

# UPTOWN

## Moving to *Hometown, SC*

**M**ore than 800 municipal officials got their first look at the new face of the Municipal Association's multi-year awareness building initiative during the Annual Meeting in Hilton Head Island last month.

Rolled out during the opening general session, the newly named *Hometown, SC* initiative was introduced to attendees through a video presentation produced to look like a newscast. Anchored by Columbia news personality Judi Gatson, the video laid out in an entertaining way the background of the *Hometown, SC* campaign and introduced the new name and look.

Outgoing Association president Elouise James echoed her yearlong theme in her remarks introducing the look. "If we are going to be successful in getting our message heard, we must deliver that message with one voice.

The long-range plans for *Hometown, SC* give us the tools and the direction to get us all moving in that direction."

Initially called Vision SC, the awareness building initiative began to take shape when members of the Municipal Association board and a group of mayors from cities and towns with populations of more than 25,000 decided it was time for the Association to take a long-range, strategic and focused approach to communicating the value and importance of South Carolina's cities and towns. The goal of the initiative is to raise hometown voices to a new level of influence that will increase awareness of the value of cities and towns.

*Hometown, SC*

Our Home. **Our Voice.** Our Future.

"With help from a communications consultant last year, a working group of the board, other mayors and Municipal Association staff developed the initiative's key messages of Value, Partnerships, Resources," said Howard Duvall, MASC executive director. "The long-range focus of this project led to some staff restructuring at the Association, putting a communications department in place to direct this process."

After a rigorous interview process this spring, the Municipal Association hired Carolina PR, a marketing and

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## Constitutional amendment: Property tax relief or guaranteed tax increase?

**A**fter the November 7 general election, South Carolina may experience a massive tax shift from the wealthy to the poor property owner. Voters will consider a constitutional amendment to cap increases in real property values to a maximum of 15 percent during a reassessment year. While proponents of the tax cut will have an easy "no tax increase" message, the reality of the situation will be much more challenging to pare down to a simple sound bite that voters will quickly grasp.

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public relations firm with extensive experience with similar projects, to work with MASC staff on this initiative. The firm hit the ground running after coming on board in May to get the new name and look ready to roll out at the Annual Meeting.

The first order of business was to create a brand identity and graphic design for the initiative. "In today's cluttered media world, any successful concept, product or idea must have an established brand identity to ensure its message gets out to its intended audience," said Reba Campbell, communications director at the Municipal Association.

There were several goals to meet in the process of developing the initiative's brand identity. It must:

- be clearly tied to South Carolina cities and towns,
- be memorable, descriptive and brief, and
- work with the primary target audience of key influencers, but also have a context for the general public.

"While we would certainly want the general public to understand the value of cities, we are starting our efforts targeted to key influencers in cities and towns around the state," said Campbell. These key influencers, who include leaders in business, education, the arts,

health care and civic interests, have a major stake in the success of their communities.

"Most of these local leaders instinctively understand the value of cities. Our challenge is to take that often passive understanding and move it to active support on behalf of cities," Campbell added.

The tagline associated with the campaign — "Our home. Our voice. Our future." — is intended to remind people that they have a stake in the future prosperity of their hometown, and their voice needs to be heard.

"We remind people that their town is their home, and they need to get involved. We convince them that they have a voice in the direction of their cities, and they need to use it," said John Durst, senior counselor at Carolina PR. "Finally, we encourage their involvement by using their voices to help shape the future of their community. When all three phrases are taken together, they convey a message that the voice of cities and towns is the voice of the people of South Carolina, and it is that voice that will define the future prosperity of the state."

Through a series of specifically planned events, mini-campaigns, awareness building and localized resources, this long-range campaign will ultimately result in a more engaged — and active — group of local leaders

who understand and actively support cities.

"The success of *Hometown, SC* depends on the state's municipal officials using the resources and information supplied by the Municipal Association to localize the message for their own cities and towns," said incoming MASC President Doug Echols, mayor of Rock Hill. "It's up to us to push this plan forward."

Meeting attendees were sent home with T-shirts and other giveaway items to keep them thinking about the focus of the campaign. A series of regional *Hometown, SC* road shows around the state is planned for the fall during which local municipal officials will each receive training and a toolkit of resources to help them tell their hometown story in unison.

Some of the toolkit resources will include a yearlong editorial calendar, a blitz of local activities to take place leading up to and following the 2007 Hometown Legislative Action Day, engagement activities for business leaders and articles that will be featured in *South Carolina Magazine*.

For the most up-to-date information on the Hometown, SC road show training sessions scheduled for the fall for municipal officials and to view the Hometown, SC video, visit [www.hometownsc.org](http://www.hometownsc.org).

### Hometown road show schedule

Central Midlands	Sept. 19	Noon	Columbia
Upper/Lower Savannah	Sept. 21	6:00 p.m.	Aiken
Appalachian	Sept. 26	Noon	Greenville
Catawba	Sept. 27	Noon	Rock Hill
Waccamaw	Oct. 4	6:00 p.m.	Conway
Berkley/Chas/Dorchester	Oct. 5	Noon	North Charleston
Pee Dee/Santee Lynches	Oct. 9	6:00 p.m.	Florence
Lowcountry	Oct. 19	6:00 p.m.	Point South

# Municipal Court Administration Association to showcase court security plans

After the Atlanta courthouse murders, court security is weighing heavily on Chief Justice Jean Toal's mind and on that of every court administrator in the state. "We have surveyed security in every location in South Carolina where court is held, from magistrates and city court to the county courthouse," said Toal during her March address to the SC General Assembly. "We are now developing a series of standard operating procedures for counties to use as a guideline in developing a local court security plan."

The City of Rock Hill became proactive about court security six years ago, when its court administrator began researching the topic with the county sheriff's office and other municipal courts. "I visited the county courthouse and talked with the sheriff's deputies

about security measures there," said Diane Anderson, Rock Hill's clerk of court/administrator. "They showed me the metal detector, explained how it worked and gave me good, sound advice about security measures that could be used in our facility.

"In addition to this, I sent a simple 10 question survey to other municipal courts regarding security in general and whether or not they had metal detectors. This was done long before 'security issues' were talked about or written about in newspapers because of the concern we had here in our court," she added.

Her research was compiled and presented to the city's management. Using this information, management proposed a security plan to its city council, and it didn't take long for Rock Hill's court-



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## Constitutional amendment continued from cover

For tax purposes, real property is recorded at its fair market value. During a reassessment year, local governments must roll back their millage rates so the increase in property values does not bring in more revenue than the previous year. A property with an "average" increase in value costs the property owner the same amount of taxes after reassessment as it did the year before. Property owners with declining property values pay less, and owners with increased property values pay more.

The constitutional amendment proposing an artificial 15 percent property tax value will take billions of dollars off the tax rolls. Commissioned by the Municipal Association of SC, Miley, Gallo & Associates conducted a study on the cap's impact on four counties:

Beaufort, Berkeley, Florence and Richland. The Miley study showed a 15 percent cap in just these four counties would take \$11.2 billion off the tax rolls: "Since the cap would exempt a portion of property from taxation, such a cap would shift the tax burden from the protected class of property owners to those who are unprotected. It would shift the burden in varying degrees in counties across the state. However, it appears that it would have the same impact statewide as it does in all four counties evaluated in this review." More than 50 percent of the property in the four counties did not benefit from the 15 percent cap, thus guaranteed a tax increase.

Similar studies by the Strom Thurmond Institute of Government and Public Affairs have reached the same

conclusion: "The higher rollback millage rate after capped reassessment means that many property owners will see a higher tax bill than they would have after conventional reassessment."

This artificial valuation is protected until an "assessable transfer of interest occurs." This means that similarly situated homes will be paying vastly different property taxes to receive the same services. Home owners will be reluctant to sell or improve property if their action would trigger higher taxes.

Before November 7, all property owners in South Carolina should carefully consider the consequences of this constitutional amendment. Is this property tax relief, or guaranteed tax increases for a majority of the property owners in South Carolina?

# Cities re-invent themselves by what comes naturally

With an economy shifting away from textiles and industry, many South Carolina cities are turning to their precious natural resources for tourism and economic revitalization.

"South Carolina has just an incredible wealth of natural and cultural resources," said Barry Beasley, director of Habitat Protection Programs for the SC Department of Natural Resources. With economies transitioning, "Communities have to re-invent themselves," he added.

The Town of Great Falls has been working on this re-invention. For years, the town relied on its textile mills for employment. When the mills shut down in the 1980s, town leaders were left searching for new industry. Officials soon learned that while they should continue to court industry, they also needed to widen their focus on expanding the economy, said Mayor H.C. Starnes.

For the past five years, the town has been working toward a plan to attract tourists with its unique and stunning natural surroundings. Part of the plan involves working with Duke Power on re-licensing its hydropower dams. The lengthy federal process, which should be complete around 2008, will allow the falls for which the town was named to flow again. This plan will also result in a new state park, along with recreational water flow for boaters and whitewater rafters.

Plans for the town also include turning the old military installation on Dearborn Island into a state historical park, preserving the views around the Cedar Creek Reservoir, establishing a system of trails and creating a "rails to trails" project on the old CSX rail line, said Glinda Coleman, director of the Great Falls Hometown Association.

"We feel like this will give us something in town to bring people in," Starnes said.

For 10 years, the town concentrated on attracting industry. While it did build an industrial park and bring in some business, leaders soon realized that traditional industry was not where their focus should be, Coleman said.

"We have to think outside the industry box," she added. "It's important for towns to look around and see what their assets are."

It's been a slow process, but Great Falls is making strides, Coleman noted.

"Great Falls has been working for a long time to develop its ecotourism," said Beppie LeGrand, Main Street SC manager for MASC. "We feel like it's going to be one of the jewels in the state."

*"We're hoping to be a major attraction for tourists who have any interest in nature," said Mayor Charles Sweat of Walterboro.*

Other cities are following suit. The City of Walterboro purchased 800 acres of land to establish the Great Swamp Sanctuary, which includes boardwalks, bridges, bicycle paths, foot trails and canoe areas. Officials are also in the process of designing a 10,000-square-foot nature discovery center, said City Manager Tuck McConnell.

Walterboro city officials hope the attractions will draw tourists heading down Interstate 95.

"The state of Florida has done a good job of attracting ecotourism. We saw this as an opportunity," McConnell added. "We're halfway between New York and Miami. It's a natural breaking point."

McConnell said the city expects to get about 125,000 to 150,000 visitors annually. When these tourists stop at the discovery center, they may also decide to visit other South Carolina sights. The center will feature a display highlighting other natural assets in the state.

Plans for the center include a movie theater, exhibits and classrooms — including a treetop classroom. The center will be designed to accommodate school buses, tour buses and motor homes.

"We're hoping to be a major attraction for tourists who have any interest in nature," said Mayor Charles Sweat of Walterboro.

As the sites are completed and the tourists come in, Sweat said he hopes the town will be a draw for entrepreneurs. He envisions businesses catering to tourists through bike rentals, canoe rentals and trips, and even birding trips.

Many municipalities across the state are taking steps toward nature-based tourism, LeGrand said. The state's beaches, mountains and lakes all offer opportunities for swimming, boating, rafting or hiking.

It's a national trend, too, Beasley said. He recently returned from a meeting where he learned how officials were working with towns along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers to develop ecotourism.

"Many towns are re-inventing themselves as their old economy fades away and a new economic identity becomes critical," Beasley added.



# MASC to provide continuing education for local government planning and zoning officials and staff

**B**uilding on its “Orientation Training for Local Government Planning and Zoning Officials and Staff,” the Municipal Association of South Carolina will begin offering continuing education training in October. MASC began offering the orientation training in November 2005. The continuing education training will focus on public hearing procedures, how to conduct public meetings, ethics in the public sector and disharmony on boards and commissions.

This training will satisfy the three hours of the continuing education requirement from the SC Planning

Education Advisory Committee (SCPEAC). Boards, commissions and staff of a local government with a population of 35,000 residents or more must satisfy the continuing education requirement by January 1, 2007. Local governments with a population less than 35,000 residents have until January 1, 2008, to satisfy the continuing education requirement. The six hours of orientation training required by SCPEAC must be completed by January 1, 2007.

The continuing education training will follow the same model as the orientation training. The session will be

offered via DVD, and an approved facilitator must be present when the training DVD is presented.

*For more information, go to the “Training for local government planning and zoning officials” link under “Featured Links” on the MASC Web site ([www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc)), or contact Natalie Viers, MASC’s staff associate for affiliate services, at 803.933.1254 or [nviers@masc.sc](mailto:nviers@masc.sc).*

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## South Carolina cities adopt NLC platform for strengthening families

**E**very day, mayors and councilmembers are reminded strong cities are built on a foundation of strong families. Local officials recognize public safety, economic development, workforce strength and fiscal stability are intricately linked to opportunities for children and families to succeed.

Municipalities in South Carolina and across the country are adopting the National League of Cities’ (NLC) *City Platform for Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth* as a framework for action in their communities.

In Greenville, the city is using the platform to guide local initiatives in youth development. The city has convened a committee with representatives from youth- and family-serving organizations. Building on an earlier Early Childhood Development Strategic Plan, the committee will develop a “youth master plan” to establish a set of priorities for young people from birth to age 18.

Greenville Councilmember Diane Smock, who serves on the NLC’s Council for Youth, Education and Families, is excited about the long-term impact of the city’s commitment to its young people. “We are addressing issues for both the short and long terms — by investing in our youngest citizens, we are ensuring the vitality of our community for decades to come,” she said.

The two-part platform for city action encourages municipal leaders to move forward by building upon their own unique mix of assets and opportunities. The platform’s first part highlights an essential “infrastructure,” key functions and processes that play a crucial role in effective or sustained investments in children and families. The second part calls upon municipal leaders to take a series of more specific action steps in each of seven issue areas: early childhood development, youth development, education and afterschool, health and safety, youth in transition, family

economic success, and neighborhoods and community.

Encouraging other cities to adopt the platform, Councilmember Smock said this is an opportunity to set a new standard. “We can be the first state to join every city and town with a promise to future generations that we will do all we can to ensure their health, safety, education and job skills. Let’s make South Carolina number one in the nation!”

To learn more about the platform, visit [www.nlc.org/iyef/a\\_city\\_platform](http://www.nlc.org/iyef/a_city_platform). The Web site also includes sample proclamations and resolutions. In South Carolina, Charleston and Greenville have formally adopted the platform by resolution.

*For more information, contact Michael Karpman at NLC’s Institute for Youth, Education and Families at 202.626.3072 or [karpman@nlc.org](mailto:karpman@nlc.org).*

## Focus on Technology

# Remote deposit capture may mean fewer trips to the bank

The days when you actually had to leave the office and rush to the bank to make a deposit may soon be just a memory.

A number of banks now are offering cities the ability to do remote deposit capture, a fairly new technology that allows checks to be scanned into an office computer and automatically deposited into the city's bank account.

Many grocery and department stores have already been utilizing the technology. Its use is now becoming more widespread among businesses and cities that deal with a large number of checks on a daily basis.

The technology allows customers to make fewer trips to the bank, said Lani Moody, cash management analyst with NBSC. All business checks and account information are sent electronically from the user's computer.

It also expands the time to make deposits, Moody added. NBSC has a 2 p.m. deadline for checks to be deposited that same business day. The remote deposit technology extends that time up to 6 p.m., she said.

MASC has used remote deposit capture for about a year. The technology has proved to be convenient, said Thomas D'Agostino, MASC accounts receivable coordinator.

Before MASC implemented remote deposit, D'Agostino had to delay other work to make a trip to the bank to deposit checks before the bank's same-day deposit deadline. Now he has more time to get the deposit done — and doesn't have to leave his desk.

"It saves time so I can get other work done," he said. "And it's very accurate. It's a very simple machine, but it does so much."

D'Agostino said the same technology could help finance officers, clerks and treasurers around the state.

"For the cities that have to handle a lot of checks during the day, this could save them a lot of time," he added.

The Town of Kiawah Island has been using the technology since October 2005, said Town Administrator Tumiko Rucker.

"We absolutely love it," Rucker added. "It's been very, very helpful."

With the system, town officials can make same-day deposits with Wachovia until 8 p.m., she said. It also eliminates the need for employees to leave work, cuts back on security issues and increases the municipality's interest revenue, Rucker added.

Banks offer the scanning machines. Once users have the equipment, they just need a secure Internet connection, Moody said. The cost of the scanning machine can initially be expensive, but it saves costs over time by cutting down on check processing fees. The machine can scan 100 to 120 checks per minute, she added.

Use of the technology decreases the chances of the checks getting lost, Moody said. It also allows users to keep the physical checks, or they can get a CD-ROM of the stored images to save storage space, she added.

Rucker said the technology has been affordable for Kiawah Island, with the scanner costing about \$1,500. And while there is a monthly service cost for the system, it is offset by the compensating balance the town keeps in its checking account, Rucker added.

## Nineteen participate in SCAMPS sponsored competition



Nineteen municipal linemen competed in the annual Pole Climbing, Hurtman Rescue and Cross-Arm Change Out Training Competition sponsored by the SC Association of Municipal Power Systems, May 23-24. Winners of the individual competition were Ron Passmore and Billy Catledge of Rock Hill. Runners-up were Jesse Sward of Laurens CPW and Jackie Helms of Rock Hill. Winners of the Cross-Arm Change Out Training Competition were the team of Billy Catledge, Randy Thomas and Hank Williams of Rock Hill and the team of Jackie Helms, Randy Jackson and Lawrence Brooks of Rock Hill. Runners-up were the team of Phil Ennis of Greer CPW, Carl Heath of Seneca and Gary Breland of Bamberg and the team of Ron Passmore, David Hope and Daniel Branche of Rock Hill.

# MASC honors nine municipalities with a Municipal Achievement Award

Since 1987, the Municipal Association of South Carolina's Municipal Achievement Awards program has been recognizing successful and innovative municipal projects. By establishing partnerships and building community support, these projects improve the quality of life for citizens and add value to the community. This year, 26 municipalities entered the Achievement Awards. Summaries of each project can be found as follows. Summaries are also available on the MASC Web site, along with a video highlighting this year's winners. Each winning municipality is also featured in the July/August issue of SC Magazine. Summaries of the other entries will follow in the September/October issue of Uptown.

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

During the January 2004 ice storm, Wagener town officials realized they didn't have a way to check on the town's senior citizens. Police officers began a door-to-door check, which developed into the Wagener Well-Being Program. However, town officials realized they needed to put together an all-inclusive list to ensure the town knew about all its senior citizens. Two senior citizens volunteered to canvass the town to compile the initial lists. These lists were sent to local churches to verify the names and add others.

Wagener officials sent each citizen on the list a letter explaining the program. If they wanted to participate, seniors could choose from three options — a periodic visit by local police, a visit just during and after inclement weather or a combination of the two. Police officers interviewed each participant to document emergency contact information and any special needs.

The program has grown from 44 participants to 71, due largely to neighbors and friends telling others about the program. Police officers visit new members of the community and the recently



Police officers visit senior citizens during and after inclement weather as part of the Wagener Well-Being Program.

widowed to inform them of the program. Participants say the well-being checks give them piece of mind, and they enjoy the relationships that have developed with the police department as a result of the visits. For a \$50 invest-

ment, the town is providing a valuable community service with its Wagener Well-Being Program.

Contact: Mayor Steve Carver at 803.564.5289 or [carverhs@westinghouse.com](mailto:carverhs@westinghouse.com)

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### Population Category 1,001 - 5,000: City of Hardeeville

By reconstructing an exact replica of Hardeeville's 1928 Consolidated School complex, the city lived up to its motto of "New Horizons, Traditional Values." The city is experiencing an unprecedented economic boom. To prepare for this growth, Hardeeville needed to expand its City Hall and chose the old Consolidated School complex as the site for its new City Hall.

Although it had fallen into disrepair, the complex served as an emotional and physical centerpiece for the community. The mayor established a committee of former students to provide guidance to architects and administrators during the process. They would replicate the building's external footprint while adapting the interior space to serve new functions. A combination of general obligation bonds, along with local accommodations and hospitality taxes financed phase one of the project. Phase one included reconstructing the 10,000-square-foot main building and renovating six ball fields.

The building houses council chambers, administrative offices, the building and planning department, the community development department, the recreation department, a community room and the city's first museum. Hundreds of citizens and businesses donated treasures such as class rings, letterman jackets, yearbooks and photographs to display in the museum. Display graphics depicting historical milestones line the building's main halls, as do display cases of city and school artifacts, mementos and vintage photography.

With an additional 70 acres of donated land adjacent to the campus, phase two will add more ball fields, a



Hundreds of citizens donated memorabilia for Hardeeville's first museum, located in the reconstructed 1928 Consolidated School complex, now Hardeeville's City Hall.

new stadium, playground, tennis and basketball courts, an open-air performance center and a 27,000-square-foot gymnasium.

Hardeeville's new City Hall and Community Campus offers its citizens a place to build strong community connections with the past and for the future.

Contact: Shane Haynes at 843.784.2231 or [rshaynes@cityofhardeeville.com](mailto:rshaynes@cityofhardeeville.com)

### Population Category 5,001 - 10,000: City of Lancaster

By collaborating with the Communities In Schools (CIS) program, the City of Lancaster has found a way to deliver cost efficient services while helping its youth develop important skills. The CIS program helps students at risk of dropping out of school and those who have already dropped out. CIS works with the students to teach them important life skills and a trade while continuing their education.

The City of Lancaster first turned to the Communities In Schools' Youth Build program when several houses in the community had code violations and the home owners could not afford to make the repairs. City Council appropriated \$10,500 over two years for Youth Build to purchase materials to make the repairs. Youth in the program provided labor at no cost and learned home building skills while helping home owners bring their houses up to code.

The city's fire department also uses the CIS Youth Build program when building its Habitat For Humanity homes. The department benefits from the extra helping hands, and the youth benefit from the mentoring and hands-on experience.

The city looked to the CIS program again when it needed to replace its inmate labor program. CIS youth help the city with landscaping work such as collecting litter and maintaining the grounds at two of the city's cemeteries.

In 2005, the city received a summer youth employment grant from the South

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Carolina Department of Transportation. The city and CIS officials selected nine students to provide landscaping and horticulture work at the 10 gateway areas into the city. Beyond earning summer cash (participants received an hourly wage), youth learned important life skills through classroom activities.

Contact: Steve Willis at 803.286.8414 or [swillis@lancastercitysc.com](mailto:swillis@lancastercitysc.com)

## Population Category 10,001 - 20,000: City of Newberry

With the help of strong partnerships, the City of Newberry provided needed affordable housing for its senior citizens when it renovated a neglected neighborhood hospital.

Through the 1990s, city officials watched as the surrounding neighborhood began to mirror the abandoned hospital building and grounds. A needs assessment, conducted in 2001, identified affordable senior housing as one of the community's needs. City staff proposed converting the former hospital into affordable senior housing. The community hospital, built in 1925, would be preserved as a local landmark listed on the National Register of Historic Places while once again providing useful services to Newberry citizens.

The City of Newberry collaborated with the Newberry County Council on Aging, the Newberry Housing Authority and a developer experienced in rehabilitating and adaptively reusing large, historic properties. This group later formed a corporation, Newberry Hospital LLC, and was charged with securing funding, overseeing the construction and providing long-term property management. With funding from a Community Development Block Grant, HOME program funds, a low interest loan and state



Communities In Schools youth work to maintain the grounds around the City of Lancaster's 10 gateway areas.

and federal tax credits, the \$4.1 million project became a reality in 2004.

The 35 one-bedroom apartments, restricted to low- and moderate-income senior citizens, were all leased within five months of the grand opening. Residents have access to services provided by the Newberry County Council on Aging's Senior Center, located adjacent to the renovated hospital. The senior center offers lunches, a wellness center, a computer room with Internet access and entertainment such as bingo, musical performances and holiday programs. Senior center staff also deliver meals from the cafeteria to handicapped tenants and



The City of Newberry provided affordable housing for its senior citizens by renovating a neglected neighborhood hospital building.

provide transportation to non-emergency medical and dental appointments.

By collaborating with numerous local, state and federal agencies to fund, build and staff the new facility, the City of Newberry has found a creative way to provide needed services and resources to its citizens.

Contact: Jeff Shacker at 803.321.1018 or [jshacker@cityofnewberry.com](mailto:jshacker@cityofnewberry.com)

## Economic Development: City of Aiken

By educating its citizens and empowering them to invest in themselves, the City of Aiken's comprehensive plan to revitalize its deteriorating north side neighborhoods is showing remarkable results.

The first step of the North Side Revitalization Strategy involved several initiatives. Aiken offered incentives to qualified owners to demolish abandoned buildings.

After the city created Dial-a-Dumpster — a free service to community groups cleaning up the streets and vacant lots — trash and junk began to disappear. Grants offered through the city's emergency repair program helped home owners make needed repairs. Then the city worked with local churches and hundreds of volunteers to paint houses and clear lots.

To prepare citizens for home ownership, the city offered educational

programs, such as a Neighborhood University, to teach how city departments work, in addition to home buyer education and credit repair classes. The city has helped hopeful home owners identify financial resources through partnerships with a local bank, the Aiken Housing Authority and a local church. Where there were once abandoned buildings and neglected yards, Aiken began building new homes sitting on landscaped lots in tidy neighborhoods with sidewalks, storm drains and street lights.

City Council vowed to invest \$2 million annually to build 50 new houses each year for 10 years to transform all north side neighborhoods. Now that the neighborhoods have turned around, developers are taking an interest and investing in more than 30 homes.

The north side neighborhoods are coming to life. People sit on their front porches, and children play in their yards without worrying about crime. Aiken's North Side Revitalization Strategy has added value to the city and its residents by increasing the tax

base and reducing the need for police and fire services. At the same time, this initiative adds value to the lives of north side residents by empowering them to live self-sufficiently in quality housing and a safe neighborhood.

Contact: Bill Huggins at 803.642.7654 or [bhuggins@aiken.net](mailto:bhuggins@aiken.net)

## Public Safety: City of Orangeburg (co-winner)

In an effort to improve emergency services and the quality of life for its citizens, the City of Orangeburg combined its fire and police departments into one public safety department. The city went from 45 police officers and 40 firefighters to 85 cross-trained and cross-functioning public safety officers.

Orangeburg focused on training, equipment and personnel to reduce the department's ISO rating. After reducing its ISO rating from a Class 6 to a Class 4, the department knew its efforts were working.

With a pro-active approach to improving the quality of life in Orangeburg, the department adopted a community policing philosophy. Initiatives such as crime watch, business watch and a TV program titled "Orangeburg Fights Back" were started. The department also established a comprehensive fire inspection program. These community programs have fostered respectful relationships between the community and the department. The department was rewarded for its hard work and professionalism when it received accreditation from the International Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies in 2003.

Continuing to improve services, the city established two more fire stations



Aiken City Council vowed to invest \$2 million annually to build 50 new houses each year for 10 years to transform all north side neighborhoods.

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and built a new multi-million-dollar public safety facility. The new facility doubles the department's workspace and provides state-of-the-art facilities to help meet the community's needs.

The department hired a full-time forensic chemist to examine drug evidence and testify for law enforcement agencies in the 1st Judicial Circuit. To encourage increased professionalism in the department, the city started a tuition assistance program for advanced education. Three officers have received master's degrees, and 16 have bachelor's degrees. Several others are working toward their degrees.

Pro-active law enforcement, dedicated fire service, public fire education and community outreach have helped the Orangeburg Public Safety Department improve its emergency services, reduce crime rates and increase the quality of life for its citizens.

Contact: John Yow at 803.533.6000 or [jjow@orangeburg.sc.us](mailto:jjow@orangeburg.sc.us)

### Public Safety: Town of Cheraw (co-winner)

The Town of Cheraw found a creative way to acquire additional space for its police department while maintaining the department's downtown presence and saving taxpayers' dollars. In the 1980s, the police department renovated and moved into a former train depot located in Cheraw's historic downtown. The facility not only met the department's needs, but also preserved part of Cheraw's history. A decade later, the department had outgrown its new facility. Twenty-four officers shared two 10-by-8 spaces, and computers were stationed in the hallways.

Cheraw's officials embarked on an ambitious project to remodel the police department's current facility and



Orangeburg's new multi-million-dollar public safety facility houses 85 cross-trained and cross-functioning public safety officers.

connect it to an adjacent building. This renovation more than quadrupled the department's space to 14,000 square feet. With the depot still serving as the department's nerve center, renovations allowed for larger offices, dedicated storage spaces, a communication center, a larger public lobby and an evidence locker. The renovated annex houses additional offices, locker rooms and showers, a kitchen and eating area, and an interrogation room.

Once only large enough for five people, the department's new training room can now accommodate 100. The space is used for training by other



Cheraw's newly renovated police department offers a two-lane indoor shooting range.

criminal justice agencies and police departments, in addition to community meetings and social gatherings. What was once the annex's garage service area is now a two-lane indoor shooting range with controlled lighting to simulate nighttime conditions.



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By using a creative approach to provide its police department with additional needed space, the Town of Cheraw was able to save tax dollars while maintaining its police department's downtown presence.

Contact: Bill Taylor at 843.537.7283 or [townofcherawbill@bellsouth.net](mailto:townofcherawbill@bellsouth.net)

### Public Service: City of York

The City of York went trenchless to upgrade its sewer infrastructure. With the age of the infrastructure, rising maintenance costs, the need for constant repairs and the inconvenience to business owners and residents, this public works project had been one of the city's top priorities for three years. Funding came from a partnership between the city and the Catawba Regional Council of Governments to secure a Community Development Block Grant.

York chose to use pipe bursting, a trenchless method of sewer infrastructure replacement, for the project. Pipe

bursting eliminates large open-cut trenches that are costly and dangerous. This method eliminated the need to cut streets and sidewalks and didn't interfere with residents' landscaping. The most obvious benefit was the speed of the installation. The contractor installed sections of new sewer main from 300 to 750 feet long within the same working day. The pipe is heat fused together so there is no potential for root intrusion or blockages. It has a lifespan of 75 years to 100 years, resulting in reduced maintenance costs.

Working closely with the contractor and engineering firm, the city reduced costs to its citizens by replacing the water service while the sewer was being replaced. Two hundred and sixty residents and several businesses benefited from the project.

By planning ahead, using new technology and working together with numerous partners, the City of York was able to accomplish the goals of its project with as little inconvenience as possible to its citizens.

Contact: Trey Eubanks at 803.684.2341 or [teubanks@yorkcitysc.com](mailto:teubanks@yorkcitysc.com)

### Public Works: City of Myrtle Beach

Myrtle Beach, with its lure of plentiful jobs, is a popular destination for job seekers. When the tourist season ends, some find it difficult to make ends meet and find themselves living on the streets. Instead of ignoring its homeless population, the City of Myrtle Beach addressed it head-on by developing partnerships to provide transitional housing and resources to get these citizens back on their feet. The first of its kind in South Carolina, the Alliance Inn is a \$5 million, three-story building with 54 apartments built for homeless families and individuals.

To lead the project, the city established a nonprofit corporation, the Home Alliance Inc., made up of board members from agencies and churches already providing services to the homeless population. Home Alliance Inc. collaborated with Douglas Company, a low-income housing builder, to construct and manage the property. Once the city purchased the land, funding for the project came from a creative mix of grants, loans and tax credits from local, state and federal organizations.

To become an Alliance Inn tenant, an individual must be referred by a participating agency or emergency shelter. Before being accepted, the individual must meet Myrtle Beach Housing Authority's requirements for rental assistance. Once accepted, tenants must attend housekeeping classes, budgeting seminars, job training and child care instruction.

Apartments are fully furnished, and the complex includes a community room, laundry facilities, a playground, police substation and an on-site medical center. With an on-site case manager and an array of support services available, such as Alcoholics Anonymous



The City of York replaced some of the oldest water and sewer infrastructure in the City by using pipe bursting, a trenchless method of sewer infrastructure replacement.

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## Awards continued from page 12

and counseling, residents have the tools and support to get back on their feet. Tenants must seek work and move out within two years. The Myrtle Beach Housing Authority helps find permanent and affordable housing for those ready to make it on their own. Two families have already found permanent housing, and four are ready to graduate — all well ahead of their two-year schedule.

By offering transitional housing and coordinated, concentrated assistance to homeless people, Myrtle Beach is achieving its goal of reducing the homeless population and helping people return to society.

Contact: Mark Kruea at 843.918.1014 or [mkruea@cityofmyrtlebeach.com](mailto:mkruea@cityofmyrtlebeach.com)

For more information about the annual Achievement Awards program, visit [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc) or contact Christie Zeller at 803.933.1215 or [czeller@masc.sc](mailto:czeller@masc.sc).



The City of Myrtle Beach developed the Alliance Inn, a \$5 million, three-story building with 54 apartments built for homeless families and individuals.

## News Briefs



■ In June, the SC Association of Municipal Power Systems elected its 2006-2007 board of directors: President — Sam Bennett of Clinton, Vice President — John Bagwell of Orangeburg DPU, Members-at-Large — Charles Guerry of Newberry, Dale Satterfield of Laurens CPW, William Medlin of Winnsboro and Nick Stegall of Rock Hill, Past President — Ken Barnett of Greenwood CPW.

■ The International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) awarded its designation of Certified Municipal Clerk to Patricia Graham, clerk of Kingstree; Ann Mercer, clerk of Georgetown; and Sylvia Young, deputy municipal clerk/human resource assistant of Chester. The Institute awards the designation to those achieving its high educational, experience and service requirements.

■ Eleven business licensing officials received their Accreditation in Business Licensing (ABL) designation after completing the three-year institute and passing an examination. Graduates are Debra Bivens, revenues manager of Georgetown; Jean Brunson, customer service representative of Mullins; Sally Dubose, business license inspector of Sumter; Derrell Blake Foster, codes enforcement officer of Belton; Patricia Fowler, clerk/treasurer of Williston; Sharron Gleaton, business license revenue technician of Columbia; Lisa Holden, inside business license inspector of Anderson; Tiffany Smalls, business license clerk of North Charleston; Sherri Tiedemann, business license revenue technician of Columbia; Kim Vargo, clerk/treasurer of Barnwell; and Kathy West, administrative assistant of Lancaster.

■ The SC Council on Economic Education is seeking mayors to sponsor local students' participation in the Mayor's Blue Chip Investors Program. The program uses a stock market game to help youth understand the economic system, how businesses operate and the interrelationship of local government, business and economic development. Students with the top virtual stock portfolios in their city's district win a US savings bond and dinner with the mayor. For more information, contact Helen Meyers at 803.777.8677, or visit [www.sceconomics.org](http://www.sceconomics.org).

■ The City of Camden received the Silver Palmetto Award during the Municipal Association of SC's Annual Meeting. The award is presented annually by the SC Commission for Disabilities and Special Needs for outstanding support of people with disabilities.

# MASC 2006-2007 board of directors

The Municipal Association's board of directors, composed of both elected and appointed officials, sets policy for the Association. The officers (executive committee) were elected to one-year terms during the Association's Annual Meeting in July:

## President

Mayor Doug Echols of Rock Hill

## First Vice President

Mayor Fred Cavanaugh of Aiken

## Second Vice President

Mayor Richard Danner of Greer

## Third Vice President

Mayor Carol Burdette of Pendleton

## Immediate Past President

Councilmember Elouise James of Clemson



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

## Councilmember

### Chandra Dillard of Greenville

Representing: Appalachian Council of Governments  
Term expires: July 2008

### Mayor Randy Randall of Clinton

Representing: Upper Savannah Council of Governments  
Term expires: July 2009

### Mayor H.C. Starnes of Great Falls

Representing: Catawba Regional Council of Governments  
Term expires: July 2009

### Mayor Ed Kyzer of Newberry

Representing: Central Midlands Council of Governments  
Term expires: July 2008

### Mayor Paul Miller of Orangeburg

Representing: Lower Savannah Council of Governments  
Term expires: July 2008

### Mayor Kevin Johnson of Manning

Representing: Santee-Lynches Council of Governments  
Term expires: July 2007

### Mayor John Douglas of Chesterfield

Representing: Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments  
Term expires: July 2007

### Mayor Marilyn Hatley of North Myrtle Beach

Representing: Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments  
Term expires: July 2009

### Mayor Michael Sottile of Isle of Palms

Representing: Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments  
Term expires: July 2007

### Mayor Ralph Tuten of Ridgeland

Representing: Lowcountry Council of Governments  
Term expires: July 2007

### Mayor Samuel Murray of Port Royal

Representing: At-large  
Term expires: July 2008

### Mayor William Alston of Awendaw

Representing: At-large  
Term expires: July 2007

### City Manager Mark Williams of Forest Acres

Representing: At-large  
Term expires: July 2009

## MCAA continued from page 3

room to become outfitted with a metal detector and court lobby bailiff.

Today, Rock Hill's courtroom is a model in security. Because of the support from city council and management, security issues take a front row seat on the council's agenda. "They've kept up with the security plan," Anderson said. "We have gained a full-time court security police officer who attends all bond hearings, bench court sessions and jury trial sessions. Prisoners from the holding facility are dressed in orange jumpsuits, handcuffed to another inmate and, when it's a repeat violent offender, shackled at the feet.

"All persons coming into the court — whether to obtain an arrest warrant,

serve as a juror or appear for court — must be screened in the lobby before further entry to the facility," she added.

Citizens have reacted to the security measures with positive comments. "No one objects," Anderson concluded. "And many people have said it makes them feel safe knowing we take such precautions at the courthouse for their safety."

The Municipal Court Administration Association of SC (MCAA) plans to showcase Rock Hill's courtroom security plan and that of the City of Mount Pleasant at its first membership and training meeting August 24. The meeting will take place in Columbia at the Embassy Suites Hotel. Other topics include learning the basic requirements

for processing Department of Motor Vehicle orders and collecting delinquent court fines. Representatives from the SC Law Enforcement Department (SLED) will also be on hand to present user friendly tips for utilizing the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system.

*For more information about the MCAA, contact Michelle James at 803.933.1228 or [mjames@masc.sc](mailto:mjames@masc.sc). For a copy of the registration brochure or a membership application, visit MASC's Web site at [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc).*

## Municipal Court Administration Association of South Carolina

Membership and training meeting  
August 24, 2006  
Embassy Suites Hotel, Columbia

*For more information, visit [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc)*



## Classifieds

■ The City of Hartsville is accepting applications for the position of assistant public works director. For more information, visit [www.hartsvillesc.com](http://www.hartsvillesc.com). Send résumé to HR Director, City of Hartsville, PO Drawer 2497, Hartsville, SC 29551.

■ Newberry County is accepting applications for a county administrator. Send résumé to Newberry County Council, Attention: Clerk to County Council, PO Box 156, Newberry, SC 29108.

■ The Town of St. George is accepting applications for a licensed wastewater treatment operator. For more information, call Annette Moore at 843.563.3032. Send résumé to St. George Water Department, 108 W. Raysor Street, PO Box 205, St. George, SC 29477.

■ The Town of Stanley, NC, is accepting applications for the position of public works director. Send résumé to Vonne Smith, Town Clerk, PO Box 279, Stanley, NC 28164. Position open until August 31.

■ The Town of Black Mountain, NC, is accepting applications for the position of chief of police. For more information and an application, visit [www.townofblackmountain.org](http://www.townofblackmountain.org). Send résumé and application to Town Clerk, Town of Black Mountain, 102 Montreat Road, Black Mountain, NC 28711.

*For the most up-to-date job listings, visit [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc).*

# Main Street South Carolina Awards

**M**ain Street South Carolina presented its 2005 Inspiration Awards on July 29 during the Municipal Association of SC's Annual Meeting.

## Outstanding Public/Private Partnership

*This award recognizes a productive private/public partnership that has resulted in achievements for both and clearly demonstrates a cooperative spirit and long-term commitment to the partnership.*

A partnership between the private and public sectors is often the key to revitalizing cities. Downtown Sumter formed such a partnership when officials created the Rotary Centennial Plaza.

Two buildings at the main intersection in downtown Sumter had fallen into neglect. Their foundation was infested with termites, and the front of one building had collapsed. The buildings were in such a state of disrepair that renovation was not an option. City leaders decided to demolish the buildings and use the land to create a plaza.

City leaders envisioned the plaza as a place where musicians could perform and diners could sit outside to eat. The plaza's design included plans to build an adjacent restaurant.

To make the plaza a reality, additional funding was needed. City officials approached the three Sumter Rotary Clubs about raising money. The clubs readily agreed to help out in honor of Rotary's centennial celebration. Rotary members raised \$107,000 from businesses and individuals.

Local investors then committed to building a Joey's Seafood & Grill restaurant adjacent to the plaza. The restaurant, slated to begin construction this fall, will feature an architectural design compatible with the surrounding historic buildings.

"Downtowns can be revitalized," said Grier Blackwelder, president of the Sumter Chamber of Commerce. "It just

takes hard work, cooperation and money."

Downtown beautification projects play a significant role in this revitalization, said Beppie LeGrand, manager of MASC's Main Street South Carolina. "Citizens want to enjoy attractive amenities in their communities, and this project has met that goal."

The work behind the Rotary Centennial Plaza represents the best of a public/private partnership, said Ray Reich, Sumter's downtown development manager.

"City government funded a little more than half the cost of the plaza and has donated land for the restaurant. Rotary clubs raised money from the private sector to enable the project to be completed, and now the private sector has come forward to build the restaurant that was always part of the vision," Reich added.

## Outstanding Promotion Event

*This award recognizes the best single promotion event staged during 2005. Criteria for judging include levels and breadth of participation, public involvement, publicity and the success toward achieving the event's intended goals.*

The City of Florence had been seeking a signature event to draw tourists and residents downtown. Florence found its signature event with the Florence Pecan Festival, which honors the city's history as a prime pecan producer. In its first year, 2004, the festival drew about 5,000 people. Attendance tripled in 2005 to 15,000 visitors.

Organizers say the family-friendly atmosphere, diverse entertainment offerings and strong media campaigns were pivotal to the festival's success.

The event offered free activities that included face painting, a petting zoo and rock wall climbing for children,

## Other winners



- **Master Merchant Award** — Brandi Wheeler, LuLu's Merle Norman, Hartsville
- **Gaines Jontz Outstanding Rehabilitation Award** — The Skye Banquet Hall and Loft Apartments, renovation of a former Roses 5 and 10 store, Bennettsville
- **Outstanding New Construction Award** — The Clark Law Firm, downtown Sumter's second major new commercial construction since the 1970s, Sumter
- **The Hometown Hero Award** — Steve Powers, business owner, president of downtown merchants' association and active member of numerous boards, Florence
- **Main Street SC Award of Recognition** — Larry Biddle, president of Burroughs Co. and Jerry Cox Co., founder and consultant for national education program renaissance, Conway

*For more information about these awards, visit the Municipal Association's Web site at [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc).*

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# 2006 SCMIT Safety Idea Contest winner: Greer Commission of Public Works

**G**reer Commission of Public Works employees no longer have to worry about manually lifting water meters and fire hydrants thanks to the ingenuity of a fellow employee.

The Greer Commission of Public Works (CPW) won this year's Safety Idea Contest for its approach to lifting fire hydrants and water valves safely. Recognized during the Municipal Association's Annual Meeting, the Commission received \$500 from the SC Municipal Insurance Trust (SCMIT), a self-funded workers' compensation insurance program administered by the Municipal Association.

Because fire hydrants and water valves had to be lifted by hand or by a chain (which could slip), the chances for significant injuries—including back strains, ankle sprains and foot injuries—were plentiful. These hazards have been eliminated thanks to the resourcefulness of Greer CPW's Brent Rhymer, an operator with the water division. Rhymer's

idea of using a metal flange attached to the top of the item being lifted prevents the item from slipping.

"We have a strong safety culture here at Greer CPW," said Ken Holliday, human resources manager. "Brent saw an opportunity to make his and 15 other employees' jobs safer. Not only did he see the opportunity, but he also took the initiative to develop a simple, cost-effective solution to a potentially debilitating injury."

The metal flange, attached to a truck crane or similar device, fits around the



Brent Rhymer, Greer CPW operator, demonstrates how his award-winning safety idea works.

large nut on the valve (or hydrant). This flange was not something the CPW went to the hardware store and picked up, however. "Brent came up with the idea, then did a little work in the

**SAFETY continued on page 19**

## 2005 SCMIT Occupational Safety Contest winners

Each year, the SC Municipal Insurance Trust (SCMIT) sponsors an Occupational Safety Contest for its members. During the Municipal Association's Annual Meeting, 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 Hemingway
Second Place	Town of Port Royal
Third Place	Town of Hampton

### Division 3 (151 or more employees)

First Place	City of North Myrtle Beach
Second Place	City of Lancaster
Third Place	City of Rock Hill

### Division 2 (51 to 150 employees)

First Place	Town of Williamston
Second Place	City of Bennettsville
Third Place	City of Dillon

### Division 4 (public utilities)

First Place	Gaffney BPW
Second Place	Greenwood CPW
Third Place	Greer CPW

## Main Street continued from page 16

pie-eating and pecan shelling contests for all ages and a pecan cook-off for adults.

Street vendors, educational exhibits and classic cars and motorcycles were also on hand throughout the festival. Organizers made sure musical groups were diverse to attract larger crowds, said Phillip Lookadoo, executive director of the Florence Downtown Development Corporation.

"When working with any Main Street community, we emphasize the importance of events that will bring people to the downtown," LeGrand said. "The Florence Pecan Festival is one of the best examples of a well-rounded event appealing to every age group."

Organizers give credit to the volunteers and donors who helped put on the event. The festival is planned and run by community volunteers. Some three dozen financial supporters contributed between \$250 and \$10,000 to fund the event.

"A lot of people devoted a lot of time and effort to make this event what it is," Lookadoo said.

The event was boosted by a successful publicity campaign that included radio and television public service announcements and ads, billboards, street banners, and TV and newspaper coverage. Organizers sent

out approximately 40,000 promotional fliers as inserts in local water bills.

"The people of Florence wanted a festival of this type," said Steve Powers, co-chairman for the Pecan Festival and co-chairman for the Florence Downtown Development Corporation's promotions committee. "They were willing to support it, and they have."

Main Street South Carolina helps citizens gain the knowledge, skills, tools and organizational structure needed to revitalize their downtowns, neighborhood commercial districts and cities or towns into vibrant centers of commerce and community.

## Fifteen graduate from Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

**F**ifteen municipal officials graduated from the South Carolina Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government during MASC's Annual Meeting in July. 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, "Forms of Municipal Government" and "Benefits and Pitfalls of Economic Development" will be broadcast via satellite to the 10 regional councils of government on September 14. For more information, visit [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc) or contact Natalie Viers at 803.933.1254 or [nviers@masc.sc](mailto:nviers@masc.sc).



The summer 2006 graduates of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government are, in alphabetical order, Councilmember Ervin Davis of Manning, Mayor J. Stevens Dukes of Johnsonville, Councilmember Eddie Ellis of Folly Beach, Councilmember Robert Gecy of Simpsonville, Councilmember Rodney Giles of Andrews, Councilmember Jacquelyn Heyward of Hollywood, Councilmember Marvin Love of Fairfax, Councilmember Deborah Morinelli of Charleston, Councilmember Clayton Pack of Manning, Councilmember Dennis Ramsey of Gaffney, Councilmember Dorothy Riley of Fairfax, Councilmember Mayella Saxon of Fairfax, Councilmember Charlene Taylor of Atlantic Beach, Councilmember Faye Thomas of Abbeville and Councilmember Joel P. Ward of Seneca. (Not all graduates appear in photo.)

# SCCDA recognizes community development excellence

## Hettie Rickett Award

In May, the South Carolina Community Development Association (SCCDA) presented Lockhart Mayor Ailene Ashe with its annual Hettie Rickett Award. The award recognizes a community development volunteer, staff member or official who showed an extraordinary commitment to community development.

When Ashe took office, the Town of Lockhart was suffering from the effects of aging infrastructure and a changing economy. The Milliken Corporation shut down its Lockhart textile mill in 1995. Located in a rural area of Union County without access to an interstate or major road, the town had depended on the mill for its economic vitality. The mill's closing left numerous residents without jobs and forced many young people to find employment outside the area.

To add to the town's problems, old water lines were leaking into the Broad River, and leaking sewer and stormwater lines needed replacing.

Ashe led the way in creating private and public partnerships to find funding for the necessary infrastructure replacements. The town worked with the Catawba Regional Planning Council of Governments, Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Union County, Lockhart Power Company, the State Budget and Control Board, the state Forestry Commission and the state Highway Department.

A financial boost came when Lockhart annexed 400 new residents. The annexation increased the town's population to 617 and its share of state funding through the Local Government Fund.

Community Development Block Grant funds paid for replacing the water, sewer and stormwater lines. Along with the infrastructure improvements, Lockhart added retaining walls, sidewalks, welcome signs and a community basketball court and playground.

"The results of these improvements are noteworthy," said Robert Britt, Southeast RCAP regional program manager, who nominated Ashe for the award. "Water losses have been reduced by 40 percent, resulting in significant savings for the town. Residents are now taking pride in their community, using the new facilities and taking part in planning for future facilities."

Even when the future of the tiny town looked grim, Ashe worked hard to establish partnerships, seek funding and work around obstacles, Britt said.

"Success bred optimism, and local support improved due to the tenacity, energy and vision of the mayor — Ms. Ailene Ashe," Britt added.

Ashe symbolizes the best in rural community development, said Carol Mason McMeekin, SCCDA president.

"Mayor Ashe has left no stone unturned for resources and has combined the efforts of both private and

public funding sources to improve the quality of life for citizens of her hometown," McMeekin added. "Her winning smile and her pioneer spirit make her memorable, but her tireless community contributions make her unforgettable."

## Award of Excellence

The City of Newberry received SCCDA's Award of Excellence for refurbishing an old community hospital into affordable housing for seniors. SCCDA annually presents this honor to organizations whose projects have significantly improved the community and have the potential to be a catalyst for further improvements to the area's quality of life.

"The Newberry Hospital Affordable Senior Housing Project is a wonderful example of the results that can be accomplished through collaboration and partnerships," McMeekin said. "The project preserved a historic resource, created housing that enhances quality of life for seniors and redeveloped a declining neighborhood. Newberry met a challenge and provided inspiration for future efforts within the city and throughout South Carolina."

The project also won the 2006 Municipal Achievement Award for the 10,001-20,000 population category. See the related article on page 9 for a complete description of the project.

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## Safety continued from page 17

shop to turn that idea into a reality," Holliday said.

The materials for the flange cost between \$10 and \$15. "Given workers' compensation costs today, that's an

incredibly small price to pay to significantly reduce the chances of paying for a disabled back, or even an injury as small as a bruised toe," said Phil Cromer, risk and safety services manager for the

Municipal Association. "Most of the time, though, it's the little things our members do that really save injuries and dollars in the long run."



## Educational Opportunities

### Setoff Debt Collection Program

■ **August 15**, will hold a mandatory programmer's training session for any programmer representing new participants to the program at MASC's office at 1411 Gervais Street in Columbia from 9 to 11:30 a.m.

### Municipal Court Administration Association of SC

■ **August 24**, will hold its first meeting and training session at the Embassy Suites in Columbia. Topics include "SLED's Toolkit for Court Administrators" and "Is Your Courtroom Secure?" (See related article on page 3.)

### SC Association of Stormwater Managers

■ **September 8**, will hold its third quarter meeting at the SC Hospital Association in Columbia. Topics include "Expanding Your Corporate Limits" and "Removal Efficiencies."

### Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute

■ **September 13-15**, will hold its fall session at the Clarion Town House Hotel in Columbia.

### Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

■ **September 14**, will present "Forms of Municipal Government" and "Benefits and Pitfalls of Economic Development." The session will be broadcast via satellite to the 10 regional councils of governments.

### SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers

■ **October 24-27**, will hold its annual meeting at the Hilton Hotel in Hilton Head Island.

### SC Business Licensing Officials Association

■ **October 24-27**, will hold its Annual Meeting at the Hilton Hotel in Hilton Head Island.

### SC Utility Billing Association

■ **November 3**, will hold its fall meeting at the Embassy Suites 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](http://www.masc.sc)



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