

UPTOWN

Advocacy. Service. Innovation.

MASC unveiled its new logo to the membership at the Winter Meeting and Legislative Conference in February.

“After 30 years of using the logo of skyscrapers emerging from the state, our new logo more accurately depicts who we are and who we represent,” said Howard Duvall, MASC’s executive director.

Because of the wide scope of the Association’s services, no single visual element could accurately represent MASC. Instead, the logo leverages the Association’s strong name recognition — both for “Municipal Association of South Carolina” and the acronym “MASC”. Created by CSNG, a Columbia-based integrated communications agency, the logo also uses the image of the state in

a new and appealing way. MASC has copyrighted the design and has begun the legal process of attaining a service mark for the logo and tag line.

An integral part of the redesigned logo is the addition of the tag line, “Advocacy. Service. Innovation.” The line helps accomplish what the logo on its own could not — it describes the programs and services of MASC.

Advocacy — this means more than lobbying. It encompasses all MASC does to advocate good municipal government practices.

Service — MASC is a service-oriented organization. “The Association places great emphasis on this area, constantly adding new programs and services,” explained Duvall.



Innovation — this exemplifies how MASC encourages and practices continuous improvement and advancement. “We recognize the importance of not resting on current successes and programs,” said Duvall. “Pushing forward and exploring new ways to provide services is essential — both for our members responding to their citizens and for MASC responding our members.”

The direction of the logo redesign and tag line development was driven
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Winter Meeting emphasizes economic importance of municipalities



Darla Moore

Municipal officials have a new and important role in increasing the state’s ability to compete in the new economy, according to Darla Moore. Moore addressed delegates during MASC’s Winter Meeting and Legislative Conference in February.

A Lake City native, Moore is chairman of the board for The Palmetto Institute, an independent, nonpartisan research foundation dedicated to raising the standard of

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living of all South Carolinians. She is also a partner in Rainwater Inc., one of the largest private investment firms in America.

Moore explained that to help the economy, the state needs to take a two-pronged approach designed to improve economic development foundations, especially education, and to diversify South Carolina's industries.

"Unless this happens, South Carolina's economy will continue to lag behind the nation and many of our neighboring states," she said. "The per capita income of our people is at 81 percent of the national average now, and we will not close the gap until we improve labor force skills and diversify the economy." She acknowledged that although South Carolina's economy has been growing, other states have been growing, too — but at a faster rate.

"Competing for big industries by touting low wages, low taxes and high tax incentives does not work in

today's global economy," Moore clarified. She explained South Carolina cannot compete with such countries as China and Mexico on low wages. "Low taxes are simply a sign of low personal income, which means a lower standard of living. More incentives just place a larger strain on the state's resources and shift the burden to taxpayers."

How municipalities can help

Citing a recently published report commissioned by the Institute, *The South Carolina Challenge: Regional Economic Analysis*, Moore stressed the importance of having basic municipal infrastructure in place to increase a region's economic potential. She explained that basic infrastructure means more than just having water/sewer capacity — it means investing in information technology/communication infrastructure such as broadband access to the Internet.

"South Carolina is at a disadvantage because its information technology

infrastructure is less adequate than comparable states," she said.

According to Moore, the new economy is built on human capital, which raises the importance of a region's quality of place.

"Municipal officials play a key role in this area, as well," she explained. This means much more than providing basic service such as utilities, public safety and zoning. A host of factors affect a community's quality of place: education, health care, cultural opportunities, how the community looks and how citizens treat one another.

Quality of place is essential in recruiting the human capital necessary to compete in our information-based economy. Even if they are not under a council's direct control, local officials must support other groups responsible for providing the various elements that enhance a community's quality of place. Moore encouraged local officials to be involved, supportive and aware of what is happening in area schools and with the local chamber of commerce, cultural organizations and others. She also said local officials must cooperate and work together as a team.

"The decisions you make at every council meeting affect your town's development potential and, therefore, the potential wealth of your citizens," she said.

Moore emphasized there is more to recruiting than simply bringing new workers to the area — the local educational system must be equipped to re-train the local person who has worked for a textile company for a decade but is now without a job because the plant moved to Mexico. In this Information Age, the worker must become computer literate.

To compete in today's economy, local officials must recognize "you're in a whole different race. Run hard, but also run smarter," Moore concluded.

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by a telephone survey of randomly selected municipal elected officials and staff. An independent market research firm, Crantford and Associates, conducted the survey. The survey had three objectives: to define MASC's current image among its members, to measure the awareness of its current programs and to assess the need for providing new information or services.

"We were extremely pleased and gratified with the survey results," said Duvall. On a 10-point scale, MASC scored 7.9 or higher on all the image ratings. Participants rated MASC in numerous areas including professionalism, availability, informed staff, responsiveness and ease of working with. "The good news was the Association did not have a negative image that needed to be repaired."

However, the survey pointed out a need to better inform the membership of the wide variety of programs and services offered by MASC.

"We have a clear indication of what we need to focus on, and we are very lucky to have several ways to accomplish this goal," said Duvall. The majority of survey participants responded they attend Association-sponsored meetings, receive MASC publications and visit the Web site (www.masc.sc). "We will be using all these avenues to communicate more with our members about the services we can offer them."

If you have any comments about the new logo, call Mary Brantner, MASC's communications manager, at 803.933.1206 or e-mail mbrantner@masc.sc.

High court rules in favor of MASC's Setoff Debt Collection Program

The circuit court decision that had put a cloud over the Setoff Debt Collection Program was reversed by the S.C. Supreme Court in a ruling issued Jan. 27. The program was challenged by 10 debtors in a lawsuit filed in 1998. The debtors alleged their constitutional rights to due process were violated by agencies using the program. They also challenged the authority of MASC and the S.C. Association of Counties to collect an administrative fee from the debtor.

The circuit court expanded the suit to a class action involving all debtors and a second class of all claimant agencies that used the program during 1996, 1997 and 1998. In February 2000, a circuit court judge ruled all debts, fees and interest collected during these years must be returned to the debtors.

The January decision of the Supreme Court reversed the order of the lower court. The court also determined a class action was not appropriate. As a result, the only parties remaining in the case are the 10 named plaintiffs and the originally named defendants.

The Supreme Court found that, although the written notice of intention to set off a debt did not violate the constitutional provision of due process, it did not comply with the requirements of the Setoff Debt Collection Act prior to 1999. The Legislature passed an amendment to the Act in 1999 clarifying the notice and appeal procedures all claimants must follow.

The court also said MASC and the S.C. Association of Counties performed a valuable service for the S.C. Department of Revenue, and the fees charged to the debtor were proper. This decision will allow

The Setoff Debt Collection Program allows MASC to compile and forward to the S.C. Department of Revenue each December a database of delinquent accounts and debts owed to participating entities. If an individual who owes a debt is scheduled to receive a state income tax refund, the Department reduces the refund by the debt amount. The amount collected is forwarded to MASC which, in turn, forwards it to the reporting entity.

MASC and program participants to reinstate the former administrative fee of up to \$25 charged to the debtors. MASC plans to re-implement the \$25 administrative fee structure beginning in January 2004.

"Because the new Setoff Debt Collection Program software is offered as an application service provider, cities will not need to update their systems to begin collecting the administrative fees," said Gail Hampton, MASC's collection programs manager. "We have reprogrammed the software on our end, so the update should be seamless for the users when the change takes effect next year."

The procedures used by the participants in the Setoff Debt Collection Program and the right to collect an administrative fee from the debtor have now been approved by the ruling of the Supreme Court. If your municipality is not participating in this program, you can learn more about the MASC program by attending a complimentary lunch at the S.C. Utility Billing Association meeting March 20 in North Myrtle Beach. Please call Gail Hampton at 803.933.1213 by March 13 for reservations.

For more information call MASC's Gail Hampton at 803.933.1213 or e-mail ghampton@masc.sc.



Classifieds

■ The Town of Ware Shoals (pop. 3,500) is accepting applications for a town administrator. Position requires an advanced degree in public/business administration and experience in local government. Send cover letter, resume, salary history and three work-related references to Miles Hadley, PO Box 510, Ware Shoals, SC 29692. EOE

■ The City of Chester is accepting applications for a recreation director. Position requires a bachelor's degree in parks and recreation administration, public administration or related field, along with one to two years of experience in parks and recreation programming and administration or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Send applications to the City of Chester Personnel Department, ATTN: Carla Roof, 100 West End Street, Chester, SC 29706, or e-mail to croof@infoave.net. EOE

■ The City of Hanahan is accepting applications for a building official. Position requires a bachelor's degree in business administration with three to five years of experience with building construction, blueprint reading, building inspection, construction, codes and ordinances or any equivalent combination of training and experience. Send cover letter and resume to City Administrator, 1255 Yeamans Hall Road, Hanahan, SC 29406 or fax to 843.747.3220. EOE

■ The Town of Kingstree is accepting applications for a town manager. Preferred qualifications include MPA, MBA or related degree and at least three years' experience as manager, administrator or assistant. May accept equivalent combination of education and experience. Send resume and references by March 14 to Town of Kingstree, ATTN: Town Manager Position, 401 N. Longstreet Street, Kingstree, SC 29556. EOE

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

Private property rights bill moving through Legislature

The legislative debate over government's responsibilities when regulating private property seems to be headed for a compromise. For years, the General Assembly has been caught between private property rights activists and those calling for government regulation to protect the public's rights. This stalemate prevented any legislation from passing.

The initial legislation would have required state and local governments to compensate a land owner whose land value had been reduced by a government regulation or ordinance. The definition of a government "taking," which has evolved over time through court decisions, would have been dramatically changed to require compensation if a regulation placed an "inordinate burden" on private property.

Defenders of the government's authority to regulate private property point to the existing framework for regulation contained in the Comprehensive Planning Act of 1994, which local governments regulating land use had to conform to by Jan. 1, 2000. This Act requires much more public input during the land use planning process than was previously required of local governments.

The S.C. Land Use Dispute Resolution Act — S204 — is the result of many years of debate between private property rights activists and supporters of government's right to regulate private

property for the common good. The debate has shifted from an effort to require government to compensate a private land owner whose property was subjected to an "inordinate burden" to a process bill that would expedite appealing a local zoning board of appeals' decision.

The legislative proposal establishes a new mediation procedure for property owners appealing a decision of the zoning board of appeals. The mediation will follow the S.C. Alternative Dispute Resolution rules. If an agreement is reached through mediation, the agreement must be approved by the municipal council and the circuit court. The legislation requires public notice of the mediation and allows people with substantial interest to participate in the mediation.

The use of mediation does not prevent a property owner from seeking relief in the circuit court under the current appeal procedure. The bill requires appeals of this type to be placed on the court calendar ahead of any other civil cases.

The legislation also proposes certification and training requirements for employees and officials dealing with planning, zoning and land use regulation. The training requirements would apply to such people as members of the planning commission, board of appeals, board of architectural review, zoning

administrators and their deputies and assistants.

The training would be supervised and approved by a State Advisory Committee on Educational Requirements for Local Government Planning and Zoning Officials and Employees. The Committee would approve the educational courses, determine the categories of people exempt from the requirements and prepare an annual report to the Legislature of its activities. Those needing certification would be required to complete six hours of training initially and three hours annually thereafter.

MASC and other associations will prepare a training agenda for approval by the Advisory Committee. Local governments may also submit their training proposals to the Advisory Committee for approval.

Although the S.C. Land Use Dispute Resolution Act inserts a new process of mediation into the appeals process and will require some expense by local governments to meet the bill's training requirements, it is not as restrictive and costly as the original "takings" legislation. MASC's board of directors endorsed S204 as reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee on Feb. 4.

A copy of the legislation is available on MASC's Web site (www.masc.sc) under the "Hot Issues" section of "Legislative Priorities."

Understanding trauma in public safety: Developing a departmentwide response

Sept. 11, 2001, will forever remind us of the bravery and courage exemplified by public safety personnel while performing their jobs. Public safety officers — police officers

and firefighters — routinely deal with traumatic incidents. They constantly face highly stressful situations such as automobile accidents, fires and shootings. Individually or over time, these

events may lead to psychological injury. If not recognized and addressed in time, the untreated trauma may cause the municipality to suffer personnel and financial losses.

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2002 Achievement Award Winner

Public Service Category: Town of Honea Path

Citizens work together to improve quality of life

Concerned Honea Path citizens began exploring ways to create a healthier living environment and improve their quality of life. Citizens met with representatives from AnMed Health Systems, DHEC-Appalachia I Public Health District and Partners for a Healthier Community to develop a process to positively improve life in Honea Path. AnMed chose Honea Path as a pilot community to receive funds for community outreach programs aimed at improving quality of life.

The Town identified four focuses for the pilot initiative: education and recreation, health and medical services, safety and economic development, and beautification, culture and historic preservation. The Town created Partners for a Healthier Honea Path (PHHP), a group of concerned citizens, to address the four focus areas.

PHHP developed a comprehensive town health improvement plan to secure grant funds for beautifying the Town park, to provide a satellite facility for DHEC's Women-Infants-Children (WIC) and immunization services and to provide a speaker series for the local assisted living and senior centers.



One of Partners for a Healthier Honea Path's most notable accomplishments was opening the first satellite office of the Anderson County Free Clinic.

One of the most notable accomplishments was establishing the first satellite office of the Anderson County Free Clinic. The free clinic was desperately needed because recent economic troubles forced a local textile mill to close and another to stop offering health insurance to its employees.

All these goals were accomplished using donations of time and other non-monetary resources from Honea Path's residents. The residents have worked together to improve the Town's quality of life and to instill a greater sense of community.

Contact: Thomas Martin, 864.369.2660

News Briefs



■ According to S.C. DHEC, all drinking water systems are required to maintain an updated map of their distribution system. System maps must include location and sizes of water lines, location of all valves and location of all water sources and all pumping, treatment and storage facilities. For more information, call Erica Johnson with DHEC's Bureau of Water at 803.898.3541.

■ The City of Charleston is the 2002 recipient of the Environmental Protection Agency's coveted Phoenix Award. The award is given annually to brownfield reclamation projects. Charleston claimed the award for its efforts in cleaning up the 1.5-acre site of the South Carolina Aquarium, contaminated by a former manufactured glass factory.

■ The Town of Lexington and the City of Aiken received Housing Achievement Awards from the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority. Lexington was recognized in the Public Sector category and Aiken in the Creative Partnerships category.

Municipal projects make the grade with the 2003 Achievement Awards

You can reach the top of the class with your unique or innovative programs by entering MASC's 2003 Municipal Achievement Awards program. Municipalities of any size can enter. Don't miss this opportunity to let others know about the exciting things happening in your municipality.

Winning entries will be featured in a video shown at the 2003 Annual Meeting, the Achievement Awards brochure, *Uptown* (see above) and during Hometown Network broadcasts.

MASC will mail entry information this month, and information will also be available on MASC's Web site at

www.masc.sc under the "Featured Links" section of the home page. Entries must be submitted by April 11. Judging will take place May 5.

For more information, call Shala Hainer, MASC's staff associate for communications, at 803.933.1215 or e-mail shainer@masc.sc.

MASC's new search engine puts your questions to work

Today's Web users have come to expect — and demand — quality Web sites that deliver accurate and relevant information quickly. To meet this need, MASC launched a new, user-focused search and information retrieval solution at its Winter Meeting and Legislative Conference in February.

The new JeevesOne search engine was developed by makers of the popular "Ask Jeeves" Internet search engine. It allows "natural language" searches, which means users can type in questions or phrases in their own words to find answers. For example, asking "What is a TIF?" will produce information on tax increment financing, and a search for "What is the Stormwater Management Association?" will pull up results about the S.C. Association of Stormwater Managers. A search for "What is a stormwater permit?" pulls up results varying from the model stormwater permit to an upcoming stormwater training session to an *Uptown* article about stormwater management.

"MASC's new search engine is helping us meet our members' information needs," said Howard Duvall, MASC's executive director. "We want our Web site to be a two-way street — our users need to be able to find what they are looking for, but we must understand our users' needs, as well."

To help MASC understand users' needs, the Jeeves Analytics customer intelligence tool keeps an anonymous record of every question asked, whether results were found for the question and whether the user picked one of the results. Reports from these records will allow MASC to shape content on its Web site around the information being requested by users.

"The reporting function also will allow us to develop more effective



Users can find MASC's new search feature on the top right side of the home page at www.masc.sc or by clicking on the "Search" link at the top of any MASC page. Simply type a question in the search box and click the "Ask" button. If you would like to search a municipality's site, the S.C. Code of Laws or all listed sites, click the arrow on the right side of the second box to see a list of sites available for searching. Click on the option you prefer and enter your question in the top box. The search engine recognizes phrases and keywords, too, for users who prefer not to use the question format.

training programs by gaining valuable insight from every question members ask," explained Duvall. "If the same question appears day after day, chances are we need to address that topic in a more aggressive way, either with an *Uptown* article or a training session at one of our conferences."

Another beneficial feature of JeevesOne is its ability to offer users an option when a search is not successful. If a user asks two questions in a row without choosing an answer, the user will be prompted at the bottom of the screen to e-mail the question to MASC if desired.

"This is just another way we are trying to make our Web site as user friendly as possible," said Duvall. "If they would rather call us instead of e-mail us, our phone number is at the bottom of every page on our Web site."

Besides searching Web pages, JeevesOne retrieves results from more than 250 file types, such as Adobe Acrobat (PDF), Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents.

"The ability to search various file types is a major advantage," explained Duvall. "We have posted our publications, such as our *Handbook for*

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Search Engine

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Municipal Officials and the *Business Licensing Handbook*, online as PDF documents. Now users can ask their technical questions online and get an immediate answer.”

MASC’s goal is to make its Web site a portal for S.C. municipal information. The search engine can search more than 10,000 pages found on MASC’s site, the S.C. Code of Laws and all S.C. municipal Web sites. Using the drop-down menu box below the search box, users can choose which site to search, or they can search all sites.

“As we continue to expand our site and as more cities come online, we hope JeevesOne will help make our site a portal for municipal government information in South Carolina,” concluded Duvall. “This will allow our members to find answers to their critical questions on their time, not just by calling us during business hours.”

MASC is not the first government-related entity to use the JeevesOne — the State of Washington has been using it since early 2001. Jeeves Solutions was selected as one of 2002’s “Best Solutions” at Government Technology’s conference for its implementation with the State of Washington. Jeeves Solutions has more than 40 corporate customers, including Compaq, Nike, Wachovia and Nestle.

For more information about MASC’s Web site or search feature, call Shala Hainer, MASC’s staff associate for communications, at 803.933.1215 or e-mail shainer@masc.sc.

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How can trauma go untreated for so long? Often, public safety personnel are considered invulnerable and able to deal with all situations. Others may unintentionally ignore trauma endured by public safety personnel. Because they often internalize grief to remain outwardly strong for their families and coworkers, it’s easy to forget that public safety personnel go through the same emotional struggle as others in times of chaos and loss.

Symptoms of traumatic stress vary. In the case of an automobile accident involving a fatality, an employee may express aversion to returning to the scene, be afraid to drive or show reluctance to deal with medical personnel. People experiencing other outside factors may be more affected by a traumatic event than others. These factors include personal life events such as financial difficulty, divorce, serious illness or other family issues.

Local officials need to encourage their staff to talk with a professional counselor after a traumatic event. These sessions help staff members unburden themselves and properly express their emotions. Counseling also helps prevent psychological injuries, which reduces the potential for expensive workers’ compensation claims.

“Talking with a trained counselor about traumatic events is just good practice, similar to going to the emergency room,” explained Carol Brown, MASC’s claims manager. “It is a healthy way of preventing psychological damage from occurring.”

To assist its members, the S.C. Municipal Insurance Trust (SCMIT) — MASC’s workers’ compensation insurance pool — has scheduled three “train-the-trainer” workshops to address “Understanding Trauma in Public Safety: Developing a Departmentwide Response.”

Dr. Larry Bergmann, president of Post Trauma Associates Inc. in Columbia and a leading expert on this subject, will conduct the workshops. The sessions will be held in Goose Creek on March 11, in Mauldin on March 13 and in Columbia on March 18.

The “training the trainer” sessions provide supervisors the tools necessary to recognize signs of traumatic stress in fellow employees. The sessions will help supervisors create a safety net for employees exposed to traumatic and stressful events. These sessions focus on a different perspective than the routine employee assistance programs or chaplain assistance programs. Workshop participants will learn about a broad range of responses available specifically for public safety personnel.

“Untreated traumatic stress can be debilitating and cause unnecessary pain and suffering,” said Brown. “Issues that could be dealt with promptly at the onset can build and lead to the inability to return to work at full capacity. These workshops will help supervisors spot traumatic stress before it gets out of hand.”

These workshops are only open to SCMIT members. “This type of training is one of the things that distinguish MASC’s Risk Management programs from those of the state or the commercial marketplace,” said Harvey Mathias, director of Risk Management Services. “Because we only deal with municipalities, we are able to monitor the trends and develop specialized training solutions for member municipalities.”

For more information about this workshop or the SCMIT program, call Carol Brown at 803.933.1235 or e-mail cbrown@masc.sc, or call Dawn Allison at 803.933.1267 or e-mail Dawn.Allison@companiongroup.com.



Educational Opportunities

S.C. Utility Billing Association

■ **March 19-21**, will hold its Annual Meeting at Ocean Drive Resort in North Myrtle Beach.

Hometown Connection

■ **March 26**, municipal officials from Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Lexington, Orangeburg and Richland counties visit with their state legislators. Officials should meet at MASC's office in Columbia at 10:30 a.m.

Hometown Network

■ **March 27**, the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government will present "Basic Budgeting." This session will be broadcast via satellite to the 10 regional councils of governments.

Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute

■ **April 2-4**, its spring session will be held in Columbia.

Hometown Connection

■ **April 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 should meet at MASC's office in Columbia at 10:30 a.m.

S.C. Association of Municipal Power Systems

■ **April 30**, SCAMPS will hold its annual legislative event at Seawell's in Columbia.

Hometown Network

■ **May 1**, the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government will present "You've Been Elected — Now What?" and "The Freedom of Information Act." These sessions will be broadcast via satellite to the 10 regional councils of governments.

S.C. Business Licensing Officials Association

■ **May 7**, will hold its Spring Meeting at Seawell's Banquet and Reception Center in Columbia.

S.C. Association of Municipal Power Systems

■ **May 7-8**, will hold its Lineman Training Program at Pine Island Club in Columbia.

Hometown Connection

■ **May 28**, municipal officials from Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Jasper, Marion and Williamsburg counties visit with their state legislators. Officials should meet at MASC's office 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

UPTOWN

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