fixtures that require two bulbs as opposed to the usual four. Both buildings also will be equipped with motion detectors on lighting (to conserve energy) and with oversized windows in offices and public spaces to provide additional natural light, Owens said.

Besides the obvious benefit of caring for our planet, going green helps cities in other ways. The Environmental Protection Agency is tightening air quality standards. If cities don't meet the requirements, they face agency penalties and possible negative economic development consequences.

Last year, the state Department of Health and Environmental Control announced the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson area had reduced ground-level ozone to meet EPA standards. However, the area still could be required

CONTINUED PAGE 10

to reduce the levels of ozone-producing emissions under new federal standards. Still, the reduction is good news for economic development officials looking to recruit industries to the area.

Reno Deaton, executive director of the Greer Development Corporation, said developer interest in the area continues to be strong, and a compliance designation would make the area even more attractive.

Being non-compliant would require businesses to move or to expand in the area to spend more money on environmental control equipment, said Melinda Mathias of the state Department of Health and Environmental Control's Bureau of Air Quality.

"The fact that we have reached attainment (of clean air standards) definitely provides a big selling point for us as we continue to recruit business and industry," Deaton said.

DHEC has drafted a model ordinance for air quality, which includes such simple steps as encouraging employees to carpool and refueling fleet vehicles before 10 a.m. or after 6 p.m. to reduce emissions during daylight hours.

Collaborating with other municipalities or agencies has been key for many cities in the effort to make positive changes to the environment.

The City of Sumter joined more than 700 other cities worldwide in a group called Local Governments for Sustainability, which promotes air quality and energy conservation within municipalities. The city will study its carbon footprint then look for ways to reduce its dependence on energy and cut vehicle emissions. Sumter already has made changes



by using energy-saving light bulbs in buildings and long-lasting LED lights on police cars.

Thinking green is nothing new to Sumter, which has been converting waste from the Pocatigo Wastewater Treatment Plant into fertilizer for more than a decade. Officials say the plant produces about 2,000 tons of the fertilizer, which is then sold, each year.

Another group of South Carolina mayors, who represent

more than 480,000 state residents, formed the SC Mayors for Climate and Energy Leadership. The group was created to encourage climate policy changes in the state and federal governments. They hope to make changes regarding energy conservation, alternative fuel possibilities and greenhouse gas initiatives. The mayors support Governor Mark Sanford's Climate, Energy and Commerce Advisory Committee, which has been studying the impact of possible climate changes in South Carolina and discussing ways to deal with them.

And it's not just South Carolina cities making an effort to go green. More than 500 mayors from around the country signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement in October 2006, pledging to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Jack Porter, an environmental health manager with the Bureau of Air Quality, said partnerships formed by local governments, schools, industries and the state have led to substantial results in cleaning the air, but that recent years really serve as "a jumping off point to continue that momentum."

North Augusta knows how to handle risky business

Reducing waste and reusing materials conserves resources and keeps landfills manageable. Both are worthy goals for a local government. However, as curbside bins on trash day become more and more common, public works departments are swamped with this additional work.

With budget crunches, some municipalities have gotten creative on how to handle this overload. North Augusta utilizes inmate labor at a regional recycling plant that takes in recyclables from Aiken and around the county. This keeps the recycling process running at full steam while preserving tax dollars.

Because inmate labor is perceived to be inexpensive, it appears to be an attractive option. But there are potential costs to employing inmates. The labor is inexpensive, but unlike regular employees, inmates are not generally concerned with what might be in the city's best interest. This lack of loyalty could make for a serious workers' compensation claim should



Business Forum:

Why "green" is good for business

Companies are finding they can do these things AND save money

By Jan Collins



“Green building [in America] has become big business,” declares a recent issue of *The Economist* magazine. “A study by the National Association of Home Builders found that some 90 percent of home builders are now using green ideas. In 2005, the study found a 20 percent increase in the number of new homes that were environmentally responsible: water-efficient, energy-efficient, built of nature-friendly materials. [In 2006] the figures were up another 30 percent.”

At its core, green building uses less energy, thereby cutting down on the greenhouse gas emissions that are contributing mightily to the global warming of the planet. As a result, many areas of the United States are now jumping on the green-building bandwagon.

This includes Columbia, the capital city of South Carolina. “Green Is Good for Business” was the name of a recent conference sponsored by the city and its Climate Protection Action Committee (CPAC) to encourage not only green building, but also a voluntary green certification program for businesses that the city is developing.

Columbia City Council established CPAC — a committee of volunteers looking at ways to cut municipal greenhouse gases — after Columbia Mayor Robert D. Coble signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate

Protection Agreement in October 2006. Signers pledge to cut their greenhouse gas emissions, thereby ameliorating global warming. More than 500 mayors across the country have signed.

The purpose of the Green Business Program, according to Columbia officials, is to recognize and encourage businesses that operate in an environmentally-friendly manner — sort of a “green business report card.” The green business standards will apply to a range of industries and may even include hospitals.

The benefits to being recognized as a Green Business Member, city officials say, are numerous:

“Cost savings: Implementing the program’s waste reduction and water and energy conservation measures can save you money.

Market exposure: Businesses with a green ethic can use this distinction to achieve a marketing edge over the competition.

Healthy work environment: Implementing many of the program standards will create a safer, healthier working environment.

Increased productivity: Caring about employees’ well-being can improve morale and increase productivity.”

At the Conference

More than 200 businesspeople and environmentalists attended the “Green is Good for Business” Conference. They heard that the CPAC plan that is currently being implemented by the city is expected to result in lower energy bills, better transportation choices, air quality improvements, preservation of green space, energy conservation, and new energy technologies, such as hydrogen fuel cells.

Two steps that the city already has taken were on display: LED traffic signals (more than 200 of the city’s 272 incandescent traffic lights have already been converted to LED signals, which use 89 percent less electricity) and LED Christmas lights, which will illuminate two main city streets. These Yule lights last longer than conventional lighting, can use up to 90 percent less electricity and reduce


CONTINUED PAGE 12

greenhouse gas emissions, city officials say.

More than two dozen companies and environmental groups also displayed their green wares at the conference, including environmentally friendly packaging manufactured by Hartsville, S.C.-based Sonoco Products Company, and organic beer, brewed by Anheuser-Busch.

The conference heard from U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), who announced that he is signing onto the McCain-Lieberman cap-and-trade bill that would mandate domestic, economy-wide reductions in carbon emissions, similar to a scheme already established in Europe.

"The idea of transitioning away from fossil fuels to alternate energy sources just makes sense," Graham said. From a national security point of view, he added, the United States will be much stronger if it is not dependent on fossil fuels like oil, much of which comes from the unstable Middle East.

Graham told the crowd he sees a "huge opportunity" in the next Congress to address climate change because he believes most Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill have not-so-different views on global warming. To the relief of environmentalists, there also will be a new occupant in the White House in 2009 when the next Congress reconvenes. 

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Cities should set example for businesses to go green

Changes have been taking place in the City of Columbia. Energy-efficient traffic lights have been installed. There are new municipal vehicles that run on alternative fuels. Employees are encouraged to carpool and to turn municipal cars off rather than let them idle.

The steps are all included in the city's Climate Protection Plan, which aims to reduce emission levels. Columbia's efforts can serve as an example for other businesses to make changes as well.

"Cities have to be a leader in going green," said Howard Duvall, executive director of the Municipal Association. "There are few incentives cities can give, but if they lead the way and show the benefits, businesses may follow."

While some environmentally friendly changes may cost money up front, most experts agree they save money over the long run. Recycling, for example, can help cities save money. All waste must go to county or municipal landfills, and cities are charged tipping fees for that service. Cities can reduce that fee by recycling some of the waste.

"They're avoiding the cost and saving the environment," Duvall said.

While a city's recycling program may not make a profit for the city, it sets an example for businesses, Duvall said.

Columbia held a recent conference to encourage businesses to think green. The "Green is Good for Business" conference promoted green building and the city's new voluntary green

certification program for businesses. (See related article on page 11.)

So far, about a dozen businesses have been approved for the program, said Missy Gentry, director of public works for Columbia. The city also partnered with the chamber of commerce for a Green Business Boot Camp in March, she said.

Columbia also has been leading by example. Mayor Bob Coble drives the city's first hybrid vehicle, and a second is in the process of being purchased, Gentry said. As the city public works department purchases new vehicles, it looks for ones with flex fuel options. Officials also are testing biodiesel fuels in the city's fleet, Gentry said.

Even the state is getting in on the act to help businesses go green.

In November, the state's Department of Health and Environmental Control and Department of Commerce launched the SC Smart Business Recycling Program.

The program is designed to help businesses reduce waste and recycle. Participants can request site visits to assess reuse, waste reduction and recycling possibilities, and share best management practices. The program also provides a free service that allows businesses and other organizations to reduce waste by exchanging reusable material.

"City governments play a key leadership role in reducing waste and emissions," said Columbia City Councilmember Anne Sinclair. "Local governments are often large users of energy and have a great opportunity to both reduce its impact on the environment and save tax dollars."



Cities use grants to **crack down** *on litter*

Each year, the PalmettoPride anti-litter organization awards hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants to help cities clean up their communities.

This year, Cayce, Fountain Inn and Kiawah Island were among the recipients of enforcement grants.

PalmettoPride is a non-profit group formed in 2003 to combat the state's growing litter problem. The group focuses on education, enforcement, awareness and pickup in its efforts to reduce litter.

The City of Cayce received a \$3,000 grant this year. The money will be used to purchase five or six night-vision binoculars to help reduce litter, said Renee Harvey, grants coordinator for Cayce.

Police officers on patrol will use the binoculars to spot offenders, she said. This tool, in conjunction with the city's three dedicated code officers, should allow Cayce to catch even more people littering, Harvey said.

Cayce also received a \$5,000 grant last year to help purchase groundhog equipment, which is used at dumpsites to capture litterers. Officers cannot sit and patrol these sites continuously, so the equipment serves as their eyes and ears when they are not there, Harvey said.

The Fountain Inn Police Department received a \$4,835 grant. The department will use the money to purchase two pairs of binoculars and an undercover surveillance system to catch people who litter, said police officer Travis Graham. The new equipment will help enforce litter laws and prosecute those who violate them, Graham said.

The Town of Kiawah Island was awarded an enforcement grant of \$1,620 from PalmettoPride. Officials will use the money to purchase two digital remote cameras, which are activated by ground sensors. These cameras can take still photos or a three-minute video. The cameras will be placed in locations throughout the island where illegal dumping has occurred, in an effort to identify those responsible, said Town Administrator Tumiko Rucker.

Kiawah Island also received a \$4,000 Community Pride Grant from PalmettoPride for litter reduction and beautification. The town hopes to reduce litter through public



education, community outreach and organized cleanups along the public stretch of Kiawah Island Parkway, Rucker said.

Rucker said the town would develop an educational campaign with brochures and daily updates to the town's Web site. Quarterly cleanups are also planned on the island.

The 2008 Great American Cleanup of South Carolina March – May

*To organize a cleanup and receive supplies,
visit www.palmettopride.org.*

Community development *starts with caring for the environment*



Children attending summer camp at A Place for Hope community center in Rock Hill were asked to think about community activism. How could they make their homes in one of the poorest communities in South Carolina better?

The children agreed that cleaning up trash and improving their environment were the first steps.

“Our kids are affected by their environment,” said Karen McKernan, executive director of A Place for Hope. The non-profit group in Rock Hill was created to revitalize and restructure an area where many residents live without basic necessities such as electricity and indoor plumbing.

McKernan has been able to use her local experiences to connect with a global problem. She gives presentations across the state and region about environmental problems as part of The Climate Project.

McKernan will discuss her experiences at the South Carolina Community Development Association’s Annual Meeting on May 21-23 in Charleston.

The Climate Project is a non-profit organization based out of Nashville, Tenn., that educates the public about the earth’s changing climate. McKernan was selected as one of 1,000 volunteers throughout the United States to receive training to present a slide show based on former Vice President Al Gore’s documentary, “An Inconvenient Truth.”

The volunteers take the presentation to their regions and pledge to make 10 presentations in a year, McKernan said. “This is great grassroots activism.” The presentations are localized to show the true impact of what’s happening in the environment at home.

In her presentation, McKernan also highlights some of the positive changes cities and businesses have made in the state. There’s plenty to be proud of in South Carolina, she said.

The state has eight current or proposed methane-to-gas projects which involve converting the methane gas emitted from landfills into usable energy. One of the most notable is the Palmetto Landfill near Spartanburg, which pipes methane gas more than nine miles to the BMW manufacturing facility. That provides about 25 percent of the plant’s energy needs, McKernan said, and makes Spartanburg healthier.


There also are efforts to improve truck-stop efficiency. One truck stop, off Interstate 85, is part of the national Clean Cities Idle Reduction Act. Cars and trucks waste fuel when they are left idling. Stopping the practice can save a significant amount of energy, McKernan said.

NORTH AUGUSTA: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

an injury occur. A change in the law two years ago made a municipal-controlled inmate workforce eligible for workers’ compensation. When a municipality uses inmate labor, it is putting its loss history at risk and could ultimately increase the costs of a workers’ compensation program.

“Using inmates from an outside agency is very risky,” cautioned Jeff Thompson, assistant director for the Municipal Association’s Risk Management Services. “Most contracts for work like this are heavily weighted in favor of the entity issuing the inmates. Be sure to read the contract carefully to consider the risk involved.”

Regardless of the type of inmate, assigning appropriate tasks is a critical component of managing an inmate workforce. Under no circumstances should an inmate be allowed to operate heavy equipment on behalf of the city. “We do not advise involving inmates on a collection crew,” Thompson said. “Recyclable sorting, as North Augusta is doing, is a good example of minimizing risks and costs.”

Avoid the temptation of believing that an inmate labor force is appropriate for all public works services. This cost-effective option can have costly repercussions. Managed appropriately, however, inmate labor can provide a valuable addition to offering municipal services. 

Institute

graduates 28 elected officials

Twenty-eight municipal elected officials graduated from the SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government during the *Hometown*, SC 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 the varied concerns of local government, such as powers and duties of elected officials, finance and planning/zoning. The next session, "You've Been Elected – Now What?" and "Freedom of Information" will be broadcast via satellite to the 10 regional councils of governments on May 15. For more information, visit www.masc.sc or contact Kili Gilmore at 803.933.1254 or kgilmore@masc.sc.



The winter 2008 graduates of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government are, in alphabetical order: Mayor Carl Beckmann of Folly Beach, Councilmember Robert Benton of Cheraw, Councilmember Connie Bowers of Pickens, Councilmember John Braddy of Dillon, Councilmember Stephen Cain of Batesburg-Leesville, Mayor Willie Campbell of Johnston, Councilmember Carthel Crout of Williamston, Councilmember Millie Dawkins of Gray Court, Councilmember John Dervay of Tega Cay, Mayor Gene Gainey of Pamplico, Councilmember Edwin Garrison of Blythewood, Councilmember Lee Harley-Fitts of Allendale, Councilmember Keith Henderson of Union, Councilmember Robert Jameson of North Charleston, Mayor Earl Jeffcoat of North, Councilmember Nancy Lawson of Lockhart, Councilmember Joe Lee of Port Royal, Councilmember Diane Marsh of Johnsonville, Mayor Clyde Martin of Central, Councilmember John Melton of Cheraw, Councilmember Marion Middleton of Williamston, Councilmember William Newman of Inman, Councilmember Marion Nickles of Belton, Mayor Roy Pipkin of Jamestown, Councilmember Dennis Ramsey of Gaffney, Councilmember Kenneth Smith of Spartanburg, Councilmember Jimmy Workman of Cheraw and Councilmember Gerald Wright of Denmark. (Not all graduates appear in photo.)

Association announces new hotel reservation process for Annual Meeting

Over the years, the Municipal Association's Annual Meeting has continued to grow. More and more local officials are taking advantage of the opportunity to receive training, network with peers and hear from national and regional experts in the area of local government. As in a city, growth comes with congestion. In the Annual Meeting's case, the congestion is happening on the reservation lines to the host hotel.

"In the 22 years I have been with the Association, there has always been a mad rush to make Annual Meeting hotel reservations," acknowledges Miriam Hair, deputy executive director. "Understandably, everyone wants to be in the host hotel. With the advent of online reservations, our hotel block is filling up in a matter of a few minutes instead of a few days."

Part of the problem involves individuals making room reservations without knowing how many from their city/company are actually going to the meeting because they have not had time to review the agenda. This rush to make

reservations then cancel them prevents others from getting a room in the host hotel.

The ideal solution would be to have the meeting at a hotel that was large enough to accommodate all attendees, but there is no such facility in South Carolina. Several years ago, the Association instituted a policy of registrants forfeiting deposits for cancelled hotel reservations. "That worked for awhile, but that is not working anymore," Hair said.

In an effort to help solve the problem, the Association will mail (and post online) the registration information on May 9. Reservations, however, will not be open until May 27. "In the two-week interim, we hope officials will decide whether they will be attending the meeting, and only those who plan to attend will make reservations."

"We are committed to making the Annual Meeting housing reservation process as fair and equitable as possible to all of our members. We will continue to look for ways to do so," Hair concluded.



events CALENDAR

APRIL

18 Municipal Court Administration Association Spring Meeting, Columbia Conference Center; *Topics*: automated parking ticket systems, victim's assistance funds, traffic court

27-29 National League of Cities and the Municipal Association, "Local Economic Development: The Challenges of Community Renewal" Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston

29 Hometown Connection Municipal Association's office, 1411 Gervais Street, Columbia - 10:30 a.m. Municipal officials from Allendale,

Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Jasper, Marion and Williamsburg counties

MAY

2 Managers Meeting, Clarion Town House, Columbia

6 and 7 SC Association of Municipal Power Systems Lineman Training, Pine Island Club, Columbia

12 SC Business Licensing Officials Association Spring Training and Advanced Academy, Embassy Suites, Columbia

14 Municipal Technology Association of SC Spring Meeting, Municipal Association's office, 1411 Gervais St, Columbia; *Topics*: geographic information systems and emerging technologies

15 Municipal Elected Officials Institute "You've Been Elected - Now What?" and "Freedom of Information Act" Via satellite

For more information about these meetings or other MASC meetings not listed, please call 803.799.9574, or visit www.masc.sc.



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