

UPTOWN

Business leader to address municipal officials

“It’s an economic imperative that we work well together.”

Cities are important economic engines for the state, and local officials must work together and with business leaders to communicate that message to state leaders and to effectively grow the state’s economy, according to a statewide business leader.

The importance of partnerships between cities and businesses is the message Joel Smith, dean of the Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina, will deliver at the Municipal Association of South Carolina’s annual *Hometown, SC* Legislative Action Day on February 28.

Smith is a recognized business leader in South Carolina. He has served as president of Bank of America East, with

responsibilities for commercial, small business, premier and consumer banking divisions in seven states and the District of Columbia. Also, he has served as dean of the business school since 2000.

It’s mutually beneficial for cities and businesses to work together, Smith said. “The city does have to embrace the business leadership” and establish trust and communication in order for work to get done, he said.

Businesses do well in strong communities; cities thrive when they are economically successful. Strong communities also have strong education systems, and the current knowledge-based economy is driven by a well-educated workforce, Smith said.

In addition to the education system which impacts quality of life for employees and reflects an area’s workforce, Smith said, businesses look for a balanced tax structure and a strong infrastructure of housing, transportation, air, water, sewer and communications systems when deciding where to locate their operations. Officials also consider such quality of life options as recreation and the arts for their employees, he added.

Businesses also will review a city’s bureaucratic infrastructure, such as the permitting process. “Are you coming into an environment that impedes business?” Smith asked.

BUSINESS LEADER continued on page 4

Financial report deadline extended

Municipalities have until February 1 to file their 2006 Annual Municipal Financial Report to the Office of Research and Statistics. By law, all local governments must file the report annually on November 15.

This year, the state Office of Research and Statistics extended the deadline to accommodate changes to

the report. Staff needed additional time to receive feedback on the new reporting forms. The report requires information about the municipality’s sources of revenue, expenditures by category, debt and other information. The state may withhold 10 percent of a municipality’s state aid if the report is not filed by the deadline.

January 2007

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Tale of two cities

And a story of different ways to grow. Charleston does it by annexing, Greenville by redeveloping

By Warren Wise, The Post and Courier

Quick. Name the three largest cities in South Carolina.

Columbia, Charleston and Greenville come to mind because each sits at the hub of easily recognized geographic regions: the Midlands, Lowcountry and Upstate. But Greenville, founded as Pleasantburg 209 years ago, is not in the top three.

It's all the way down at No. 6, behind Charlotte's shadow, Rock Hill, and once-tiny Mount Pleasant, based on 2005 population estimates.

North Charleston, which was founded just 34 years ago, is the state's third-largest city behind Columbia and Charleston, respectively.

Hailed as the Hub of the Lowcountry on a doormat outside City Hall, North Charleston has never stopped growing since it became a city in 1972. At 62.1 square miles, it's fighting a testy court battle with its neighbors to grow even larger.

Greenville is 26.1 square miles. It has grown very little in the last 30 years but in that same time has developed one of the state's most beautiful and rehabilitated downtowns.

The two cities, one which grew by expanding outward and the other which grew by investing in redevelopment of its existing cityscape after it was rimmed by the public service districts, reflect different methods of building a city. They also represent a kindred mindset: They both agree it's essential that cities grow both from within and from the outside to remain viable. "You grow or you die," Greenville city attorney Ron McKinney said. "It's that simple."

North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey and Greenville Mayor Knox White couldn't agree more.

"In order for cities to remain viable long term, they have to have the ability to grow," Summey said.

If a city doesn't grow, it must either cut services, raise taxes or redevelop itself, White said.

"The cost of government goes up just like the cost to run your home goes up," said Howard Duvall of the Municipal Association of South Carolina.

Improving by not growing

Years ago, Greenville realized it couldn't grow outward because it was hemmed in by special-purpose districts. Those districts doggedly guard their tax bases from being eroded by annexation for fear of losing revenue to pay off debt and afford new infrastructure improvements. Consequently, Greenville, in stark contrast to North Charleston, all but abandoned efforts to annex new territory. Instead, it focused on redeveloping its inner core over the last 30 years.

The result is stunning: a beautiful, tree-canopied Main Street with gleaming office and hotel towers, renewed residential areas, parks and sports complexes that draw people back to the city's urban core.

"In a sense, we had no choice," White said. "There was a surprising neglect of annexation and not an emphasis on residential development in the inner city. The City of Greenville was forced to focus on redevelopment, and hence we have a very successful downtown."

Though White acknowledges there are very few annexation opportunities available, he said annexation is a new-found tool for Greenville. Three years ago, the city instituted a new policy that required annexation of properties contiguous to the city that wanted to enhance their water service.

"If Greenville had done that 25 years ago, the city would be three or four times larger today," White said, noting that the greater metropolitan statistical area of Greenville, Spartanburg and Anderson is home to nearly 1 million people. "We'd be the biggest city in South Carolina."

During that same period, North Charleston ballooned without much thought to redeveloping its inner core. That has changed in the past few years, with the blighted southern end in the throes of being bulldozed and remade into new homes, offices and shops. Unlike Greenville, North Charleston has no central core and no Main Street, yet it's redeveloping its older neighborhoods and attracting world-class businesses such as Vought Aircraft Industries on available tracts inside city limits.

Annexation wars

North Charleston has found itself hemmed in to a degree as well.

Blocked by court battles with Summerville over annexation of the 6,600-acre Watson Hill tract across the Ashley River on the south side of the city and with Goose Creek over annexation of Oaks Country Club on the north side of the city, North Charleston can only look west.

That has already begun as the city started annexing small parcels earlier this summer across Ladson Road. It ended a long-agreed-upon demarcation line with Summerville that vanished after Summerville sided with Charleston last year to try to prevent North Charleston from crossing the Ashley River to annex Watson Hill in Dorchester County.

Offering higher-density housing to developers, North Charleston tried to annex Watson Hill via a parcel known as the Barry tract so it would have contiguity. Charleston caught wind of the move and persuaded Summerville to join forces and create a barrier by annexing several properties along S.C. Highway 61 to prevent North Charleston from acquiring Watson Hill.

Both Summerville and North Charleston rushed to annex the Barry tract as well as others by announcing public hearings. Summerville held its first, but a judge later ruled Summerville came up 12 hours short. The annexation battle remains in mediation and could drag on for years in court.

Meanwhile, Goose Creek sued North Charleston in February to prevent North Charleston from encroaching farther into Berkeley County. Goose Creek's attorney said that North Charleston annexed Oaks Golf and Country Club and Charleston Water System property illegally because North Charleston used a railroad right of way to reach the country club. The case remains unsettled.

While Summey said development of unused parcels inside the city is important and is happening, he also said the city must not dismiss any avenue to grow.

"If you want to enhance the quality of life, and not to do it on the backs of taxpayers, you have to do it through

new growth," Summey said. "We have to look up into the Ladson community."

White agreed. "While our focus has been on redevelopment, it's still important for cities to have an opportunity to annex and grow."

He pointed to the city's recent annexation of a huge tract along Interstate 85 where the International Center for Automotive Research is home to BMW's research and development facility and other high-paying companies.

"We have tried to be strategic in what we annexed and that's why the I-85 corridor is important," White said. "It's going to become the center of economic development in the city."

All you need is money

Urban policy consultant David Rusk, a one-time Arizona lawmaker and former mayor of Albuquerque, N.M., said cities must have the ability to grow unless they are wealthy like San Francisco, which hasn't grown in decades, or like Forest Acres near Columbia, which Duvall said represents a wealthy residential part of the Columbia metro area and has big malls to help the tax base.

Rusk said one thing hampering the growth of cities in South Carolina is its antiquated, stiff annexation laws that lead to many of the local turf battles. In North Carolina, for instance, he said once an area is deemed urban, the city annexes it. Not so in South Carolina. A single property owner has to agree to be annexed or the city must get 75 percent of different contiguous property owners to agree to be annexed if all of the targeted properties don't want to come into the city.

"Should South Carolina reform its annexation laws?" Rusk said. "There is no question about it, but there is no disposition in the Legislature to do so."

He said one of the problems with cities that cannot annex the wealthier suburbs is that they tend to have a higher-than-normal concentration of lower-income people who often must bear the tax burden of keeping a city afloat when costs go up.

White said that was not the case in Greenville, where taxes didn't go up significantly when the city wasn't expanding because of redevelopment and because residents of its affluent neighborhoods didn't flee to the surrounding farmland and old mill village special purpose districts when they filled up with suburbanites over the past 20 years. Those wealthy neighborhoods give Greenville an upper hand on poverty and per capita income when compared with North Charleston.

Greenville recognized long ago that it needed to reinvigorate its inner city since it had trouble annexing into the special purpose districts that surround the city. It revitalized several of its neighborhoods and created loft-living spaces in the commercial core for young professionals and more affluent residents.

"Our focus has been to rebuild the residential population," White said.

North Charleston hopes to do that as well by building new communities in once-crime riddled, blighted areas on and around the old Navy base. But like Greenville, it's also looking elsewhere to expand.

"A city has to have growth ability," Summey said. "I still think we will be successful annexing west of the Ashley River. We have to look at every adjoining area that has the potential for expansion."

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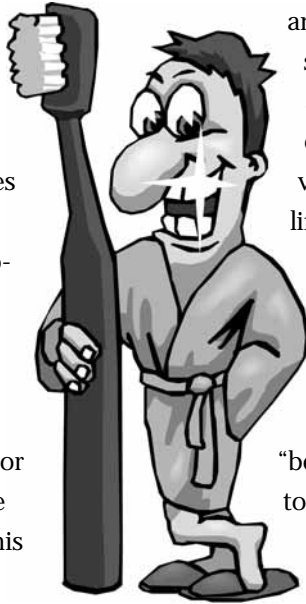
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Smile: MIS adds dental coverage

Municipal Insurance Services, a subsidiary of the Municipal Association of South Carolina, recently added a dental program to its best-of-breed insurance products for municipal employees.

“Good oral health care is very important to the overall well-being of our employees,” said Wayne George, MASC’s field services manager.

The voluntary dental program has no minimum contribution, no minimum participation requirement and enables employees to choose their own dentist. “For cities not participating in the SCLGAG dental program, this is a viable option to offer



dental benefits to employees,” said Harvey Mathias, director of risk management services.

MIS offers the best quality and lowest possible cost supplemental products (accident insurance, cancer insurance,

dental insurance, short-term disability insurance, medical gap coverage, critical illness coverage, universal life insurance, term life insurance and long-term-care insurance) in the industry. Rather than limiting choices to just one company’s products, MIS has grouped these “best-of-breed” products together for a convenient one-stop shopping approach.

Products purchased through the employer are portable; an employee can keep them after retirement or when changing jobs. The MIS program is voluntary and employs a no-pressure, consultative approach to benefits counseling.

The voluntary supplemental insurance program is the result of a coordinated effort between MASC and SCLGAG, a MASC-sponsored health benefits program. A city, town or other municipal entity can participate in this program and not be a SCLGAG member. Since March 2005, 38 local governments have enrolled in the MIS program.

For additional information on the dental program or other MIS products, contact Wayne George at 803.933.1242 or wgeorge@masc.sc.

Business leader continued from cover

When city and county leadership do not work well together, according to Smith, it leads to misdirection and failed opportunities. “In South Carolina, we’re very small and we’re not well funded; as a result, it’s an economic imperative that we work well together,” he said

In addition to his luncheon speech, Smith will participate in a panel discussion with other business leaders. The panel, which will be moderated by WIS-TV’s David Stanton, also includes attorney Steve Benjamin of the Benjamin Law Firm, Spartanburg Mayor Bill Barnet and Paula Harper Bethea of the McNair Law Firm.

Keynote speaker for HSCLAD is Dr. John Daly from the University of Texas at Austin. Daly will discuss

how state legislation affects cities and how municipal leaders can communicate their message to citizens, key influencers and legislators.

Daly earned rave reviews from his pre-conference session at the 2006 MASC Annual Meeting. That led to a return invitation to address HSCLAD about how to tie communications techniques to legislative advocacy.

HSCLAD is an opportunity for MASC members to learn about the connection between strong cities and a strong state. The event seeks to educate municipal leaders about how state legislation monitored by MASC affects individual municipalities. It also provides a chance for local leaders to meet legislators and learn about best practices from other local officials.

HSCLAD goes hand-in-hand with *Hometown, SC* – MASC’s long-range initiative promoting relationship building that gives local leaders greater influence. MASC is working with elected officials to better engage business leaders and raise visibility of the value of cities, said Reba Campbell, MASC director of communications.

The initiative seeks to demonstrate the value of South Carolina’s cities and towns to their residents and illustrate to policy makers and key influencers the important role cities and towns play in the state’s economic well-being.

“It’s part of a sea change in how elected officials see their roles and how business leaders see elected officials,” Campbell said.

Hollywood comes to SC cities

By Amy Geier Edgar

When Hollywood comes to small-town South Carolina, it shines a spotlight on cities and pumps big bucks into their local economies in a few short weeks.

The state passed a law offering incentives to film crews two years ago, with modifications made last year, said SC Film Commissioner Jeff Monks. That action is starting to pay off now, Monks said, with the shooting of six feature films and one television pilot in cities and towns around the Palmetto State.

Competition is fierce in the movie industry. Even while film scouts are looking at sites in South Carolina, they're also considering locations in four to six other states or countries, Monks said. Louisiana and New Mexico have become popular filming locations because of their incentives; so have Canada, Australia and Romania.

Being chosen as the location for a movie can be an economic boon for a community. Film crews spent about 100 days shooting "Radio" in Walterboro, and spent about \$12 million there, Monks said.

As a result, many cities and towns offer local support or incentives to make the process smoother and their location more appealing to film crews, Monks said.

The City of Charleston has a Special Events Committee comprised of officials from the parks and recreation, transportation, legal, police and cultural departments, said Ellen Dressler Moryl, director of the City's Office of Cultural Affairs. This committee is a one-stop



The film crew for "Death Sentence" starring Kevin Bacon uses a downtown building in Columbia for one of its scenes.

shop for the requests of film crews who might want street closures or use of city parks.

"It's a great team approach to giving them the best support possible from the city, and making the permitting process less daunting," Moryl said.

In the past, the Rock Hill area has offered up empty storefronts to be used as production offices and provided surplus furniture to make them functional, said Margaret Young, director of sales for the Rock Hill/York County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Mostly, city and county officials say they serve as a clearinghouse of information for film crews.

"We've helped them find everything from a traveling massage therapist to where they can have cast parties," Young said.

It seems to be working for Rock Hill. The area served as the backdrop for the films "Patriotville" and "Asylum," Young said.

The Pee Dee also has been courting the film industry. In October, production was set to begin in

Florence on "Strangers," starring Liv Tyler.

Lyles Cooper, communications and membership relations manager for the Florence County Economic Development Partnership, said she has spent days helping to find locations and property owners, arranging housing for crews and ordering fax machines and copiers.

And local officials say the work is well worth it.

"The film industry has a tremendous economic impact on a community it chooses to film in," said

Joe W. King, executive director of the Florence County Economic Development Partnership. "This project will inject millions into our local economy during the three-month film production, benefiting hotels, restaurants, service industries, retail outlets, lumberyards, and many more local resources that the cast and crew will utilize."

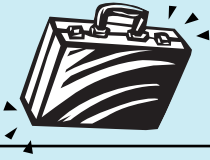
Aiken also had economic payoffs when the movie "Who's Your Caddy?" was filmed on location. This production filmed about 26 days in Aiken, three days in Myrtle Beach and one in Columbia.

"The film business spends money and produces a lot of cash," said David Jameson, president/CEO of Greater Aiken Chamber of Commerce. "We experienced a real strong fourth quarter here."

Besides the economic impact, the public also gets a glimpse of a city when it is transformed into a movie set, and many moviegoers take an interest.

HOLLYWOOD continued on page 7

News Briefs



■ MASC's two video productions introducing the *Hometown, SC* initiative earned recognition from the MarCom Creative Awards, a program of the National Association of Marketing and Communications Professionals.

"Hometown Network News," parts I and II, received an honorable mention in the category of Government Video and Film. Also, MASC's "City Hall" music video won an Award of Merit for Electronic Communication from the South Carolina Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators. KitchenFish, a Columbia production company, provided production services for both projects.

■ The Public Entity Risk Institute (PERI), a nonprofit risk management training and educational organization, will award 40 scholarships to attend the 2007 Public Risk Management Association (PRIMA) Conference and Expo this June in Boston. For an application or more information, visit www.masc.sc/Resources/PRIMA_scholarship.pdf

■ Funding is available to reduce the negative impacts of natural hazards through the state's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program. Applications are due to the Emergency Management Division by January 10. For more information, visit www.fema.gov/government/grant/pdm/fy2007.shtm.

New deadlines for 2006 SCMIT Safety Awards and Safety Idea Contest

The Municipal Association of South Carolina and the SC Municipal Insurance Trust (MASC's self-funded workers' compensation program) will recognize the 2006 Safety Award and Safety Idea Contest winners during the *Hometown, SC* Legislative Action Day on February 28.

Safety Award

The SCMIT Safety Award recognizes local government entities for their safety efforts based on OSHA and loss-ratio data. The award is open to all SCMIT members with at least 10 full-time employees in two or more of the following operations: administration, public safety, public utilities or public works.

The competition has four categories: Division I - 10 to 50 employees; Division II - 51 to 150 employees; Division III - 151 employees and above, Division IV - Non-municipal (ex. Commission of Public Works, utility departments). Only members with law enforcement operations can participate in Divisions I-III.

First-, second- and third-place winners receive monetary reimbursement for safety equipment.

First Place - \$2000

Second Place - \$1000

Third place - \$500

To be eligible for the competition, SCMIT must receive entry forms and OSHA 300 data by February 5. Entry forms were mailed to SCMIT members in December.

Safety Idea Contest

The Safety Idea Contest recognizes SCMIT members who have helped make their workplace safer with an innovative idea. Selected by the SCMIT board of trustees, the winner receives a \$500 check. SCMIT must receive entry forms by January 15. For more information or an entry form, visit the RMS Web site at www.masc.sc/misc/rms.htm or contact Phil Cromer at 803.933.1210 or pcromer@masc.sc.



Classifieds

■ The Town of Hilton Head Island is accepting applications for a finance director. Submit resume to: Human Resources, One Town Center Court, Hilton Head Island, SC 29928; fax: 843.341.3974; or e-mail: jobs@hiltonheadislandsc.gov. For more information, visit www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov. Deadline for applications is January 31.

■ Colleton County is accepting applications for a GIS manager. Submit application to SC Employment Security Commission, Walterboro Workforce Center, PO Drawer 530, 101 Mable T. Willis Blvd., Walterboro, SC 29488, or e-mail dsadler@colletoncounty.org.

■ The Town of Estill is accepting applications for a town clerk. Submit resumé and cover letter to Lakisha Youmans, Town of Estill, PO Box 415, Estill, SC 29918. Application deadline is January 30.

Hollywood continued from page 5

Ray Swagerty, production manager for the City of Charleston's Office of Cultural Affairs, said he's talked to many fans of "The Notebook" who want to visit the same sites they saw in the movie.

"People who really enjoyed the film want to see where the movie was filmed," Swagerty said. "So it has generated tourist revenue as well."

Other local officials are hoping to get the same results when their hometowns make it to the big screen.

"Having Florence in the spotlight, hopefully it will bring in more films," Cooper said.

"Everybody knows 'The Patriot' was filmed in Charleston, and 'Prince of Tides' was filmed in Beaufort. This will definitely help with economic development."



The City of Charleston was the filming site for the blockbuster, "The Patriot," starring Mel Gibson.



Hometown Happenings

Hometown Happenings is a new service to municipalities as part of the *Hometown, SC* initiative.

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

MASC posted the February packet at the end of December. The packet includes sample press releases, sample

letters to the editor and guest editorials, suggested events and Web site links.

MASC will distribute additional information as noted below in January.

February Hometown Happenings

- **Black History Month** – Partner with local organizations that have Black History Month events planned and spotlight municipal officials who have dedicated themselves to the prosperity of your city or town.
- **Hometown, SC Legislative Action Day** – On Wednesday, February 28, municipal officials have the opportunity to meet with their legislators and share local government concerns.
- **Souper Bowl of Caring** - Based in Columbia, the Souper Bowl of Caring is a nationwide effort to raise money on Super Bowl Sunday to combat hunger and poverty. Partner with local businesses, churches and other non-profits participating in this youth-led opportunity to serve others. For more information, visit the Souper Bowl of Caring Web site at www.souperbowl.org.

Visit the "Featured Links" section of the MASC Web site (www.masc.sc) to download the materials.



Educational Opportunities

Hometown Connection

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

Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

■ **February 27**, will hold Sessions A and B at the Columbia Marriott. Officials must attend Session A before they can register for Session B. Session A topics include conducting public meetings, planning, zoning and personnel. Session B topics include annexation, business licensing, liability and finance.

MASC

■ **February 28**, will hold its *Hometown, SC* Legislative Action Day at the Columbia Marriott. (See article on page 1.)

SC Utility Billing Association

■ **March 21-23**, will hold its Annual Meeting at the Marriott Resort at Grand Dunes in Myrtle Beach.

Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

■ **March 22**, will present "Basic Budgeting for Municipal Officials." The session will be broadcast via satellite to the 10 regional councils of governments.

Hometown Connection

■ **March 27**, municipal officials from Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Jasper, Marion and Williamsburg counties visit with their state legislators. Officials will meet at MASC's office at 1411 Gervais Street in Columbia at 10:30 a.m.

Hometown Connection

■ **April 24**, municipal officials from Anderson, Cherokee, Chester, Fairfield, Greenville, Lancaster, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg and York counties visit with their state legislators. Officials should meet at MASC's office at 1411 Gervais Street in Columbia at 10:30 a.m.

Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

■ **May 3**, will present "You've Been Elected - Now What?" and "Freedom of Information Act." The session will be broadcast via satellite to the 10 regional councils of government.

Hometown Connection

■ **May 29**, municipal officials from Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Lexington, Orangeburg and Richland counties visit with their state legislators. Officials will meet at MASC's office at 1411 Gervais Street in Columbia at 10:30 a.m.

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



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