

UPTOWN

More than just a pretty face

MASC's new Web site has more than just a new name and a new look. It has a new attitude. "This site is a continuation of our commitment to offer our members better and more convenient services," explained Howard Duvall, MASC's executive director.

Users will find several new areas on the Web site (www.masc.sc). For example, the Resource/Research area has model ordinances and a very

extensive links page. Although the old Web site offered many external links, they were scattered throughout the site. On the new site, the links are compiled in one place and categorized. "We hope to make the MASC Web site **the** place municipal officials go to for municipal, legislative and state information," continued Duvall.

The new site's unveiling at the association's Annual Meeting in July was just phase one of MASC's ongoing

Web site development. "It is a project that will have no completion date," said Mary Brantner, MASC's communications manager. On the drawing board are plans to allow members to register for meetings from the site and to update their contact information. "We will also look at conducting online training sessions in the future," Brantner added.

MASC is very proud to be expanding its Internet service to its members. This site has a special introduction page for new visitors (go to "Using This Site" and click on "New to this site?"). If you have any comments, questions or suggestions for additional content/functionality, please call Mary Brantner at 803.933.1206 or e-mail mbrantner@masc.sc.

If you want to run, you have to file

Reprinted from August 2001 Uptown due to member requests

Running for office requires more than the desire and ability to serve — it also requires filing reports with the State Ethics Commission, including a campaign finance disclosure form and a statement of economic interests form. Candidates and officials should be familiar with the details of when and how to file to remain eligible for office.

Campaign Disclosure Form

According to Herb Hayden, executive director of the State Ethics Commission, all candidates running for office and political committees must file a campaign disclosure form within 10 days of spending or receiving the first \$500 in campaign funds. "The initial \$500 can be a lump sum or the accumulation of several contributions or expenditures, to include personal funds contributed to the campaign," he said.

After the initial report, candidates do not have to file a report after each \$500 spent or received. Instead, they file a quarterly report covering contributions and expenditures from the last report through the end of

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the calendar quarter. These quarterly reports are due:

- Jan. 10 (covers Oct. 1-Dec. 31)
- April 10 (covers Jan. 1-March 31)
- July 10 (covers April 1-June 30)
- Oct. 10 (covers July 1-Sept. 30)

“Even if there have been no contributions or expenditures, candidates must file a report quarterly after the initial report,” he said.

In addition to the quarterly reports, all candidates must file a pre-election report no later than 15 days prior to each election. This report covers all activity from the last report through 20 days prior to the election and is required, even if there has been no financial campaign activity.

After the election, candidates file a final report only after closing the campaign account. To file a final report, the campaign account must have a zero balance and no outstanding campaign debts. “Once a final report is filed, a candidate may not accept or spend any funds for the campaign,” Hayden said. “If candidates choose to run for another election, the process starts over again — they have to open a new account and file a campaign disclosure form after receiving or spending \$500.” Candidates cannot use contributions received for one elective office for another elective office unless the person making the contribution gives written authorization.

If a candidate plans to run for re-election to the same office, they may keep the account open and continue to file quarterly reports, even if there has been no campaign activity during the quarter.

On the campaign disclosure form, candidates must list all campaign contributions and expenditures. They must list the amount contributed and

the complete name and address of each contributor of more than \$100. Candidates must also maintain a list of all contributions, including the date, amount and the names and addresses of all contributors, regardless of the amount. Candidates should itemize all expenditures, regardless of the amount, and disclose any loans made to the campaign.

Candidates must keep a separate campaign checking and/or savings account for all campaign funds. Candidates cannot pay campaign expenses from their personal checking accounts or in cash. However, they can maintain a campaign petty cash account of not more than \$100 to make cash purchases of \$25 or less for items such as office supplies, food and transportation expenses. Candidates have to deposit any personal funds used for the campaign into the campaign checking or savings account before using the funds, and they should report those amounts on the campaign disclosure form. Candidates may not use campaign funds for personal use unrelated to the campaign.

Statement of Economic Interests Form

In addition to the campaign disclosure form, all candidates and many public officials must file a statement of economic interests form. Those who must file the statement of economic interests include:

- Any person appointed to fill the unexpired term of an elected official
- All elected officials
- All candidates for public office (excluding federal offices)
- Any person serving on a state board, commission or council
- County and city administrators,

managers, supervisors and administrative officials

- Chief finance/purchasing official of all state agencies, counties, municipalities or other political subdivisions

The statement of economic interests form asks for information on several topics, such as income received from a governmental entity by the filer or a member of the filer’s immediate family. This includes any gifts received during the previous calendar year, if the gift was believed to be given because of the filer’s position. See the Ethics Commission’s Web site at www.state.sc.us/ethics for a detailed list of information to include on the form.

For every year they are in office, officials have to file the statement of economic interests on or before April 15. The statement should cover activity during the previous calendar year. For those running for office, the form is due when the candidate registers for public office. Appointed officials must file immediately after beginning work. Officials not in office on April 15 do not have to file a statement of economic interests.

Statement of Organization

Excluding candidates’ committees, all committees receiving or spending money to influence elections must file a statement of organization form. Municipal committees attempting to persuade the public on a referendum or issue, such as local option sales tax, are among those that must file. On the form, committees list their members and purpose. Committees report their income and expenditures the same way candidates do, including filing campaign disclosure forms.

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State senator receives Distinguished Service Award

At the Annual Meeting in July, MASC presented its Distinguished Service Award to Senator Brad Hutto of Orangeburg for his significant contributions to municipal government in South Carolina.

The State newspaper reported Senator Hutto's peers ranked him as one of the most influential members of the Senate. During the past legislative year, he used this influence to help protect the interest of local government.

"This year, we were faced with a well-organized effort by the telecommunications companies to restrict the authority of municipal government to provide telecommunications services," said the MASC President Don DeLoach of Varnville at the Annual Meeting. "The bill sped through the House, where the legislation actually passed two times. We had a total of only four votes in the House in our favor."

Once the bill was on the Senate side, DeLoach explained Senator Hutto gave local governments a fair opportunity to explain the complicated subject. He helped take the legislation off the fast track, which forced the telecommunications companies to accept a fair compromise.

Senator Hutto has represented Orangeburg, Barnwell, Allendale and Hampton counties since 1996. He is a graduate of the Honors Program of the University of South Carolina and received his law degree from Georgetown University. He practices law with the Williams and Williams firm in Orangeburg.

The Municipal Association established the Distinguished Service Award to honor individuals outside municipal government who contribute to the advancement of municipal government in South

Carolina. The award is not given every year, and it has been presented only 16 times since 1975.



Senator Brad Hutto

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Contribution Limits

The Ethics Law places limits on the contribution amounts candidates can receive from individuals per election. Statewide candidates can receive \$3,500, and local candidates can receive \$1,000. Candidates cannot accept cash contributions of more than \$25 or any contribution from a lobbyist. Candidates cannot accept anonymous donations. All anonymous contributions must be donated to the Children's Trust Fund of South Carolina within 10 days of receipt.

There are limits on the amount candidates can receive from political parties and party committees per election. Statewide candidates can accept \$50,000, and local candidates can accept \$5,000.

After an election, statewide candidates can be repaid up to \$25,000 for loans they made to their personal campaign. Local candidates can be repaid \$10,000.

Penalties for Late Filing and Failing to File

If a required form is not filed within five days after the established deadline, the public official or candidate will be fined \$100. After the Ethics Commission sends notice of the failure to file by certified mail, it will assess a fine of \$10 per day up to an additional \$500.

If a public official or candidate fails to file a required form after being

notified, the Ethics Commission will file a complaint that can result in additional civil fines of up to \$2,000 for each delinquent form. The commission can file criminal charges resulting in penalties of up to one year in prison, a fine of up to \$5,000 or both.

The Ethics Commission's Web site contains a list of individuals and committees who filed incorrectly and failed to pay late filing penalties. This includes municipal officials. To view the list, visit the Debtor's Page link located on the Ethics Commission's home page.

This topic was covered at MASC's Annual Meeting in July. For more information on training offered by MASC, visit www.masc.sc.

2002 Achievement Award Winner

Population Category 1-1,000: Town of Trenton

Partnerships, CDBG funds help remove blight

Like many municipalities, Trenton was plagued with numerous vacant, deteriorating structures posing health and safety hazards to citizens. Trenton's small size made it economically unfeasible for the Town to use solutions that have worked in other municipalities, such as having the public works department clear properties or creating strict code enforcement demolition programs. As a first step, the Town pushed for voluntary compliance, which worked well for clearing vacant lots, but not for removing dilapidated structures.

To avoid the substantial financial costs of demolishing the buildings, the Town passed a slum and blight removal ordinance to help it qualify for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Using grant money, the Town would demolish all the

condemned properties. To qualify for the grant, the Town had to provide a 10-percent match. The Town sought the matching funds from the Edgefield Department of Education because the most costly building to raze was an old school. The school board approved \$35,000 for the Town's matching funds, which was 50 percent less than the school board's estimated demolition costs.

The school board funds gave Trenton a 20-percent grant match, which was double the required match. The additional matching funds helped secure CDBG funds totaling \$123,000.



The Town Council and staff worked with the Edgefield Department of Education to raise matching funds to secure a Community Development Block Grant to demolish dilapidated buildings.

Receiving the grant was possible because two local government entities worked together to save each other money and reached a common goal of making the community a better place to live.

Contact: Bernie Welborn, 803.275.2538

Three municipalities honored with Historic Preservation Awards

This year, three municipalities received Historic Preservation Awards from the Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation, the S.C. Department of Archives and History and the Governor's Office. The awards honor exceptional accomplishments in the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and interpretation of the state's architectural and cultural heritage.

REVIVA, the Iva Community Improvement Association of Volunteers, received the Heritage Tourism Award for using cultural and historic resources in the promotion and development of tourism. The

organization worked to market Iva as a stop on the S.C. Heritage Corridor and to promote the community's heritage. REVIVA's efforts include creating the REVIVA Museum and Visitor's Center, publishing the pictorial history book "Around Iva," erecting historical markers and collaborating with local schools to teach the value of preserving historic buildings.

Both Clemson and Patrick received Honor Awards, which celebrate successful and exemplary historic preservation projects around the state.

Clemson undertook an extensive renovation of the Clemson Depot, with

a strong emphasis on restoring the building to its original look. The Depot, once mostly vacant, now houses the Clemson Area Chamber of Commerce and an AMTRAK passenger waiting area. The Depot is on the Discovery Route for the S.C. Heritage Corridor.

Patrick converted a turn-of-the-century train depot into a community and senior center. The Town carefully followed the original floor plan and design when adding handicapped accessibility and new heating and air-conditioning systems. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Sewer backups: The down and dirty truth

Sewer backups are unpleasant occurrences better avoided by municipalities. However, according to the S.C. Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing (SCMIRF) Fund, MASC's self-funded property/liability insurance pool, sewer backup claims are rising in frequency and severity.

SCMIRF cited increased negligence on the part of the municipalities as a reason for the rising number of claims.

"Apparently, some municipal sewers are not being monitored and maintained as they should be," said Harvey Mathias, MASC's director of Risk Management Services (RMS). "A routine inspection and maintenance program, particularly in areas where sewer backups have been known to occur, is a must if the municipality wants to minimize its potential liability." Mathias explained that many sewer systems

have been in place for a long time, and the infrastructure is wearing out. In these cases, lines may have deteriorated and require replacement.

Mathias mentioned that improperly clearing a blockage using rodding or jetting techniques also can cause backup problems. "More often than not, this results in a sewer backup claim that is a clear case of negligence and liability, for which your liability insurance must pay," he said. "SCMIRF has provided training to members on the proper use of sewer rodding equipment, and the RMS staff is always willing to offer guidance to SCMIRF members."

Lancaster is one of many municipalities that noticed an increase in sewer backups. After citizens reported several recent sewer backups to the City, Administrator Steve Willis discovered that very few houses had backflow

prevention devices installed. Many backups were occurring because of accumulated grease or tree roots infiltrating the home owner's sewer lateral line and were not problems with the City-owned sewer main. Though maintenance of a home owner's lateral line is not the responsibility of the City, Willis decided Lancaster needed a public information campaign to help citizens understand the importance of backflow devices (also known as check valves, flap valves, backwater valves, backflow preventers, etc.). As part of this campaign, the City developed a brochure to circulate in utility bills to educate home owners and to mitigate future problems home owners might encounter.

If you would like more information, please call Jeff Thompson at 803.933.1216 or e-mail jthompson@masc.sc.

Keep claim costs down when sewers back up

There are many steps that can be taken (both before and after the fact) to reduce sewer backup claims costs. Fundamental training and basic attention to detail will address most problems. Here are some other rudimentary things that can be done.

1. Follow a program of inspections and routine maintenance, particularly in your trouble spots
2. Use equipment (such as jet vacs and rodding machines) properly and thoroughly
3. Encourage the use of check valves, backflow preventers and other devices in trouble spots
4. Do not admit liability without a thorough claims investigation, particularly when the backup occurs in a service line
5. Do not assume the role of a sewer service company on private service lines (doing this, in many instances, is equivalent to the admission of liability)
6. If you provide cleanup or any other assistance after a sewer backup, be sure to require affected individuals to sign a non-waiver of defenses agreement before work is performed (SCMIRF members can obtain a sample on the RMS Web site at www.masc.sc/rms/scmirf/sewer.htm)

Technology inventories can save you time and money

Using technology in City Hall is no longer an option these days; it is a necessity. However, to keep costs down and to determine a return on your investment, municipalities should keep detailed inventory reports of all hardware and software owned by the municipality. Without an inventory, municipalities have a difficult time preparing technology budgets, scheduling hardware or software upgrades, and tracking service contracts. A municipality with no information technology (IT) inventory might not own the correct number of software

licenses. Buying too many licenses is a waste of money, and not owning enough licenses can lead to huge financial penalties.

An inventory is essential when trying to find technical support for software. Most software vendors require a proof of license before they will provide warranty support or product upgrades. With a central inventory, you can quickly find your license information, allowing you to receive technical support without losing valuable time searching through files for the necessary documents. Immediately

after purchasing any software or hardware, complete all required registration forms either online or by mail to ensure you receive necessary technical support.

An often-overlooked benefit of IT inventories is keeping track of assets for financial audit purposes. Inventories also allow the municipality to file proper insurance claims in case of a disaster — municipalities know immediately how many computers they had, how much they were worth and the various software installed on the computers.

To begin an inventory

- Step 1.** Visit all the workstations in your municipality. Note all software installed on each machine. Keep track of the inventory date, and the software's name, publisher and version number. Make sure you have a record of all the hardware (such as monitor, central processing unit or scanner), along with model and serial numbers.
- Step 2.** Summarize the data for easy reference. Sort the information by software name, and include the number of computers running the software.
- Step 3.** Every software vendor has a different way of selling licenses, so it is important to track this along with your inventory. Beside each software name on your summary sheet, log the type and number of licenses, along with the date of purchase. By matching this information with the number of computers running the software, you can tell easily if you own too few or too many licenses for that software.
- Step 4.** Update the inventory every time software, hardware or upgrades are purchased. To avoid confusion, log in the new product before installing it. "It is a good idea to centralize your technology purchases so that whoever updates the inventory is also the person who purchases the software," said Alan Tumey, MASC's director of information technology. "Individual departments often purchase their own software, but this can lead to licensing problems and software version conflicts if the products are not inventoried correctly."

Although you can use a spreadsheet to inventory your hardware and software, many types of automated inventory software are available. For more information on available software, visit www.microsoft.com or www.winnetmag.com/buyersguide. You can also call Alan Tumey at 803.933.1233 or e-mail atumey@masc.sc.

SCAMPS linemen climb to the top

About 120 municipal linemen representing 13 electric cities attended the annual S.C. Association of Municipal Power System (SCAMPS) safety training sessions in June. For the first time, the sessions included a Pole Climbing and Hurtman Rescue Training Competition. The new training-focused competition followed a session on proper pole climbing and hurtman rescue procedures and allowed attendees to see the proper procedures in action. In the pole-climbing portion, linemen climbed a utility pole with an egg in a small bucket and descended the pole with the egg in their mouths. Points were deducted for cracking the egg. The hurtman rescue used a "hurtman dummy" to simulate a wounded lineman unable to lower himself from the top of a utility pole. The rescuers climbed quickly to the top, secured the hurtman dummy and lowered it gently to the ground before descending. The participants were judged on the speed at which they were able to perform the task using the proper procedure for lowering a hurt lineman to the ground.

Training Competition Winners

June 5

Winner: Jason Peek,
Bamberg Board of Public Works

Runner-up: David Mabry,
Greer Commission of Public Works

June 6

Winner: Paul Etheridge,
Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities

Runner-up: Russell Whelchel,
Laurens Commission of Public Works



Rock Hill Lineman Ron Passmore saves the hurtman dummy during the Pole Climbing and Hurtman Rescue Training Competition.

News Briefs



■ The Municipal Treasurers Association of the United States and Canada is holding its Annual Conference in Vancouver, Canada, Aug. 11-14. For more information, call 202.737.0660 or e-mail info@mtausc.org.

■ The National League of Cities (NLC) is sponsoring Race Equality Week Sept. 23-29. NLC encourages municipalities to observe the week by celebrating diversity, focusing on local initiatives that promote race equality, discussing the effects of racism, examining policy issues and pledging continued efforts to promote race equality. For idea kits or to share your plans for Race Equality Week, call John Pionke at 202.626.3051 or e-mail Pionke@nlc.org.



Classifieds

■ The City of Tega Cay is accepting applications for a manager. Position requires a bachelor's degree in business/public administration with five years of experience as a city administrator/manager. Send cover letter, resume, current salary and references to Mayor Robert C. Runde, PO Box 3399, Tega Cay, SC 29708. EOE

■ The City of Chester is accepting applications for a grants administrator. Position requires a bachelor's degree in public administration, business, political science or related field supplemented by two years of experience, or an equivalent combination of education, training and experience. Send application to City of Chester Personnel Department, ATTN: Carla Roof, 100 West End Street, Chester, SC 29706 or e-mail to croof@infoave.net. EOE

For more information on these and other job opportunities, visit MASC's Web site at www.masc.sc.



Educational Opportunities

Setoff Debt Collections Program

■ Aug. 13, will hold a training session for new participants and new employees of current participants at MASC's office in Columbia.

Setoff Debt Collections Program

■ Aug. 20, will hold a training session for current participants at the Sheraton Hotel in Columbia.

Hometown Network

■ Sept. 12, the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government will present "The Forms of Municipal Government" and "Benefits and Pitfalls of Economic Development." This session will be broadcast via satellite to the 10 regional councils of governments.

Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute

■ Sept. 25-27, will hold its fall session at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Columbia. Topics to be discussed include financial management, election administration and management skills.

Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association

■ Oct. 15-17, will hold its Annual Meeting at Ocean Drive Resort in North Myrtle Beach.

Business Licensing Officials Association

■ Oct. 16-18, will hold its Annual Meeting at Ocean Drive Resort in North Myrtle Beach.

Community Builders

■ Nov. 13-15, will hold its Community Builders Conference at the Hyatt Regency in Greenville.

S.C. Association of Stormwater Managers

■ November 22, will hold its Quarterly Meeting at the S.C. State Museum in Columbia.

S.C. Municipal Personnel Association

■ Dec. 4-6, will hold its Annual Meeting at the Myrtle Beach Wyndham Resort.

S.C. Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund

■ Dec. 4, will hold its members' meeting at the Sheraton Hotel in Columbia.

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

UPTOWN

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