



# UPTOWN

a publication of the municipal association of south carolina



## Cities train for active-shooter emergency

**W**ith a rising number of active-shooter incidents, police departments, city halls and other organizations are learning how to respond.

There were 20 active-shooter incidents nationwide in both 2014 and 2015, up three from 2013, according to the FBI. The agency defines “active shooter” as one or more individuals with a firearm who is killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area.

Town of Pelion Police Chief Chris Garner said small police departments have a unique need for training on how to respond to an active-shooter emergency.

“A lot of these smaller agencies don’t have the resources, so you’ve got to be prepared,” he said, adding that all local government departments should be trained.

“If you’ve got a town clerk or traffic clerk, somebody that deals with the public, you don’t know who’s coming to that agency,” he said.

Although it’s impossible to plan for every conceivable threat scenario, Cpl. David Spivey, with the S.C. Department of Public Safety, said employees’ cooperation is key. If possible, workers

should avoid the gunman by escaping or deny him access by taking cover in a locked room.

However, if that is not possible, and the gunman is immediately at hand, workers should be trained to think quickly.

“You’re fighting for your life — that’s your incentive,” said Garner. “You’ve got a pen, you’ve got a phone. Anything can be a weapon,” to throw the shooter off.

The FBI has adopted the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training response protocol as the national standard for special agent tactical instructors. ALERRT is geared toward police departments and has been part of training in nearly 60 large and small police departments in South Carolina, county sheriffs’ offices, universities, churches, state agencies and medical centers around the state. ALERRT-certified officials act as “force multipliers,” who then conduct civilian-response active shooter training workshops at city halls, community organizations and other groups, said an ALERRT spokesman. The ALERRT courses are delivered to South Carolina law enforcement officers through

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federal grants from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and these certified instructors then deliver the training at no cost to municipalities.

## Know your building

Another element of active-shooter training is to closely examine the workplace to prepare for an emergency. Far from being blind to the features of their office, municipal personnel have a detailed awareness of their professional environment.

"You can mitigate half your issues by having a good physical security plan in place," said Pelion Police Department Capt. Darren Norris, who is ALERRT certified.

The employees of a city or town play a crucial role in the physical security of a workplace.

"Your employees have to understand what you're trying to accomplish," Spivey said. "They are there every day, and they see the vulnerabilities. They know what needs to be looked at. They know when they feel unsafe and where they feel unsafe."

Spivey said it could help to have an outsider come in and walk around a building. However, such a person wouldn't be privy to the staff's everyday routine and would have to spend several days on site to make note of all the security cameras, panic buttons, locked areas and other features.

"There is no single strategy, standard or manual that will adequately prepare an organization for every future event," said Spivey, who is also ALERRT certified.

## Liability for law enforcement responders

Norris said the potential for loss of life and also for lawsuits against a police department make active-shooter response training a necessity for police departments.

"Training both law enforcement and other staff reduces workplace anxiety and communicates that the city is aware of the risks and is working to reduce those risks," said Heather Ricard, director of the Municipal Association's Risk Management Services.

"In the event a law enforcement lawsuit is served due to an active-shooter situation, the plaintiff's attorney will allege one of the causes of injury was due to inadequate training of law enforcement. Requiring law enforcement, as well as other staff, to participate in active-shooter training is a must."

Additionally, Ricard suggests cities invest in law enforcement active-shooter kits, including a ballistic shield, helmet and properly fitted body armor to protect their officers during an incident.

## Why train for an active-shooter situation?

- 69 percent of incidents last five minutes or less.
- From 2000 - 2006, there were an average of six incidents per year nationwide.
- From 2006 - 2013, there were an average of 16 incidents per year.

## Critical incident response kit

The critical incident response kit is a bag or kit an employee can grab when leaving the building in an emergency. The kit can also be prepositioned at a safe place or rally point, such as a nearby business.

Among the items in the kit should be floor plans, evacuation plans, keys and codes, personnel rosters and contact lists. Cell phone numbers should be part of it, in order to account for anyone who is missing. A first aid and trauma kit should also contain snacks, such as jerky and candy, if any staff members have diabetes or other special needs. It should include items to allow for employee accountability, first aid, and to begin the business recovery process to include important phone numbers and emergency contacts.

## How do you respond to an active shooter?

- Announce "active shooter" or other emergency using plain language. Do not use code words.
- When a lockdown is announced, tell this to other employees in a clear, calm voice. Include temporary workers, custodial staff and others in the building. Do not allow re-entry to the building after an evacuation.
- Avoid the gunman. Get away from the attacker fast. Do not stop to remove injured victims or to gather personal belongings. Keep your hands visible as you exit.
- Deny the shooter access. Take cover in a locked room. Turn off all lights and silence cell phones. Barricade the door with heavy objects. Stay away from windows and doors. Stay quiet.
- Defend yourself at all costs.

# 15 graduate from Business Licensing Officials Association Training Institute

The BLOA Training Institute graduated 15 at the Spring Meeting. The institute is designed to improve the professional and administrative skills of business licensing officials. The three sessions needed to complete the training institute include topics on general licensing, problem areas and personal development. This spring session included topics, such as classification and rates, the S.C. Freedom of Information Act, coin operated machines and communication skills. The graduates will receive the Accreditation in Business Licensing designation, upon passing an exam.

The 15 graduates are Wendell Hall, business license inspector, City of Aiken; Martha Ann Lake, business license clerk, Town of Batesburg-Leesville; Angie

Currall, business license coordinator, Town of Bluffton; T. Joby Williams, business license inspector I, City of Columbia; Scott Lang, assistant treasurer/HR coordinator, City of Easley; Victoria Bell, revenue collector, Horry County; Vicki Bell, business license auditor, Horry County; Alten Driggers, supervisor, Horry County; Russell Harris, revenue collector, Horry County; Rhonda Housand, finance accountant, City of Lake City; Jessica Morgan, accounts payable/payroll clerk, Town of Moncks Corner; Melody Dangerfield,



senior business license technician, Town of Mount Pleasant; Michael Burgess, business license inspector, City of North Charleston; Barbara Beard, revenue analyst, Richland County; and Lori Puckett, business license specialist, City of Sumter.

## Hometown Economic Development Grant process opens in July with increased funding

The ideas and the enthusiasm are there. It's the funding that's often the missing piece.

The Municipal Association's Hometown Economic Development Grant program can help.

The 2017 program will award grants up to \$25,000 each to as many as 10 cities and towns that submit winning proposals for projects that will make a positive impact on quality of life. The grant program, which began last year, also promotes and recognizes innovation in economic development practices. A key step in the application process is the council's passage of a resolution in support of the grant application.

In October, the Municipal Association awarded eight cities \$25,000 grants. One winning project received a grant to cover the engineering costs for a wildlife

sanctuary and discovery center, while another recipient used grant funding to create a joint main street corridor master plan and economic impact analysis for two adjoining towns.

Cities and towns that receive a grant must provide matching funds. The amount of the match is determined by population. Those selected for grants are also required to submit reports about the progress and successes of each project and provide financial details about how the grant funds were spent.

Applications for a 2017 Hometown Economic Development Grant will be accepted online beginning July 20. Grant awards will be announced no later than October 31. Look for application information at the 2017 Annual Meeting and in the weekly *Uptown Update* starting in August.

## NEWS BRIEFS

The **City of Travelers Rest** ranked No. 4 on a top 10 list of the Best Southern Small Towns by *USA TODAY*.

The National Child Safety Council awarded a five-year recognition award to **Hemingway Police Chief H. Bryan Todd** in recognition of the police department's participation in the NCSC/Safetypup program over the past five years. Safetypup helps children learn and remember the basics of child safety.

*Southern Living* magazine has named the towns of **Hilton Head Island** and **Kiawah Island** No. 4 and No. 6, respectively, on a list of The South's Best Islands 2017.



# ‘Path of totality’ presents opportunities for S.C. cities

Last August, an astronomy photographer in New York called the City of Newberry to find out its plans for the great eclipse of August 2017.

“He was telling me this is the shot of his career,” said Mary Alex Kopp, tourism and events coordinator for the City of Newberry. “So he’s coming to Newberry specifically because he felt our area would be the best for his purposes, and the fact that we’re a rural community was very beneficial to him” to get the perfect shot of the eclipse on Monday, August 21.

With visitors coming from around the world to experience a transcontinental total solar eclipse — the likes of which hasn’t happened for 99 years — some 140 South Carolina cities and towns, including Newberry, are uniquely positioned to offer residents and visitors a phenomenal couple of minutes, preceded by a memorable weekend.

But with a bit of planning, the approximately 2 ½-minute event (length depends on where a city sits inside the path of the

eclipse) can have a lasting impact on a city’s image and economic development potential.

“An eclipse like this is a humbling, jaw-dropping experience that stays with you for the rest of your life,” said Tracie Broom, cofounding partner of Flock and Rally, the Columbia-based marketing firm that is leading the Midlands’ eclipse campaign. “It’s going to be a profound experience.”

The City of Newberry is partnering with the Newberry Opera House, Newberry College, the Newberry Downtown Merchants Association and others. There will be a free outdoor showing of NASA-themed movie, “Hidden Figures,” specially branded sunglasses, local food trucks and a public countdown to the eclipse. Newberry’s hotel rooms have been largely booked since April.

“We want people to come downtown and have a good time, but the best place to see the eclipse is going to be in the middle of a field,” said Kopp. “That’s why we’re planning for a weekend of activity

instead of just one blowout day.”

Any town or city “in the path of totality” can use the once-in-a-lifetime event to showcase its unique appeal. Broom offered ideas for cities to use when making plans for the eclipse: Plan a free public viewing event; make sure there is some shade and cool beverages; hire someone to manage parking, traffic and sanitation; coordinate with public safety officials and logistics organizers; and finally, make sure you’ve advertised the event.

“Let’s show them what a wonderful place this is,” said Broom, adding that people from as far away as England have already booked reservations to experience the eclipse in Columbia. The state’s capital city is the nation’s third largest city on the center line of the path of totality, with the longest duration of 100 percent total solar eclipse on the East Coast.

“It’s not just about this one day,” she said.

Broom said that local attractions, such as an American Revolutionary War battle-

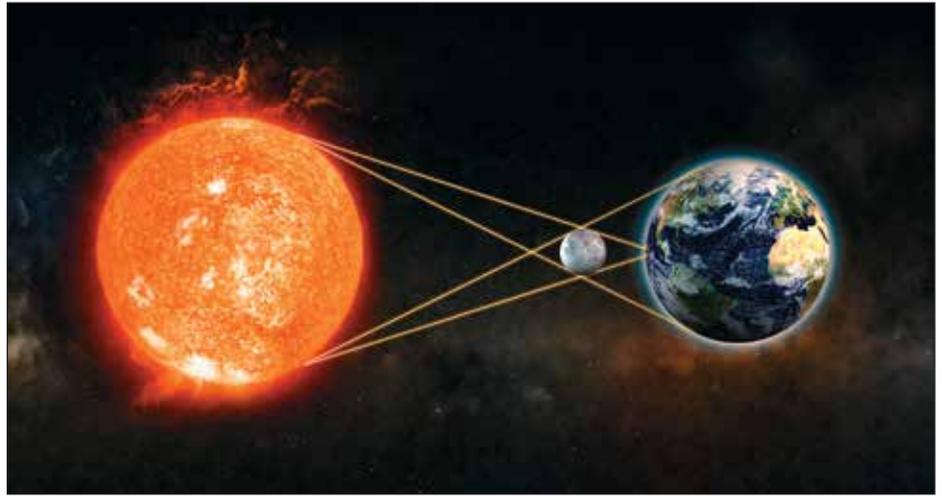
field or an African American history site, would likely receive traffic from eclipse tourists who would want to make the most of their visit.

“If you’ve got any tourism assets, pull ‘em out, shine ‘em up and put ‘em on display,” said Broom.

The Town of Santee plans to do so.

The weekend leading up to the eclipse will include presentations about local Revolutionary War legend Francis Marion, “the Swampfox,” in addition to eclipse-related topics. Santee State Park is expected to feature festivities, too, including a 100-boat flotilla and possibly a geocaching hunt, in which participants search for items using GPS-enabled devices and set of GPS coordinates.

Another idea is to brand a piece of memorabilia, such as a reusable plastic water bottle, with the town or city’s name or logo. Eclipse glasses, too, are a potential branding item. The Midlands’ effort is offering to sell eclipse sunglasses at a bulk-order price to any city or town that would like to distribute them



An eclipse occurs when the moon passes between sun and the earth. [www.totaleclipsecolumbiasc.com](http://www.totaleclipsecolumbiasc.com)

to the public, available with the town’s own branding. Broom’s goal is to have 400,000 of the glasses to pass out in the Midlands.

In the Columbia area, an array of events include a Star Wars-themed concert by the S.C. Philharmonic, a Columbia Fireflies baseball game, in which play stops at the exact moment of the eclipse, and a visit from astronaut Charles Moss

“Charlie” Duke Jr., who was born in Charlotte, North Carolina, and attended Lancaster High School in Lancaster, South Carolina.

“You can have an incredible economic impact,” Broom said.

To find out what other cities and towns in South Carolina are doing to celebrate the eclipse and welcome visitors, visit [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc). (keyword: eclipse)



## Test yourself monthly quiz

**True or False:** In the three forms of municipal government in South Carolina, council retains sole authority for both legislative and administrative functions.



### Answer: False.

Legislative authority is the power to make, alter and repeal local laws and establish policy for the municipality. Legislative power rests in the collective judgment and discretion of the full council in all forms of municipal government.

Administrative authority is the power to implement laws and policies. Council cannot delegate the power to decide legislative matters to an individual councilmember, a municipal officer or employee, a committee or a committee composed of council members.

Council’s level of administrative authority varies based on the municipality’s adopted form of government.

The mayor in the mayor-council (strong mayor) and the manager in the council-manager forms of government serve by state law as the chief administrative officer of the municipality and

are responsible to the council for the administration of municipal affairs. Council, in the council form, is vested with administrative powers and may retain this authority or delegate all or some of it to an administrator.

The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government offers in-person and online courses. Elected officials who complete all of the required coursework graduate from the institute. Register for the September 26 “Municipal Economic Development” and “Forms of Municipal Government” courses at [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc) (keyword: MEOI)



# Get along to move along

**E**ven the most well-considered economic development project can get derailed if federal, state and local governments aren't working in tandem toward the same goals. A disconnect may be the result of conflicting priorities, political differences, or just a misunderstanding of various agencies' processes and procedures.

"It is possible to negotiate the complexities of working across jurisdictions to move a project from a place of conflict to a place of collaboration," says Greer Mayor Rick Danner. "But the keys to making that happen often boil down to communication and shared vision."

Danner points to two projects in the City of Greer that required substantial

coordination among a variety of jurisdictions.

First, the construction of the inland port property in Greer in 2013 brought together local, state and federal interests together for a mammoth, yet quick-turnaround, project that would ultimately benefit not only the region, but also the state as a whole.

Second, Greer's recent downtown redevelopment project meant multiple jurisdictions had to coordinate timing and resources to ensure downtown businesses and their customers didn't lose out because of construction work.

In both cases, Danner points to a number of lessons learned by Greer officials in working across jurisdictional lines:

- Formalize cooperation agreements to ensure everyone is working toward the same end.
- Ensure the goals of any agreements are politically attractive for all involved.
- Share facts such as inventories, surveys and field data by using technology.
- Use neutral parties if necessary to get past baggage of the past.
- Break down large goals into manageable projects.
- Create demonstration projects.
- Create multiple opportunities for public involvement.

*Learn about Greer's experiences in successfully working with a wide variety of government jurisdictions during an Annual Meeting session at 11:15 a.m. on Saturday, July 22.*

# Trash Talk with PalmettoPride

2017 **MASC** Municipal Association of South Carolina™  
**Annual Meeting**

Litter is far more than just annoying trash on the street or cigarette butts on the sidewalk. It impacts economic development, quality of life and the safety of South Carolina communities.

A litter study by Keep America Beautiful determined the following:

- Cities, counties and states spend \$1.3 billion annually to address litter. This number is a low estimate and only covers line item budget amounts. Cities pay the bulk of that amount: \$797 million.
- 36 percent of business development representatives say that litter factors into a decision to locate to a community.
- The presence of litter decreases property values by 7 percent.
- Improperly secured truck and cargo loads, including collection vehicles, comprise 20.7 percent of litter more than 4 inches in size.
- Vehicle debris and improperly secured containers, dumpsters, trash cans or residential waste/recycling bins represent another 8.1 percent of litter that is greater than 4 inches.

The General Assembly established PalmettoPride, the state's litter watchdog organization, not only to eradicate litter but also to change the behavior that causes people to litter.

"We want to eradicate litter, promote beautification projects and improve quality of life for everyone," says Esther Wagner, Prideways program manager at Palmetto Pride. "Preventing litter is the best anti-litter strategy. Picking up litter costs three times as much as removing properly disposed trash. Many communities are focusing on litter prevention and awareness efforts to change the societal norm of littering."

Through education, enforcement support and community involvement, PalmettoPride offers cities a variety of resources that can be tailored to each city's needs.

- Nonmatching grants are available to any anti-litter or beautification program on publicly accessible property. Community groups and municipalities can receive up to \$2,500 and \$10,000, respectively.
- Free classes are available to any South Carolina resident through the Crime Prevention Through Environmental

Design program. CPTED is based on the arrangement and design of buildings and open spaces to discourage undesirable behavior and criminal activity. CPTED works by decreasing opportunities for crime and increasing the chances that a legitimate user will see and report crime as it occurs.

- Municipalities throughout the world are adopting CPTED ordinances requiring site plan reviews with crime prevention and safety in mind. PalmettoPride instructors will train city leaders and individuals on the concepts without charge as well as provide help to a city to implement the strategies.

Getting involved in litter prevention has never been easier. The PalmettoPride Trash Tracker app allows individuals to report litterbugs, illegal dumpsites and areas that need attention in all 46 counties. It's available through the App Store or through Google Play.

*Grant opportunities and other PalmettoPride programs that cities can use will be presented at an Annual Meeting breakout session at 3:15 p.m., Friday, July 21.*



# How to make good police hires and other tips

Some of the best law enforcement advice comes from experience. Ryan Alphin, executive director of the S.C. Law Enforcement Officers' Association and the S.C. Police Chiefs Association, Jackie Swindler, director of the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy and Larry McNeil, employee safety and law enforcement liaison for the S.C. Department of Social Services, fielded an assortment of questions during a panel discussion before municipal officials in Columbia earlier this year.

## On body cameras

Law enforcement officers commonly attach their camera to their chest, said McNeil. However, the former Bennettsville

police chief said he recommended his officers position the camera higher, where the device would follow the movement of the officer's head.

"You're going to see more," said McNeil. "If you hear a gunshot, your chest will not turn, but your head will."

He also urged agency supervisors to randomly sample camera footage every two weeks to make sure the camera is operating properly and capturing viewable footage. Simply deploying body cameras to comply with the law without revisiting the devices can shortchange the department.

"Just to do it and never look back, you're losing a whole lot," said McNeil.

## On hiring

Alphin urged police departments to spend the approximately \$15 up front to give candidates the National Police Officer Selection Test to see if a candidate has the education and skills required to be successful at the Criminal Justice Academy. The exam, offered by consulting firm Stanard & Associates, Inc., assesses proficiency in math, reading, grammar and incident report writing.

"You'd be surprised — candidates who can't read," said Alphin. "You cannot be a police officer if you cannot read."

## On physical fitness

In order to graduate from the Criminal Justice Academy, recruits must complete an obstacle course in 2 minutes and 6 seconds. The course includes dragging a 150-pound dummy, leaping through window frames and scaling a fence. But there's no reason to send a recruit to the academy who hasn't prepared for the course or to send someone who will take up a precious academy training slot but has little chance of passing the obstacle course.

Swindler recommends police departments set up a close duplicate of the course in their towns so that recruits can practice. The practice course is a good way to make sure the recruit has a chance of passing the real thing.

"Test your candidates before you think about sending them," said Swindler. "When you send a candidate that does it in 2 minutes 50 seconds or 3 minutes, there is no way they'll pass it."

## On vetting

The Criminal Justice Academy director offered another bit of advice to departments that are weighing a job candidate's qualifications.

"You can call the academy on any candidate and see if they've been enrolled before (at the academy) and see what their training records are and what their disciplinary records are," said Swindler. "It blows my mind to think that that opportunity is available and someone would hire somebody — put them in a position that carries the liability that it does to be an officer — and you're not vetting that officer."

# Keeping residents and visitors cool and safe



**P**ools, water parks and natural bodies of water deliver a host of economic benefits but also require cities and towns to take steps to keep visitors and residents safe.

## Swimming pools

With drowning the second leading cause of death for children 14 and younger, municipal pool operators must pay close attention to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control regulations 61-51 related to swimming pools.

In addition to regulating the pool's design and construction, DHEC also provides guidance on the number of lifeguards needed based on pool size, the required safety equipment and the use of emergency notification devices.

Ignoring these regulations and others can be costly. The pool may be shut down until violations are corrected, and DHEC can impose fines and penalties. More important than avoiding a hit to the budget, following the regulations greatly reduces the likelihood of a drowning or other water-related crisis.

"In our property and liability program, these claims are fairly limited, usually less than 10 per year," said Heather Ricard, director of the Municipal Association's Risk Management Services. "The most common are slip and fall claims. But we also receive a lot of claims for cuts, scrapes and toe injuries." She said fatal drownings rarely occur at municipal pools.

"Recreational users are owed a duty of care," said Ricard, referring to the

requirement that the municipality has taken all reasonable steps to ensure safety.

"That includes premises that are maintained in a reasonable, safe condition; inspection and discovery of conditions involving unreasonable risk of harm; and protection against dangers by making defects safe or giving adequate warning of defects."

She said cities and towns must also ensure that facilities are designed, built, inspected and maintained appropriately. Municipal officials should also address unreasonable hazards and post warnings about them, anticipate foreseeable activities and take reasonable steps to protect users, Ricard said.

## Aquatic features

Water parks and splash pads are growing in popularity in cities and towns. While these aquatic features offer the public another water recreation outlet, they create their own liability concerns. For instance, the presence of stairs and platforms increases the opportunities for trips, slips and falls.

Wave pools, in particular, bring additional elements into play. Glare, the rise and fall of the water, and the number of people present can create additional risks. Officials may need to consider adequate handrails, more signage and additional lifeguards to keep these increasingly popular aquatic features safe for residents and visitors.

When the weather turns hot enough, however, residents and visitors may end

up splashing and playing in any city water feature, regardless of whether it's intended for public recreation.

A fountain that is not used for recreation can use recycled water that is disinfected by chlorine, but officials must post "no swimming" signs, said DHEC spokesman Robert Yanity. If a city wants to install a recreational splash pad that uses recycled water and disinfectant prior to recirculating the water, it would fall under state public swimming pool regulations 61-51. But if it uses water that goes from the tap into the fountain and then drains away to sewage connections after being sprayed out, it would not be regulated by DHEC, said Yanity.

## Bodies of water

Because many natural bodies of water do not have lifeguards, signage is especially important. Cities or towns that are fortunate to have rivers and lakes should post "swim at your own risk" warnings in areas without lifeguards. In some cases, the municipality may need to restrict, or prohibit altogether, activities such as swimming and fishing. Officials should also consider having adequate railings and keeping lifesaving equipment nearby for visitors to use.

Storing the proper equipment on hand and staffing pools and water features correctly go a long way in preventing accidents and allowing residents and visitors to enjoy some relief from the South Carolina summer.



Savannah River/North Augusta

# Cities embrace, enhance their blueways

From moving sewer lines to adding trails, South Carolina cities and towns are recognizing — and maximizing — the appeal of their rivers.

That means taking any number of steps, such as adding a boat launch, rerouting infrastructure or securing an easement to open up public access and attract residents and visitors.

The City of North Augusta has worked for years to take advantage of the Savannah

River. In the 1990s, the city did a study on riverfront development and adopted the tag line “South Carolina’s Riverfront,” according to Lark Jones, who retired as the city’s mayor this month.

In the mid-1990s, a private developer built a golf club and riverfront homes, which sold for up to \$1 million. This was the catalyst that began to bring people into North Augusta and cultivate an identity for the city as something other

than a bedroom community of Augusta, Georgia, which sits across the river, Jones said.

As developments grew, the city retained access to the riverfront because city leaders believed public access would be key for future successful development.

“The philosophy of the city has always been to provide public access to the river,” Jones said. “It’s part of the public realm that our residents own. When we develop

these things, we want the residents to feel ownership.”

The city had a greenway from a rails-to-trails project and then added a 1-mile spur to the riverfront. The spur circles the Brick Pond Park, which is a 40-acre restored wetland, water treatment system and public nature park.

Significant developments continue at the riverfront. Project Jackson is a mixed-used development that includes a new minor league ballpark for the Augusta GreenJackets. A hotel, restaurants, shops, homes and condominiums are all underway near the riverfront.

Other towns are investing in their riverfronts, as well. The Town of Ware Shoals succeeded in having its project to reroute a 40-year-old sewer line along the Saluda River included on the Greenwood County Penny Sales Tax Commission’s list of projects funded by the tax, which voters approved in 2016.

This project addresses the dangers of possible pollution and contamination that come from having waste running through sewage pipes along the river, said Town Administrator Heather Fields.

In addition, the town is working to improve Pitts Park, which lies along the shoals and offers access to the river. Fields said the town would like to clean up the park, add trash cans and restrooms, and make it handicapped accessible.

The river is part of the Heritage Corridor, and signage there points to the kayak launch and access to fishing.

“On any given day, we have hundreds of people in the park,” she said.

### Reaching an agreement

Scores of people visit the Pacolet River Paddling Trail, and the Town of Pacolet has been working on other improvements to draw visitors to the riverfront area, according to Mayor Michael Meissner.

“Providing public access to the river gives community members and individuals something to do,” Meissner said.

For years, there was no public access to the river, due in part to industrial sites located there. The town reached an easement agreement with Lockhart Power,



Saluda River/Ware Shoals

which provides hydropower along the river, to create trails and allow public access to the water, Meissner said.

The town has other projects in the works, including a new traffic circle in front of Pacolet Town Hall, and improvements, such as benches, to the park area and river walk. An old building known as the Cloth Room, which is a remnant of the textile mill, is undergoing renovations to become a community events center that will spur revitalization efforts by the river. Meissner said eventually they hope to expand the trails, add a bridge, increase signage and expand a fishing pier.

### ‘Get connected to nature’

The Town of Calhoun Falls, located in the Savannah River Basin, provides numerous recreational activities for residents and visitors. Calhoun Falls State Park and the Blue Hole Recreation Area offer boat ramps, playgrounds, picnic areas, and canoeing and kayak areas.

The West Carolina Pavilion on Lake Russell hosts musical and outdoor events, said David Garner, Calhoun Falls town administrator. The town works closely with the Calhoun Falls Chamber of Commerce and the Lake Russell Recreation and Tourism Coalition to plan and organize events and draw people to the area, he said.

In the future, Garner said they hope to establish a rails-to-trails project accessible from downtown Calhoun Falls, which would be a regional recreational trail linking the counties of Abbeville and Laurens.

The activities around Lake Russell and the Savannah River Basin offer an oasis from the fast pace of daily life. When cities embrace and enhance the rivers and waterways that make them unique, they can increase economic development while providing healthy spaces for residents to enjoy the outdoors.

“We want to get people disconnected from technology for a while and get connected to nature,” Garner said.



## What to do *when water becomes scarce*

It keeps us and our communities alive, clean, green and functional. But what happens when a city or town's water becomes scarce?

"Water is a shared resource that has to be fairly distributed to commercial, municipal and private use," said Wes Tyler, assistant state climatologist in the S.C. State Climatology Office, a division of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, in April shortly before retiring. "Fire protection is a top priority, as is drinking water availability."

The S.C. Drought Response Act of 2000 requires that all water utility providers adopt a local drought management plan that addresses how water would be con-

served during certain stages of drought — incipient, moderate, severe and extreme.

"Local drought ordinances or plans are the best-fit responses that address local hydrologic situations such as water supply source, distribution and usage," said Mark Malsick, severe weather liaison for the S.C. State Climatology Office.

A Drought Response Committee of state and local representatives from the state's four drought management zones periodically coordinates responses to water supply shortages. The committee decides if there is any level of drought in the state by reviewing average temperatures; precipitation; crop moisture index; future weather forecasts; and river flow, lake and groundwater levels.

Local drought management efforts are continually changing as conditions change, but not all plans work for each season. There is typically greater demand for water during the warmer months, but consumption can rise at any time of the year. Keeping the public involved, informed and participating in the decision-making process is key to implementing an effective drought management plan.

That's why it helps to get ahead of a drought when faced with a long-term forecast of scant rain. The S.C. Climatology Office recommends officials undertake predrought planning efforts.

Some preresponse measures aimed at conserving the system's source water include

- Identifying all major water users of the system (the top 10 percent heaviest users, including wholesale customers).
- Identifying water users with whom there are conservation agreements.
- Conducting a vigorous public education program. An effective public outreach program will keep the public informed about the water supply situation, what actions will mitigate drought emergency problems, and how well the public is meeting the program goals.

“Between surface and ground water sources, our state is fortunate to be able to — so far — meet existing demands, sometimes with restrictions,” Tyler said. “The wise practice of water storage along most of South Carolina’s river systems has proven to ensure that demand is met.”

### How bad is it?

**Incipient drought** — There is a threat of drought. Water levels should be more closely monitored.

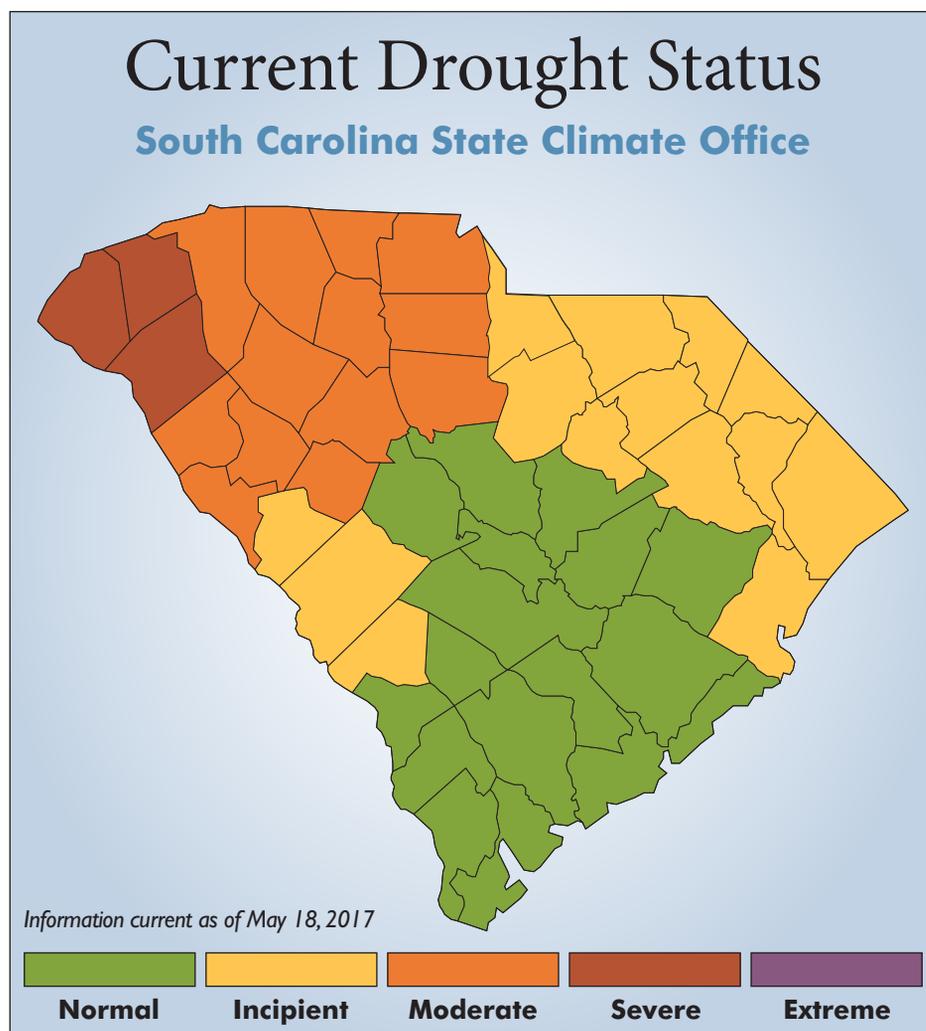
**Moderate drought** — The threat of a drought is increasing. Local water provider can begin seeking voluntary reductions from consumers in their use of water during peak water-demand periods. Typically, the local provider aims to cut usage by 15 percent.

**Severe drought** — The local provider seeks voluntary reduction in water usage and can impose mandatory restrictions on nonessential usage. These restrictions, with a goal to achieve a 20 percent reduction of water usage, could involve staggering the use of water for irrigation, eliminating the washing of sidewalks and buildings, putting a halt to installations of new irrigations taps on the water system and barring consumers from washing their vehicles at home.

The provider would also emphasize to the public that consumers must conserve. When communicating potential restrictions, local officials should stress the cost savings of water conservation measures, said Malsick.

Cutting back on water usage for a given period of time is better than the alternative in many ways.

“Building water distribution infrastructure is a very expensive solution to assuage water



shortages during periods of drought,” Malsick said. For example, if a city or town runs out of water, trucking water in is very costly, while building water pipelines is even more so.

**Extreme drought** — Certain indices show a water supply shortage exists and is expected to persist. The provider aims to cut water usage by 25 percent. Customers can be mandated to eliminate any irrigation, filling swimming pools, washing vehicles, and other nonessential uses of water.

Additionally, officials could continue to stop installation of new irrigation taps on the water system; place a moratorium on the issuance of all new water service connections and contracts for all new water main extensions; or impose a drought surcharge per 1,000 gallons of water, a fee that increases with higher usage. The general principle behind the drought surcharge is that the fee is imposed on water use in excess of normal use.

As with other natural disasters and special circumstances, the governor wields emergency powers. If the Drought Response Committee finds that the conditions in a drought management area have worsened to the point of jeopardizing the health and safety of the public, the committee reports the conditions to the governor and provides a priority list of recommended actions designed to alleviate the effects of drought conditions. The governor may declare a drought emergency and issue emergency regulations to require a moratorium on water withdrawals or to allocate water on an equitable basis.

*For a more complete list of management practices and conservations measures, refer to each local ordinance or plan at [www.dnr.sc.gov/pls/drought/drought\\_survey\\_search](http://www.dnr.sc.gov/pls/drought/drought_survey_search)*

*A model ordinance is available at [www.dnr.sc.gov/climate/sco/Drought/drought\\_login.php](http://www.dnr.sc.gov/climate/sco/Drought/drought_login.php)*



# Cities battle water pollution

Water

It can be as simple as a public education campaign or as sophisticated as DNA testing. Cities and towns have an array of strategies to fight and prevent water pollution.

Unfortunately, more than 1,150 waterways in South Carolina are considered “impaired,” too polluted to meet water quality standards, according to Carolina Clear, a Clemson Extension program that provides stormwater education and outreach.

## Know the types — point and nonpoint

Point source pollution comes from a single source, such as an industrial or wastewater discharge pipe. Nonpoint source pollution, such as stormwater runoff, originates from countless places, and is one of the greatest threats to water quality in the U.S.

With stormwater runoff, rainwater gathers litter, pet waste and leaves, and washes it off roads, parking lots or rooftops directly into a storm drain that discharges into a waterway. The over-application of

fertilizers and herbicides from agricultural lands or residential areas also contributes to the problem.

Other sources include spills or the dumping of oil, antifreeze or household chemicals into drainage systems. Sediment from improperly managed construction sites also pollute.

Stormwater is regulated through the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control, which requires many industrial sites, all construction sites of 1 acre or more, and all regulated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems to have a stormwater permit.

## The first step: public education

The primary sources of pollution encountered in the City of Anderson result from nonpoint urban stormwater runoff, said Billy Bolger, stormwater engineer.

Anderson officials start where the pollutant was discovered and work upstream to determine the source. This can involve addressing the issue with the party responsible for the pollution. Bolger and his staff also take steps to educate the

responsible party on the harmful effects that pollutants have on waterways.

Some residents believe there is no difference between a sewer manhole and a storm drain manhole, assuming water all goes to the same place and is treated. Teaching the public about the difference helps keep waterways clean, Bolger said.

“We hope that people will have a better awareness of stormwater issues and change their behaviors to look at water as a resource needing protection,” Bolger said.

The city has partnered with the Carolina Clear program and the Anderson and Pickens Counties’ Stormwater Partners consortium.

“We believe this regional approach to stormwater education and resident involvement is the most effective method for providing a consistent water quality message across the upstate,” Bolger said.

## Pollution sleuths

Along the coast, saltwater is closely monitored for bacteria, such as enterococci, that could be a risk to public health, said Andy Fairey, chief operating officer of the

Charleston Water System. Bacteria can be found in stormwater from animal waste, ranging from pets to wild birds to the horses that pull carriages in downtown Charleston. DHEC monitors beaches and shellfish beds, especially after heavy rains or hurricanes, and posts warnings about high bacteria counts.

The water in Shem Creek has had high bacteria numbers in the past, leading to concerns about public recreation. But it's difficult to know what's causing it. Septic tanks seem like a likely culprit: They're permitted by DHEC, but they are privately owned and maintained. Cities and towns do not regulate them.

"That is one of the challenges that a lot of communities face," said Hillary Repik, stormwater manager for the Town of Mount Pleasant. "There's nobody who's responsible for making sure owners are actually maintaining them and doing what they're supposed to, which makes them a potential source of pollution."

And there are lots of them.

More than 1 million households in South Carolina rely on septic tanks. In an average year, 10 to 30 percent of those septic systems fail, usually because of poor maintenance. Leaky, clogged or damaged systems can contaminate a home's drinking water well; force untreated sewage to the surface of a yard and into ditches and creeks; and create sewage backups in sinks, tubs and toilets. Faulty septic tanks can also pollute nearby ponds, lakes and rivers, exposing people and animals to viruses and infections.

When rural areas are incorporated into existing sewer systems, residents often resist tying into the system because they don't want to pay monthly fees, Fairey said. Offering reasonable fees and educational outreach can help, he said.

The Town of Mount Pleasant is trying something new — DNA technology to answer a crucial question: Whose bacteria is to blame?

The bacteria samples fall into broad categories, such as human, dogs and other producers. The town is doing some small pilot testing of this process now and plans to use it more in the future with a total maximum daily load regulatory plan and



other operations where it's difficult to locate a specific source.

If a sample was identified as human waste, the town would know to look at septic tanks, illegal dumping, illegal connections or sanitary sewer overflows. The DNA sample wouldn't indicate whether the bacteria came from a septic tank or an illegally emptied toilet from a recreational vehicle, but it would inform officials about what responses are appropriate.

The idea is to use the DNA to help narrow down the potential sources and figure out if the issue is a "personal pollutant," which can be reduced through education and other efforts, or whether the source is wildlife waste, which the town cannot control.

"This is a long-term process for us," said Repik. "We want to make really good decisions and get good information along the way, especially when spending taxpayer dollars, so you're doing something that will fix something and make a change — not just checking a box."

### Maintaining detention ponds

Another key piece of controlling water pollution is to stop pollutants that collect in stormwater from entering the environment. If detention ponds are designed and maintained properly, they can be effective. Any developer that puts in a new development — be it housing, a mall or a parking lot — is required by state law to have a plan for stormwater.

In many cases, the developer of a residential community has an agreement with a city for the maintenance of the pond,

which the developer then transfers to the homeowner association, said Kinsey Holton, stormwater program manager for the City of Charleston.

"It establishes expectations up front of what needs to be done, and that there's legal recourse if you don't maintain them," said Holton.

The ponds are not intended to stay full, but instead allow rainwater to evaporate and seep into the earth and then empty into an adjacent water body. "Inherent with a detention pond, most of the stuff — the pollutants — will somewhat settle out, but not all of it will," Holton said.

Without proper upkeep, the ponds accumulate debris, such as trash, silt and dirt. The debris builds up over time and must be removed to prevent overgrowth of green algae and bacteria, which hinders the water absorption process.

Often, the homeowner associations that assume responsibility for the ponds don't have the technical expertise to maintain them or the ability to pay for dredging every 10 to 20 years. Depending on what an analysis of the dredged material reveals, that material is sometimes hauled to a landfill or spread over land.

Another concern is residents' overuse of lawn and garden fertilizer, which collects in runoff and ends up in retention ponds.

"There is a push to make people understand, 'Hey you've got this pond in your neighborhood — Do you know you're responsible?'" said Holton.

"The average person doesn't really realize what their part is."

# Calendar

For a complete listing of training opportunities, visit [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc) to view the calendar.

## JUNE

**6 SC Business Licensing Officials Association Accreditation in Business Licensing Exam.** Municipal Association of SC.

**8 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Second Quarter Meeting.** Columbia Conference Center. Topics include S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control enforcement practices and MS4s, with a focus on construction and post-construction best management practices.

**11 - 13 SC Association of Municipal Power Systems Annual Meeting.** Sonesta Resort, Hilton Head Island. Topics include the growth of small-cell antennas, cloud computing and the use of unmanned aircraft systems/drones for utility inspections.

## JULY

**20 -23 Municipal Association of South Carolina's Annual Meeting.** Marriott Hilton Head.

## AUGUST

**1 SC Business Licensing Officials Association Accreditation in Business Licensing Exam.** Municipal Association of SC.

**15 Regional Advocacy Meeting.** Waccamaw COG area. Myrtle Beach Historic Train Depot.

**16 Regional Advocacy Meeting.** Appalachian COG area. Garage at Whitner - Economic Development Office, Anderson.

**17 Regional Advocacy Meeting.** Catawba COG area. Main Street Junction, Union.

**23 Regional Advocacy Meeting.** Lower Savannah COG area. The Arts Center, Orangeburg.

**24 Regional Advocacy Meeting.** Pee Dee COG area. Lawton Park, Hartsville.

Tell us  
what information you need  
and how you'd like to get it.  
Complete the survey at  
[www.masc.sc/MASCsurvey2017](http://www.masc.sc/MASCsurvey2017).

## SEPTEMBER

**7 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Third Quarter Meeting and Exhibitor Showcase.** Columbia Conference Center. Topics include MS4 basics, delineating impervious areas using LiDAR and color infrared photography, source tracking and DNA testing.

**11 Regional Advocacy Meeting.** Santee-Lynches COG area. Swan Lake Visitor's Center, Sumter.

**13 - 15 Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute Fall Session - Year 2, Session B.** Hyatt Place Columbia. Topics include technology in the workplace, interpersonal skills, payroll administration, risk management, time management, grants administration and notaries public.