

UPTOWN

2003-2004 state legislative session ends

Each year, MASC monitors more than 300 pieces of legislation on a wide variety of topics. From handicapped parking to hospitality taxes, from telecommunications to annexation, many bills affect municipal government. While MASC continued to monitor and work on all these bills, the Association focused on three legislative priorities this year.

H3530 gave legislators the opportunity to fulfill promises made in 1999 with the Telecommunications Act. The legislators promised municipalities would not lose revenues during the transition from the franchise fee to the business license tax. On the last day of this year's session, H3530 was approved by unanimous consent of both the House and the Senate.

Over the last several years, there has been a flurry of "tax reform" bills. MASC urged the legislature to carefully study the consequences of any proposed changes in the taxation system. No changes should be adopted that would

either decrease the revenue available to municipal government or take away local control. Of the many tax reform bills debated, the only proposal to pass was a bill to limit the increase in real property value to 20 percent during a re-assessment year. This provision is likely to be challenged in court.

Finally, MASC continued to work for **better annexation** laws to allow annexation of enclaves and reduce the threshold required by the petition-ordinance method. Annexation legislation was introduced in the Senate with bipartisan sponsors. Although it did not pass, there is growing awareness in the General Assembly of the need for realistic annexation laws.

There are three new laws of particular interest that will positively affect municipalities:

- The Textile Communities Revitalization Act will increase the tax base of a municipality by

encouraging the re-development of abandoned textile facilities.

- The At-Will Employment law will protect municipalities as employers because it makes it clear that an employee handbook or a personnel policy is not an employment contract.
- The SC Military Preparedness and Enhancement Act and the Federal Defense Facilities Utilization Integrity Protection Act will

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A pair of silver-rimmed glasses was found during the Annual Meeting in Hilton Head Island. To claim them, contact Mary Brantner at 803.933.1206 or mbrantner@masc.sc.

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give communities with military installations and facilities additional protection from base closures.

There were several initiatives of municipal interest that did not pass. A few of these are the municipal capital project sales tax, reducing the percentage of required signatures on annexation petitions, authorizing the use of cameras at traffic-signalized intersections, eliminating the Second Injury Fund, eliminating the \$900,000 threshold limits on accommodations tax expenditures and the Criminal Street Gangs bill. MASC will continue to pursue these initiatives next year.

Several bills that would have negatively affected municipal governments were stopped:

- The five-mile limit for new municipalities to incorporate
- Property tax reforms replacing the property tax with a sales tax
- Requiring a two-thirds vote of a municipal council to impose or increase any tax or fee
- Preventing a local government from enacting more stringent requirements than those imposed by the state

The General Assembly adjourned June 3, 2004, ending the second year of the two-year legislative session. Bills not passed will have to be re-introduced during next year's session.

"Involvement on the local level is necessary for successfully advocating positive municipal legislation," stressed Gary Cannon, MASC director of inter-governmental relations. Municipal officials can become involved by acting on the weekly legislative alerts, attending Hometown Connection days and participating in the Hometown Legislative Action Day held each February.

"To stay up to date on legislative issues, officials should check our Web site (www.masc.sc) often, especially during the legislative session," Cannon added. "Also, officials who subscribe to our legislative listserv receive the information directly on their computer or PDA."

To subscribe to the listserv, visit www.listsrv.masc.state.sc.us/mailman/listinfo/legis. For the complete 2003-2004 Legislative Report, visit www.masc.sc.

News Briefs



■ Twelve business licensing officials received their Accreditation in Business Licensing (ABL) designation after completing the three-year institute and passing an examination. Graduates are Dell Bagwell, clerk/treasurer of Blacksburg; Richard Bowers, building official of Lancaster; Steffanie Dom, finance director of Greenwood; Tami Fralick, office manager of Charleston County; Belinda Harper, finance officer/clerk-treasurer of Seneca; Megan Hume, auditor of Charleston County; David Hurt, assistant business license officer of Mount Pleasant; Donya Jordan, municipal fees inspector of North Myrtle Beach; Sonya Lee, accountant I of Lexington; Crystal McGhee, business license inspector of North Myrtle Beach; Ellen Ravenell, head customer service representative of West Columbia; and James Siemers, revenue specialist I of Charleston County.

SCLGAG kicks off HELP program

On August 1, the South Carolina Local Government Assurance Group (SCLGAG) kicked off its Healthy Endeavors for Life Promotion (HELP) program for its members. HELP's goal is to assist individuals diagnosed with certain conditions (diseases) improve the quality of their life while helping control medical costs.

Administered by Matria Healthcare, one of the premier condition management companies in the country, HELP offers assistance in managing the following conditions: coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, diabetes, cancer and obesity. Matria staff is reviewing claims histories and other data to identify individuals who may benefit from the program. Participation in the program is voluntary, and there is no cost to the individuals who participate.

SCLGAG members do not have to wait for a Matria staff member to contact them about their eligibility for the program. Members can call the HELP phone line at 888.451.4908 or visit www.matriacares.com/sclgag/help to see if they qualify.

"If there is to be any hope of 'containing' medical costs, everyone must take a personal interest in their own well-being," said Harvey Mathias, director of MASC's Risk Management Services.

SCLGAG is a self-funded health benefits program offered by MASC for municipal employees.

Hot topic: Emerging issues in parking

2004 Community Builders Conference

The success of a downtown is sometimes a mixed blessing. Along with a resurgence of activity and investment interest in downtown come the headache of what to do about parking. This is a hot issue that repeatedly surfaces when discussing downtown and community needs assessments.

Where parking considerations were once focused on getting better use of existing parking, the emphasis is now on providing adequate parking for increasing demand. This means not only using available parking more efficiently, but also defining additional needs and planning to meet these needs.

There are several “tools” that cities and towns can use when faced with increasing demand for downtown parking. John D. Edwards, transportation consultant and author of the “Parking Handbook for Small Communities,” will share his “tool kit” at the 2004 Community Builders Conference, November 4-6 at



the Hyatt Regency in Greenville. To help community leaders make the right decisions when designing and managing parking, Edwards will discuss evaluating the design of off-street sites, rating matrix-alternative parking sites (honeycomb-shaped pavers sturdy enough to support everyday vehicular use and underlain with sand, gravel and specially engineered textiles to reinforce soil and to allow grass to grow), land and site preparation cost, preservation of historic structures, and compatibility and compliance with an overall downtown plan.

Parking issues will not be the only item discussed at the conference. Attendees will learn

the importance of combining all community elements, from boomer (baby boomer) spending and giving trends to developing and recognizing cultural heritage. The “Funding Opportunities and Grants Workshop” will provide a panel discussion of leading grantors and funders. Attendees will also have an opportunity for one-on-one sessions with grantors.

You will enjoy even more take-home tools and workshops because this year, Community Builders is collaborating with The Humanities Council^{SC} to provide a multidisciplinary format.

“We are proud to collaborate with Community Builders in its annual fall conference. Both organizations have long histories in helping South Carolina communities realize and develop their assets and potential,” said Randy Akers, executive director of The Humanities Council^{SC}. “While a community cannot exist without vision, leadership, economic and physical infrastructure, it cannot fully develop without knowledge of the memories, stories and context which shape the lives of its citizens.

“This November, draw from the resources of both organizations and be inspired, engaged and enriched,” he added.

For more information, contact Beppie LeGrand at 803.933.1231 or blegrand@masc.sc.

Additional conference sessions

- “Boomers: What They’re Doing, How They’re Spending and What Central Business Districts Can Do About It”
- “Using Graphic Design to Enhance Brand Identity”
- “Responsibilities of Non-Profit Boards”

Grants.gov creates online process for applying for federal grants

Reprinted from the April/May issue of CityScan, official publication of the North Dakota League of Cities

Over the last few months, the federal government has radically altered the process for federal grant applications. The new system, Grants.gov, simplifies the grants management process and creates a centralized, online process to find and apply for more than 900 grant programs from the 26 federal grant-making agencies.

Grants.gov provides local governments with two primary capabilities: the ability to discover grant opportunities and a unified process to apply for grants. Everything else on the site is designed to support the use of these features.

Grants.gov is intended to streamline the process of awarding more than 900 different federal grant programs worth more than \$360 billion annually to state and local governments, academia, not-for-profits and other organizations. The aim is to produce a simple, unified source to electronically find, apply for and manage grant opportunities.

What is it?

Grants.gov is the common face for federal grant program information and applications. Key benefits include: a single source for finding grant opportunities, helping applicants locate and learn more about funding opportunities in a standardized manner, and a single, secure and reliable source for applying for federal grants online. The system promises to simplify the grant application process and reduce paperwork.

All federal agencies are now required to post all competitive grant opportunities to the site.

This year, there will be a rapid ramp-up of additional agencies and

grant programs on the "Apply" feature. There will also be significant focus on advancing the grantor and grant community system-to-system interface, allowing local governments to directly communicate with the Grants.gov system. Grants.gov will also begin to expand its uses to add progress reporting.

Here's how it works

A grant seeker visits the Grants.gov Web site to search for grant opportunities. Once a match is found, the organization downloads the grant application package, completes it offline and then submits it through the Grants.gov site. The application is time stamped, and the appropriate federal agency has immediate access to it.

Questions?

Go to www.grants.gov and click on the "Customer Support" tab to access an online tutorial, frequent questions and other resources, or e-mail your questions to info@grants.gov.

How to begin

Local governments can begin searching for grant opportunities for which they would like to apply and begin completing the application immediately. A series of additional "Prepare to Apply" steps must be finished in advance of submitting a grant application through Grants.gov. These steps are described in detail on the site.

Grant applicant organizations need to be registered with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) before being able to submit a grant application through Grants.gov. When an organization registers with the CCR, it is

required to designate an E-Business Point of Contact (E-BIZ POC). The E-BIZ POC is the organization's sole authority capable of designating or revoking an individual's ability to submit grant applications on behalf of their organization via Grants.gov. The CCR also houses organizational information that Grants.gov uses to verify applicant organization identity.

To safeguard the security of electronic information, Grants.gov utilizes E-Authentication, the federal program that ensures secure transactions. E-Authentication defines the level of trust or trustworthiness of the parties involved in a transaction through the use of credential providers. It is the process of determining with certainty that someone really is who they claim to be. The credential provider for Grants.gov is Operational Research Consultants (ORC).

Representatives from Grants.gov made a presentation during MASC's Annual Meeting in July. For a copy of the presentation, visit www.masc.sc/education/annualmeeting.htm.



MASC 2004-2005 board of directors

The following officers were elected to one-year terms:

President

Mayor Tom Peoples of Hilton Head Island

First Vice President

Councilmember Elouise James of Clemson

Second Vice President

Mayor Doug Echols of Rock Hill

Third Vice President

Mayor Fred Cavanaugh of Aiken

Board members are elected to three-year terms. The board is composed of representatives from each of the 10 regional planning districts and three at-large seats.



Mayor Tom Peoples of Hilton Head Island will serve as 2004-2005 MASC president.

Peoples stressed the need for officials from the state's towns and cities to try to work cooperatively with their counterparts on the county and state levels. He said local officials must make efforts to know state legislators on a personal level, and they must foster an atmosphere in which they can both bring forward their concerns and also listen to those of the state government.



The MASC 2004-2005 board of directors consists of six new members. They are, from left, Mayor John Douglas of Chesterfield, Councilmember Phil Mottel of North Augusta, Mayor Kevin Johnson of Manning, Mayor William Alston of Awendaw, Mayor Michael Sottile of Isle of Palms and Mayor Ralph Tuten of Ridgeland.

Board Members

Mayor LaRue Alford of Lake City
Representing: At-large

Mayor William Alston of Awendaw
Representing: At-large

Mayor Carol Burdette of Pendleton
Representing: At-large

Mayor Edith Cantrell of Lowrys
Representing: Catawba Regional Council of Governments

Mayor Rick Danner of Greer
Representing: Appalachian Council of Governments

Councilmember Sam Davis of Columbia
Representing: Central Midlands Council of Governments

Mayor John Douglas of Chesterfield
Representing: Pee Dee Council of Governments

Mayor Kevin Johnson of Manning
Representing: Santee-Lynches Council of Governments

City Manager Tom Leath of Myrtle Beach
Representing: Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments

Councilmember Phil Mottel of North Augusta
Representing: Lower Savannah Council of Governments

Mayor George Rush of Ware Shoals
Representing: Upper Savannah Council of Governments

Mayor Michael Sottile of Isle of Palms
Representing: Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments

Mayor Ralph Tuten of Ridgeland
Representing: Lowcountry Council of Governments

Is your procurement policy 'appropriately competitive'?

State law requires municipalities to “adopt ordinances or procedures embodying sound principles of appropriately competitive procurement” (SC Code Section 11-35-50). However, state law does not go as far as setting a specified procurement policy for municipalities. Unlike state agencies, municipalities are not subject to the State Consolidated Procurement Code.

This means municipalities have the authority to create their own ordinances and procedures for procurement and purchasing. Municipalities may wish to follow a model ordinance, such as the MASC Model Purchasing Ordinance, or incorporate desired portions of the State Procurement Code. The procurement procedures adopted should be workable for the municipality and tailored to meet its individual financial situation.

While municipalities have the flexibility in creating their own procedures, state law requires that the ordinances or procedures provide for procurement that is “appropriately competitive.” A recent state appeals court decision has underscored the law’s intent of a competitive award procedure for local government public project contracts. This decision also illustrated the court’s increased willingness to consider legal actions by taxpayers and dissatisfied bidders challenging noncompetitive practices.

In *Sloan v. Greenville County*, decided on December 8, 2003, the State Court of Appeals considered whether the County, under its own procurement code, properly used a “design-build” procurement method, rather than the “competitive sealed bidding” method for road and building construction projects [356 SC 531, 59 S.E.2d 338 (Ct. App. 2003)]. The “design-build” source selection method allowed the County to enter into a single contract for project design and construction. It also

“**Procurement**” is defined in the State Procurement Code as “buying, purchasing, renting, leasing, or otherwise acquiring any supplies, services, or construction. It also includes all functions that pertain to the obtaining of any supply, service or construction, including description of requirements, selection and solicitation of sources, preparation and award of contracts, and all phases of contract administration.”

allowed for comparative, subjective evaluations of the proposals based on factors other than lowest price, such as experience, project team members and expertise.

The court noted that municipal competitive bidding laws were enacted to “guard against such evils as favoritism, fraud or corruption in the award of contracts, to secure the best product at the lowest price.” The court also observed that “without proper guidelines and oversight,” design-build “may foster the impression that the government is somehow less accountable for its decisions as to how it spends taxpayer money.”

The court then examined in great detail whether the County followed its own specified procurement procedure in justifying use of the design-build method. This procedure required a “written determination” in advance by the County administrator or his designee that the design-build method was the most advantageous to the County and would result in the most timely, economical and successful completion of the project. The court concluded that, for one of the projects, the written determination failed to provide sufficient detail and reasons for using the alternative source selection method. Because the project had been completed by the time of the court’s decision, the court could not set aside the contract as originally requested

by the plaintiff. The remedy was limited to a declaration that the contract had been improperly awarded.

In determining that the plaintiff taxpayer, who was not part of the procurement process, had standing to bring the legal action, the court reiterated the language of earlier cases that the expenditure of public funds pursuant to a competitive bidding statute is of “immense public importance.” The court also stressed the necessity that public entities “must be accountable under the laws and regulations which govern how they spend public money.”

“This recent case shows the importance of following the established procurement procedures, particularly when the procurement method used is not a competitive bid method,” said Danny Crowe, MASC general counsel. The *Sloan* court did not hesitate to closely examine the local government’s adherence to its own policies and the sufficiency of the government’s justification for departing from the favored competitive sealed bid procedure.

Sloan is a continuing reminder of the responsibility and accountability of municipal governments and officials in establishing and following procedures and practices in procurement and in all government activities that properly protect the public interest in the appropriate expenditure of public money.

Does your procurement policy provide for “sound principles of appropriately competitive procurement”? Are you following your procurement policy? It may be time for a review.

Learn more about procurement during the Fall Session of the SC Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute at the Adam’s Mark Hotel in Columbia, September 15-17.

The key to a successful financial system is the selection process

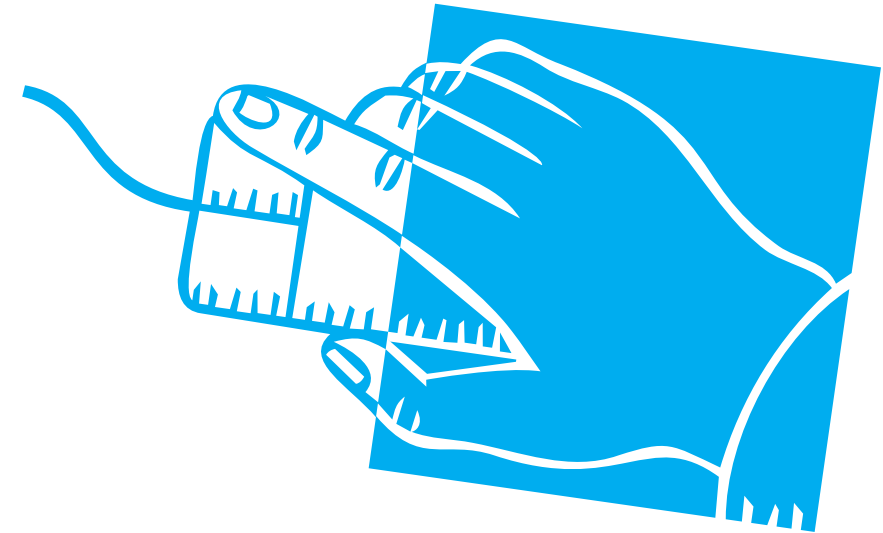
One of the greatest trusts citizens put in their municipal officials is the responsibility to manage the public's purse strings. A fully functional financial system should be the backbone of municipal operations.

Often, a municipality ends up with a system that does not meet its needs. Usually, this result has little to do with the system itself. Instead, it lies with what happened before the purchase during the selection process. Selecting the right software can be difficult and time-consuming, but the time invested in the upfront selection process will pay for itself many times over.

What is the best way to ensure your selection process is successful? Get input. All departments should participate in defining their requirements. Even departments that may not directly access the software are involved with purchasing, budgeting and human resources. They may provide valuable input on how complex situations that originate from their department may be better handled in the new system. They can also identify a difficult process now in place that could be resolved by an improved system.

To help ensure all the municipality's requirements are collected, a committee should be formed that draws members from all city departments. Each module, or specific function within the system, should have a committee member directly responsible for defining the requirements of that module and reviewing proposals from vendors.

Once the requirements are gathered, the next step is to create a Request For Proposal (RFP). The RFP should be struc-



tured to allow easy comparison of responses from multiple vendors. The requirements should be as specific as possible, leaving as little room as possible for interpretation. After receiving the proposals, it is important that municipalities view a vendor demonstration in addition to a demonstration at a city currently using the module. A city site visit allows the municipality to ask specific questions and get a "real-user" response.

"It has been our experience that each municipality has specific issues that the software needs to address," said Karl McCollester, account manager for VC3. "Therefore, it is important to see a real-life example to confirm that the software will meet your city's needs."

Once the responses are compared, references checked and site visits completed, the committee needs to make a recommendation to the city's management on a vendor.

The committee may agree to an overall solution or select a "best-of-breed" strategy, recommending the best modules of two or more vendors.

There are several other factors that affect whether a financial software system is fully functional. These include having the proper information technology infrastructure, managing expectations and implementing an ongoing training system.

In the end, the degree of your financial system's success or failure is first determined by the selection process. If your municipality is reviewing its financial system or considering a review, make sure you have a clearly defined selection process.

Learn more at the SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association (MFOCTA) Annual Meeting at Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach, October 20-22. MASC's technology partner, VC3, will present a technology demonstration on "Dollars and Sense: Choosing the Right Financial System."

Orangeburg DPU wins safety award

The SC Municipal Insurance Trust (SCMIT), a self-funded insurance program administered by MASC, named the Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities (DPU) as this year's Safety Idea Contest winner for its Safety Month program. The DPU will receive a \$500 check for winning.

During the DPU's Safety Month, each division is responsible for innovative ideas and programs to heighten safety awareness among its members. The Administrative Division chose to use an "Inspector Clouseau" theme. Teams of four to five employees went out each day on surprise inspections throughout the department. They inspected everything from first aid kits for expiration dates, bucket trucks and worksite signage to trenching, fall protection and other pertinent safety items.

"There are about 60 people in the Administrative Division, mostly office workers who had never seen DPU facilities or operations outside the main office. We sent each team with a safety officer from DPU and gave them badges with an Inspector Clouseau pic-



Teams of four to five employees conducted surprise inspections each day during Orangeburg DPU's Safety Month.

ture, hard hats, safety glasses and a safety vest. They were thrilled to participate," said Mike Sells, director of administration for Orangeburg DPU.

The DPU starts the Safety Month with a motivational breakfast meeting and ends it with some type of celebration, usually an ice cream sundae break. All employees are issued special safety pins they are required to wear throughout the month. If employees

report to work without it, they are fined a quarter, which goes to one of the DPU's charitable fund-raisers.

"Congratulations to Orangeburg DPU for the creative steps they have taken to increase safety awareness and motivate employees to keep their workplace safe," said Harvey Mathias, director of MASC's Risk Management Services.

Occupational Safety Contest winners

Each year, the SC Municipal Insurance Trust (SCMIT) sponsors an Occupational Safety Contest for its members. During the Awards Breakfast at MASC's Annual Meeting, SCMIT recognized nine municipalities for their safety efforts. The competition is based on OSHA and loss-ratio data.

First-place winners received \$2,000 credit toward the purchase of safety equipment and/or safety training. All winners received engraved plaques for their accomplishments.

Division 1

(10 to 50 employees)

First Place	City of Pickens
Second Place	Town of Hemingway
Third Place	City of Liberty

Division 2

(51 to 150 employees)

First Place	Laurens Commission of Public Works
Second Place	Town of Cheraw
Third Place	City of Chester

Division 3

(151 or more employees)

First Place	Orangeburg Department of Public Utilities
Second Place	City of Seneca/Seneca Light & Water
Third Place	City of Rock Hill

SCMIT, a self-funded insurance program administered by MASC, provides workers' compensation protection for municipal employees.

Fourteen graduate from Municipal Elected Officials Institute

MASC, along with the USC Institute of Public Service and Policy Research and Clemson University's Strom Thurmond Institute, recognized 14 municipal officials for graduating from the SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government. Graduates received their certificates during MASC's Annual Meeting in Hilton Head Island in July.

Institute topics address the varied concerns of local government such as powers and duties of elected officials, finance and planning/zoning. The next session, "The Forms of Municipal Government" and "Benefits and Pitfalls of Economic Development," will be held September 30 via satellite. For registration information, visit www.masc.sc or contact Mary Brantner at 803.933.1206 or



The summer 2004 graduates of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government are, in alphabetical order, Frankie Bennett of Estill, Aaron Brown of Summerville, Annie Brown of Ravenel, Ken Durham of Edgefield, Tony Gray of Estill, Cornelius Huff of Inman, Forrest LaCons of Calhoun Falls, Franklin McAllister of Lake City, Isabelle Coxe-Mercado of Greer, Laura Parker of Ravenel, Louie Roberts of McCormick, Gerald Schuster of Hollywood, Rodney Turner of Lyman and Randal Wallace of Myrtle Beach. (Note: Not all graduates listed appear in photo.)

FAQs about forms of municipal government

Q. What are the three forms of government for municipalities?

A. The three forms of municipal government are mayor-council, council-manager and council.

Q. What is the most used form of government?

A. The mayor-council form of government is the most used — 169 of the 269 incorporated cities and towns use this form.

Q. In which of the three forms of government does the mayor vote on motions?

A. The mayor is a voting member of council under all three forms of government. The mayor should vote on every issue before council.

Q. Who hires an administrator to assist the mayor in the mayor-council form of government?

A. The mayor and council may hire an administrator to assist the mayor (Section 5-9-40).

Q. Who prepares the proposed budget under the council form of government?

A. Unless delegated, the entire council is responsible for preparing a balanced budget.

Q. Who creates the administrative departments under all three forms of government?

A. The council is responsible for creating departments.

The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government will answer these questions and more during "The Forms of Municipal Government" class via satellite September 30. The "Benefits and Pitfalls of Economic Development" will also be presented.

Registration information is available at www.masc.sc. For more information, contact Mary Brantner at 803.933.1206.

2004 Achievement Award Winner

Population Category 1-1,000: The Town of Wagener

When asked to help fund local school activities, the Town of Wagener made a “to do” list and offered a way for students to “earn” the funding by doing chores around the Town.

Similar to many small municipalities, local schools in Wagener play a huge part in the town’s livelihood, and Town officials feel a strong obligation to help the schools provide opportunities for students. The Town of Wagener was asked to help financially support various school organizations and extracurricular activities. Rather than give an actual monetary donation, Wagener looked for a more prudent way to provide the funding.

Town officials looked at the list of things that needed to be done in the town. The Town had to either hire additional Town employees or contract for outside help to accomplish the projects. Officials realized many of the projects could be done by the high school groups asking for help. Town officials approached the various group leaders with the proposal, and the groups agreed they would “earn” the financial support they requested. To date, the Town has paid the groups almost \$2,600.

The football team needed funds to pay for summer camp. To earn this money, players cleaned Town parks by painting benches, edging sidewalks, planting flowers and cleaning the fountain in the center of town.

The basketball team needed to purchase new uniforms and agreed to cut the grass around Town-owned industrial property. Coaches helped install insulation when the Town Hall was being renovated.

After the Town sold the building that housed its museum, the baseball



The baseball team earned money by moving contents from the Town museum to storage.



The football team earned money for summer camp by painting benches, edging sidewalks and cleaning the fountain in the center of town.

team helped move its contents into storage to earn the money it needed to supplement a trip to the playoffs.

Members of the local high school chapter of Future Farmers of America (FFA) landscaped and planted flowers at a town park for funds to send its officers to a leadership conference in Louisville, KY.

Having the students work on Town projects has encouraged them to take an active interest

in the betterment of the town. As a result, students began working to revive the “Wagons to Wagener” festival. They scheduled a high school rodeo, basketball tournament, beauty pageant, parade and a town-wide yard sale and craft sale to help raise funds for the Town and the local schools.

For more information about this project, contact Mayor Steve Carver at 803.564.3412.

MASC recognizes and encourages innovations and excellence in local government through its Achievement Awards. Started in 1987, the program provides local government officials and employees the opportunity to receive deserved recognition for superior and innovative efforts in local government. The program also provides a forum for sharing the best public service ideas in South Carolina. For more information, visit MASC’s Web site at www.masc.sc or call Christie Zeller at 803.933.1215.

2004 Achievement Award Winner

Population Category 1,001-5,000: City of Travelers Rest

Knowing the dangers associated with improperly installed child safety seats, the Travelers Rest Fire Department opened a Child Safety Seat Fitting Station to raise public awareness about child safety seats.

After conducting a community needs assessment, the Travelers Rest Fire Department determined that the community needed a permanent "Child Passenger Safety Seat Fitting Station." The 11 full-time firefighters and 25 volunteer firefighters, who were already highly trained and educated in child safety, went on to earn the Child Safety Seat Technician Certification from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The Child Passenger Safety Seat Fitting Station opened in August 2000.

The goal of the fitting station is to stimulate changes in attitude, behavior and the environment to promote safety. The station works to raise public awareness about child safety by providing training and awareness materials and using the media to promote the program.

When a parent brings a child to the fitting station, the main objective is to ensure the child leaves the station safer than before he or she arrived. The car seat is inspected for correct installation, company recalls, defective parts and any other safety hazards. The firefighter identifies any parental concerns or issues and educates the parent about child safety seats through hands-on instruction and by providing educational materials.

If a low-income family cannot afford a safety seat, the fitting station will provide one to them at no charge. The seats are provided by Greenville Safe Kids.



The main objective of the fitting station is to ensure the child leaves the station safer than before he or she arrived.



Firefighters educate parents about child safety seats through hands-on instruction and by providing educational materials.

The station is operated by on-duty firefighters and is a free service to the public. Donations from the public are not accepted. To ensure safety seat inspections do not interfere with the firefighters' other duties, all car safety seat inspections are by appointment only.

It is a proven fact that properly installed child safety seats save lives, and the Travelers Rest Fire Department has been instrumental in educating the community about this fact.

For more information about this project, contact Chief Richard Johnson at 864.834.5536.

MASC recognizes and encourages innovations and excellence in local government through its Achievement Awards. Started in 1987, the program provides local government officials and employees the opportunity to receive deserved recognition for superior and innovative efforts in local government. The program also provides a forum for sharing the best public service ideas in South Carolina. For more information, visit MASC's Web site at www.masc.sc or call Christie Zeller at 803.933.1215.



Educational Opportunities

SC Association of Stormwater Managers

■ **August 20**, will hold its Quarterly Meeting at the State Museum in Columbia.

SC Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute

■ **September 15-17**, will hold its Fall Session at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Columbia.

Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

■ **September 30**, will present "The Forms of Municipal Government" and "Benefits and Pitfalls of Economic Development."

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.

SC Business Licensing Officials Association

■ **October 19-21**, will hold its Annual Meeting at the Embassy Suites at Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach.

SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association

■ **October 20-22**, will hold its Annual Meeting at the Embassy Suites at Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach.

Community Builders

■ **November 4-6**, will hold its Annual Conference at the Hyatt Regency in Greenville. See related story on page 3.

SC Municipal Personnel Association

■ **November 10-12**, will hold its Annual Meeting at the Holiday Inn Oceanfront in Hilton Head Island.

SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund

■ **November 18**, will hold its Annual Members Meeting.

SC Municipal Insurance Trust

■ **November 18**, will hold its Annual Members Meeting.

SC Association of Stormwater Managers

■ **November 19**, will hold its Quarterly Meeting at the State Museum in Columbia.



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