Traditionally, a municipality has the responsibility for conducting elections. However, due to the complexity of elections and the part-time nature of municipal election commissions and support staff, an increasing number of municipalities are considering other options.

State law establishes how municipal elections are conducted and provides that municipal councils must adopt by ordinance the process and method for electing its members. Municipalities may choose to conduct their own elections or contract with the county.

If the municipality retains authority for its elections, the primary player in the municipal election process is the municipal election commission. Every municipality conducting elections must establish and maintain on a continuous basis a commission appointed by council. The municipal election commission plans, conducts and supervises all special and general municipal elections. South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 5-15-90.

Additionally, the commission is responsible for issues related to qualification of candidates and hearing election protests. Effective in 2011, all newly appointed municipal election commission members must complete, within 18 months of appointment, state mandated training consisting of three courses offered by the S.C. Election Commission. Thereafter, the affected commissioners must complete one training course per year.

State law allows a municipality to transfer authority to conduct municipal elections to the county election commission if the governing bodies of the municipality and county agree to transfer terms adopted by ordinances. South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 5-15-145. This transfer may be performed two ways.

The first method is a complete transfer of all election responsibilities. In this case, the ordinance transferring election authority authorizes the county election commission to assume all roles and responsibilities previously performed by the municipal election commission. The county election commission becomes solely responsible for conducting municipal elections based on the municipality’s local ordinance, which defines when and how the election is held. When the total responsibility for conducting a municipal
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For a list of current municipal job openings, visit www.masc.sc; keyword: jobs

SELECT your candidates
Press red vote or green check

This completes the voting process.

Individual photography of South Carolina Voting System, the South Carolina State Election Commission

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Electonic voting machines

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Because of the complexity of election regulations and increased use of electronic voting machines owned by the county, many municipalities consider the transfer of some or all election responsibilities to be beneficial,” said Eric Budds, Municipal Association deputy executive director.

Because state law requires the municipality and county to agree on and adopt the terms of a transfer by ordinance, county election commissions can request the municipality to alter its election date to minimize the impact and cost of conducting municipal elections. Some counties have requested terms that require the municipality to pay for all or part of the cost of conducting the election, particularly if the election is not held in conjunction with a general election.

There is no “one size fits all” answer to whether transferring election responsibilities would benefit a specific municipality. Every municipality must carefully evaluate the costs, benefits and acceptability of such a transfer.
While municipal officials cannot be at the State House every day, they can stay on top of daily legislative activity through the Municipal Association’s legislative tracking system. Municipal officials can conduct detailed searches of state legislation and receive up-to-the-minute tracking of daily legislative activity at the State House.

The search feature is easy and accessible for inquiries ranging from a general overview of weekly activity to the specific language and history of a bill and its amendments. Access the tracking system through the Association’s website at www.masc.sc (keyword: tracking).

The tracking system follows all bills that directly and indirectly affect cities and towns. During the 2009-2010 session, the Association tracked more than 800 bills. The system sorts legislation by bill number, sponsor, tracking level (Priority, Work, Of Interest, Graveyard and Passed), subject, keyword, date introduced, and date action was taken by a subcommittee, committee or the full House or Senate.

In addition to bill tracking, the system has other features that help local officials gather information. The tracking system provides copies of fiscal impact statements, when available, for specific bills. The fiscal impact statements are important in helping legislators understand the financial impact of specific bills on cities and towns.

Officials can also send feedback on specific bills directly to the Municipal Association staff by clicking on the “comments” button on the individual bills. There is also an officials’ link to access contact information for all federal and state elected officials, including all state constitutional officers. Also, the link gives the user access to a General Assembly members’ birthday list and a district look-up if the user is unsure of his representative or senator.

While the General Assembly website (www.scstatehouse.gov) provides similar information about bill activity, the Association’s tracking system gives additional detail following legislation through the subcommittee and committee process with up-to-the-minute updates and explanations of committee action. The General Assembly website is accessible through the tracking system to search daily calendars and journals, state statutes and other states’ legislative activity.

“This tracking system has allowed our advocacy staff to keep our officials as ‘in the loop’ as possible on all daily activity throughout the week,” said Reba Campbell, deputy executive director. “We even hear frequently from other lobbyists, reporters, legislators and legislative staff who say they depend on our site for the most up-to-date information, especially on committee activity.”

For questions about using the tracking system or tracking a specific bill, contact Casey Fields (cfields@masc.sc) at 803.933.1256.
During the past year, there was a flurry of activity on the Association’s listserves discussing the impact two court rulings would have on existing and future planned development projects. *Sinkler v. County of Charleston*, 387 S. C. 67, 690 S.E.2d 777 (S. C. 2010) and *Mikell v. County of Charleston*, 386 S.C. 153, 687 S.E.2d 326 (S.C. 2010).

At the Municipal Attorney’s Association meeting in December, Curtis Coltrane, an attorney with Alford, Wilkins & Coltrane, P.C., presented a summary of these cases. Previously, Coltrane served as assistant town manager for community services for Hilton Head Island as well as master in equity for Beaufort County.

Well-versed in land use issues, Coltrane explained that the two cases do not severely restrict local governments’ use of innovative planning techniques to carry out the objectives of comprehensive plans. In the Sinkler case, the court “found that the change in the zoning classification from an agricultural classification to a Planned Development District classification violated the State Enabling Act,” said Coltrane.

“Specifically, the court said if you use the PD or any of the other seven techniques defined in state statute, you must follow the specific rules established by state law for that technique,” said Coltrane.

By selecting one of the seven defined techniques, Charleston County was required “to meet the statutes definition of a PD.” The definition requires housing of different types, densities, and mixed uses resulting in improved design, character and quality of mixed use developments. Because the planned development district approved by Charleston County did little but alter density, it did not meet the definition of a PD and was an improper application of the technique.

To avoid the restrictions placed by the defined rules for the enumerated techniques, municipal officials may create a local technique, with a name other than a term used in state law, and apply its use consistently with the local comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.

According to Coltrane, state law supports this position. Section 6-29-720(C) states that the zoning ordinance may use one of the seven enumerated techniques “…or any other zoning and planning techniques for implementation of the goals specified above” and “failure to specify a particular technique does not cause use of that technique to be viewed as beyond the power of the local government choosing to use it.”

The Mikell case is similar to Sinkler because it involves a rezoning from a rural agricultural use classification to a PD classification. However in Mikell, the court ruled that the approved PD plan for the property allowed a development density that was higher than the “highest allowed density” specified in the general language of the underlying agricultural district in the zoning ordinance.

The zoning ordinance stated that the “density may be increased to a ‘highest allowed density’ of one dwelling unit per five acres, if a request is processed through the planned development process ....” The state Supreme Court ruled that Charleston County’s legislative intent was unambiguous. “We find [the] County clearly intended to limit those tracts zoned AG-10 to a maximum density of one dwelling per 5 acres, and intended to preserve existing rural settlements and compatible low-density residential development.”

Coltrane concluded, “these rulings do not severely restrict local flexibility with regard to planned development. Planned development may continue to be carried out using the Planned Development District or the other enumerated techniques if applied in a manner that meets the definition in state statute. Additionally, local officials may use a locally developed planning technique as long as the development plan produced is consistent with the general language of the local comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance.”

For a copy of Coltrane’s presentation to the Municipal Attorneys Association, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: MAA), and click on the “past meetings” link.
With the passage of Act 388 in 2006, local governments lost the flexibility to manage their property tax rate. The General Assembly put in place a hard cap on millage rate increases. Any millage rate increase cannot exceed the prior year’s inflation rate plus the increase in the population. This was a significant change. Prior to Act 388, municipal councils had the ability to override the cap by a majority vote.

“Contrary to public perception, municipalities were good stewards of the public money while the override provision was in place,” said Miriam Hair, executive director of the Municipal Association. Comparing the Consumer Price Index to the municipal millage rate increases for the past 10 years, South Carolina cities and towns, on average, kept their millage rate increases to only one third of the inflation rate, or CPI.

Under Act 388, municipal councils must consider annually whether to increase the millage rate to the cap or lose the opportunity to capture the increase in subsequent years. Mark Williams, administrator for the City of Forest Acres, explained “If we know the city will need to make a large capital purchase for something like a garbage truck in the near future and the cost of the item is likely to rise, we would recommend the millage rate be increased to the cap every year prior to the purchase so the city will have the additional revenue to make debt service payments on the garbage truck when the time comes.” In reality, the “use it or lose it” component of the 2006 millage cap has resulted in an unintended consequence of fostering annual millage increases.

A major theme of the Associations’ legislative agenda this year is to provide flexibility to local governments to meet specific local needs. “One thing we heard frequently during last fall’s Regional Advocacy Meetings was a millage cap look back or ‘bank’ would allow local leaders the flexibility to raise millage only when it’s needed,” said Hair.

This year, the Association will ask state legislators to allow local governments the flexibility to raise millage rates in one year by the cumulative increase allowed by the millage cap, but not imposed, for up to the previous three years. This change would relieve the pressure to increase the millage to the annual cap, provide local flexibility and result in a cumulative millage increase no larger than is currently allowed under the annual cap.

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Looking back on millage caps

news briefs

- The Municipal Association board members selected Sam Bennett, city manager of North Augusta, to fill an unexpired seat on the Association’s board. Bennett takes the seat of Mac Burdette, retired town administrator of Mount Pleasant.

- Amanda Childers, clerk/treasurer for the Town of Harleyville, and Christine James, business license clerk for the City of North Augusta, recently achieved their masters in business licensing designation, offered by the SC Business Licensing Officials Association.

- At its Annual Meeting, members of the SC Municipal Attorneys Association elected their 2011 officers. President: Carey Ayer, town attorney, Batesburg-Leesville; Vice President: Chaplin Spencer, city attorney, Rock Hill; and Secretary/Treasurer: David Tedder, city attorney, Hardeeville.
Ware Shoals Town Clerk Heather Fields used to dread going into “The Dungeon,” a storage area in the town’s offices where boxes of documents were kept in dusty, indecipherable stacks. When staff needed to search for a certain document or information in the storage area, it sometimes took two hours to find.

Fields decided to organize the documents that had not been touched in some 30 years as part of her project for national certification as a Certified Municipal Clerk through the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute.

Municipal clerks are responsible for maintaining city records, and a growing number of them are utilizing technology to increase efficiency and provide more transparency to the public.

After Fields completed her project to update the town’s files, a similar research task by staff now takes about 10 minutes, she said.

Fields was able to transform the storage area from a “dungeon” into a user-friendly work environment by organizing, sorting data and removing documents that could be destroyed. She worked with the S.C. Department of Archives and History on the proper destruction of documents.

The town could not afford to purchase a large scanner and make all the files digital; however, it has made council meeting minutes and some financial statements electronic and hopes to continue to do so with other records, she said.

Although government agencies continue to use a mix of formats for recordkeeping — including paper, microfilm, digital and others — the move toward digital record systems is increasing steadily as a result of the efficiencies involved and public demand, said Bill Henry, electronic records consultant for SCDAH.

Recent laws such as the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act have placed electronic records and signatures on an equal footing with their paper counterparts, Henry said. This means that individual statutes requiring certain records to be in writing can be satisfied with electronic records, allowing government agencies to convert many of their paper-based systems to digital systems.

“We are finding that a number of archival records that we once transferred to the State Archives in paper form are now only generated in digital formats,” Henry said.

Folly Beach Clerk of Council Mary Cunningham took on a project similar to Ware Shoals’ in 2008. With the city’s purchase of two scanners, Cunningham has scanned in city council minutes, ordinances and resolutions. Other departments, including accounts payable and human resources, also have scanned in their own records.

The electronic record keeping has saved space and time, Cunningham said. There is very little storage in the city’s main building and removing reams of files has freed up space — one
CD holds as much information as a large filing cabinet with four drawers, she said. It’s also made it easier and quicker to respond to Freedom of Information Act requests, she said.

“There’s more transparency for residents,” Cunningham said.

The Town of Hilton Head Island also began scanning in its records a few years ago. Since its incorporation in 1983, the town had kept its council minutes in binders and on microfilm. Yet those minutes were never indexed and finding information in them was a time-consuming process, said Town Clerk Betsy Mosteller.

The town purchased a scanner, and Mosteller started scanning the minutes and agenda packets into an electronic records management system with optical character recognition capabilities. This allows research on specific topics to be done more quickly and efficiently. Work continues on the scanning project, with every department starting to scan in documents and 200 boxes of files in a storage area transferred into electronic documents, Mosteller said.

“Our ultimate goal is to set up the system so that the public has access and can do research from home,” she said.

Disaster recovery and business continuity are also main concerns for this coastal community. Once in electronic format, staff can easily make the records a part of the town’s disaster recovery plan.

SCDAH provides advice and assistance to state and local governments on electronic recordkeeping, mostly through reference to its website publications, Henry said. The agency also provides some assistance and advice with specific problems and issues, though budget cuts have limited its ability to do so, Henry said.

Municipalities are considered public bodies in South Carolina and are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Section 30-4-10. This Act requires, among other things, that the public receive advanced notice of all meetings of public bodies, have open access to meetings, and have the ability to review and copy public documents unless specifically exempted by state law.

Failure to fully understand and comply with FOIA can result in negative publicity, loss of public trust and potential prosecution. Some of the most misunderstood sections of the FOIA for municipalities include proper notice of meetings, conduct of executive sessions, requirements for release of public information, and disclosure of information for final applicants for public jobs.

**Public meetings**

For the purpose of FOIA, a public meeting is defined as convening a quorum of any public body where business is discussed or conducted, regardless of whether votes will be taken. In addition to council meetings, work sessions or other less formal meetings, regardless of the name used to describe the gathering, are public meetings subject to the FOIA. Additionally, committees/commissions appointed by a municipal council are public bodies subject to open meeting and notice requirements. Section 30-4-60.

Municipalities must provide public notice for all meetings. Section 30-4-20. Annually, municipalities must publish a public notice listing its regularly scheduled meeting dates, times and locations. A written public notice consists of, but need not be limited to, posting a copy of the notice at the municipal office of the public body holding the meeting, or, if no such office exists, at the building where the meeting is to be held. Section 30-40-80(d).

In addition, the municipality must provide notice of all rescheduled, special or called meetings. State law requires the municipality post the meeting notice a minimum of 24 hours before the meeting and to notify the press as well as anyone else requesting individual notice. Section 30-4-80. These requirements do not apply to emergency meetings.

**Executive session**

Minutes of all municipal meetings must be prepared and made available to the public. The only exception is the executive session portion of meetings which is exempted from the requirement to keep minutes. Section 30-4-90.

The FOIA recognizes the need for some sensitive information to remain confidential and exempt from disclosure. Section 30-4-70(a).

If a public body can go into a closed session, it first must vote, in public, on the question of going into executive session. If the vote is favorable, the presiding officer must announce the executive session’s purpose. Section 30-4-70(a)(6).

Council cannot take any action in executive session except to adjourn or return to public session. Section 30-4-70(b).

The release of information related to contractual, legal, and real estate negotiations may be withheld until the matter is resolved. At that time, the contract, legal papers or settlement become part of the public record.

Municipal councils may enter an executive or closed session to discuss matters exempted by state law. Section 30-4-70.

- the discussion of employment, appointment, compensation, promotion, demotion, discipline or release of an employee, or an appointment to a public body
- discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements, discussions of a proposed sale or purchase of property, receipt of legal advice, settlement of legal claims or discussions of the public agency’s position in adversary situations
Release of public information

Under FOIA any person request release of public information. Legal standing does not apply. As a general rule, public information should be promptly disclosed without a formal FOIA request. However, requiring a formal written request may be appropriate when sensitive information is involved.

All FOIA requests must be satisfied within 15 business days. If the research will take more time, a written response must be provided within the 15-day time limit stating why additional time is required and when the requested information will be provided.

Municipalities may charge actual costs related to the research, preparation and copying of the requested materials. Requests for materials exempted by the statute may be denied. Sensitive personal information may be redacted or removed from disclosure. Section 30-4-40.

Public job applicants

FOIA also requires all information gathered by a public body or agency as part of a search to fill a public job “relating to not fewer than the final three applicants under consideration for a position must be made available for public inspection and copying.” The South Carolina Supreme Court clarified this language when it ruled a public body is required to release information on “… the final pool consisting of not fewer than three applicants.” Section 30-4-40.

Complying with FOIA is required by state law. Knowing the requirements of the law, properly applying these requirements, and promptly responding to requests for public information should be the objective of all municipalities.

For more information on complying with FOIA requirements, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: FOIA). This search will provide access to valuable resource materials including The Public Official’s Guide to Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.

1. Going into executive session without giving a specific reason
2. Charging more than the actual cost for documents requested under FOIA
3. Not taking the time – either through attending training or reading the The Public Official’s Guide to Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act – to understand FOIA.
4. Straying from the specified topic in executive session
5. Thinking committee meetings are different from full meetings under FOIA.

Submitted by Bill Rogers, executive director, S.C. Press Association
Local governments need policies, a technology plan and a consistent implementation strategy for record keeping, especially with changing technology.

Many municipalities are working in hybrid record-keeping environments, with a mixture of paper and electronic records. Some lack the resources to keep up with rapidly changing technology. Instead of concentrating on the type of media or equipment, local governments need to focus on sound record management principles, according to a University of South Carolina information science specialist.

It is important for local government officials to be educated on proper record management practices, said Dr. Jennifer Marshall, assistant professor in the School of Library and Information Science at USC. They need to understand what functions they need to document and what information they need to record and maintain, she said.

When it comes to archival data, “the media you choose is, to some extent, not as important as the policies you have in place,” Marshall said.

Bill Henry, electronic records consultant for the South Carolina Department of Archives and History echoed Marshall’s advice. According to Henry, municipalities must adhere to the same retention schedules regardless of whether the records are stored on paper or electronically. “You need to make sure whatever method is chosen, the records are accessible for whatever time period is required.”

Issues of the physical stability of the media chosen for storage and the stability of the data recorded on those media are less problematic than the issues associated with the technological stability of those media (i.e., whether the hardware and software necessary to read the data stored on the media will be available to access data in the long term).

Because of issues of technological obsolescence, keeping electronic records available in the long-term entails having policies and procedures in place to migrate the data periodically from one technology to another in order to ensure that it remains accessible. The National Archives and Records Administration provides guidelines on media that can
In April, the South Carolina Municipal Insurance Trust will debut its Fire Department Model Policies, Procedures and Best Safety Practices Manual to its members.

The model policies and procedures manual addresses a number of administrative, fire apparatus, fire scene, safety, and technical rescue operation issues and tasks. The manual covers topics ranging from building or area evacuation to professional standards response to electrical incidents.

“It’s for the safety of our firefighters,” explained Phil Cromer, the Municipal Association’s risk and safety services manager. “During our minimum guidelines assessments, we found that many members did not have policies in place or, if they had them, they were very out-dated. The manual is designed to be helpful to both paid and volunteer departments regardless of size.”

SCMIT contracted with the Legal and Liability Risk Management Institute, a division of the Public Agency Training Council, to develop the manual. PATC ensured the suggested policies and procedures were consistent with federal and state laws and met best legal and technical rescue operations. SCMIT also created a fire service advisory committee to provide input and review the manual.

In addition to the manual, SCMIT members will receive on-going technical assistance and policy alerts as court or legislative decisions affect the fire department critical task policies.

SCMIT also offers a law enforcement model policy manual. The manual provides similar model policies and procedures for law enforcement agencies.

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The South Carolina Municipal Insurance Trust is a cooperative local government program providing “self-funded” workers’ compensation protection for municipal employees. For more information, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: SCMIT).
“Doughnut holes” are tasty to eat, but for many city and town officials in South Carolina they are no treat. To the contrary, they are one of the biggest obstacles to successful land use planning, government efficiency and economic growth that cities and towns face.

These “doughnut holes,” also known as enclaves, are parcels of unincorporated property that are completely surrounded by property located within a municipality. On a map, the enclave looks similar to a doughnut hole.

Because local governments are operating with limited resources, they must maximize those resources with the most efficient use of government services. Giving municipalities more flexibility to annex property that is completely surrounded by a city or town would do just that. Enclave annexation is one of the top four legislative priorities on the 2011-2012 Municipal Association legislative agenda.

Outdated annexation laws that prevent orderly and cost-effective growth patterns lead to enclaves. Cities that are able to grow their boundaries find it easier to attract a higher quality workforce and more industry and business. Updated annexation laws can make it easier for cities to attract economic development by demonstrating realistic evidence of local population numbers and growth patterns.

“Today, more than ever, it is especially important that cities in South Carolina have the tools they need to be successful and to carry out their residents’ visions for the future,” said Reba Campbell, Municipal Association deputy executive director. “When cities are economically successful, the state, in turn, also is successful.”

South Carolina has some of the most difficult annexation laws in the country. Under the state’s laws, there are only three ways for property owners to bring contiguous property into a city:

• An individual can petition for annexation if he owns 100 percent of the property to be annexed.

• 75 percent of landowners in an area who own at least 75 percent of the assessed value can petition the city council to annex;

• 25 percent of the electors in a designated area can petition for council to hold a special election. If council approves the request, 50 percent plus one of the electors living in the designated area must approve the annexation vote.

The City of Rock Hill is one of the many cities and towns that has doughnut holes scattered throughout the city. According to the city map, 26 percent of the unincorporated enclaves are parcels of land under 10 acres, and 29 percent are parcels of land under 25 acres. These parcels, as small as they are, create problems for city officials in consistent and efficient service delivery and public safety efforts.

“In Rock Hill, we have major road corridors where one side of the street is in the city and the other side is in
the county,” explained Gerry Schapiro, deputy city manager of Rock Hill. “This results in confusion for both our service providers, such as public safety, as well as the property owner. In addition, Rock Hill may have zoning or development standards, such as the use of signs, that differ from the county. The doughnut hole issue not only affects city service delivery, but creates public relation concerns with residents and businesses.”

According to the city map in Aiken, 79 percent of unincorporated enclaves are less than 25 acres and 73 percent are less than 10 acres. Aiken City Manager Richard Pearce is all too familiar with the problems enclaves create.

“As South Carolina cities such as ours begin to resemble a slice of Swiss cheese, it becomes more difficult for us to ascertain which houses are in our city and which are in the unincorporated area,” Pearce said. “We see this occurring constantly with our public safety, garbage collection, recycling and yard trash removal services.”

“We have water, sewer, storm drainage and public safety infrastructure already in place in these enclave areas. As our staff drives by these homes or vacant lots that are in a hole, we aren’t able to serve them,” he said. “By changing the law, we could have a unified Aiken, with all our residents all under one set of rules and regulations. More importantly we could provide our city’s services in a much more cost effective way.”

“Not only do doughnut holes create problems for the majority of our municipalities, but they are also increasingly becoming problems for counties too,” said Ed Schafer, legislative counsel for the Municipal Association.

In Richland County, there are places where all but one or two homes on a street are inside the City of Columbia. The county has to send a garbage truck and a recycling truck to those few houses in the enclave, while the city serves the rest of the neighborhood. Even though Columbia police cars might patrol the street, Richland County Sheriff’s deputies must respond when there’s an emergency in these enclaves.

“That’s wasteful and confusing,” concluded Schafer. “It simply makes more sense – practically and economically – for one government to serve all residents on that street.”
Representative Chandra Dillard

The General Assembly has 170 members from all different parts of the state, backgrounds, professions and personal beliefs. Of those 170 members of the current legislature, 29 members are former municipal officials. Eight of those 29 members are former mayors. Uptown is featuring these legislators with former municipal experience to give their perspective on local government from the State House view.

Representative Chandra Dillard is beginning her second term as a House member representing Greenville County, and the House Democratic Caucus recently elected her to the position of deputy leader.

Representative Dillard is a former City of Greenville councilmember and served on the Municipal Association’s board of directors from 2006-08. A graduate of Winthrop University, she received her master’s degree in public administration from Walden University. Dillard is serving on the Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs committee and the Invitations and Memorial Resolutions committee.

How has your experience as a local elected official helped you as a state representative?

My experience as a local elected official has been invaluable in my role as a state legislator. I understand how decisions made on a state level can impact local government both positively and negatively, which gives me the ability to make decisions and look at issues from multiple positions. The relationships I’ve gained through the years in local government have followed me to the State House and have allowed me to have credibility and information that a first-time elected official would not have.

What is your advice to current local elected officials?

Build a relationship with your state legislator(s). Keep your legislator(s) updated (when we’re in and out of session) about what’s going on in your city and how state decisions may impact local service delivery for our constituents. And don’t hesitate to ask your legislator to help bring state resources (i.e. technical assistance, information, relationship building) to bear on local issues when applicable.

What are you most looking forward to in your continued role as a state representative?

I continue to look forward to representing the views and opinions of the voters in District 23 and South Carolina with whom I share similar values. I also look forward to tackling the tough issues in this legislative session in a manner that is positive, proactive and solution-oriented.
Each month, municipal officials have the opportunity to recognize national observances that will help them share the value of cities and towns with the community. Through each suggested national observance, municipal leaders can localize the observance and form partnerships with the local business community, the media, local non-profit organizations and policy makers.

Earth Day/Keep America Beautiful Month - Many organizations in your community plan events surrounding Earth Day on April 22 and Keep America Beautiful Month. These events include planting trees and picking up trash. Partner with those organizations or start your own event. Use this opportunity to promote environmentally friendly businesses, beautiful landscapes or nature conservancies in your municipality. Highlight “green” building and other efforts. For more information on Earth Day, visit www.earthday.org. For more information on Keep America Beautiful Month, visit www.kab.org.

National Volunteer Week – Volunteers are an essential part of the success of all cities and towns. Use the week of April 10-16 to recognize those residents who make a difference by volunteering their time to a local organization such as a food bank or Boys and Girls Club or by volunteering at city hall. Make sure they know you appreciate them, and let the local media know who is making a difference in your community. For more information, visit www.pointsoflight.org or www.handsonnetwork.org.

National Animal Cruelty Prevention Month - Partner with your local animal shelter to raise awareness of animal cruelty. Invite residents to bring their pets to your local park or dedicate a dog park. For resources and more information, visit www.aspca.org.

Let the Municipal Association know if you participate in a Hometown Happening. Contact Casey Fields at 803.933.1256 or cfields@masc.sc.
MARCH
16-18 Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute: Session I. Newberry Firehouse Conference Center. Topics include election administration, human resource management and municipal finance fundamentals.


23 Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association Spring Assembly. SC Hospital Association, Columbia. Topics include redistricting, acceptable archival media, GASB 54 reporting and election commission training requirements.


SC Association of Stormwater Managers 1st Quarterly Meeting. Columbia Conference Center. Topics include SMS 4 general permit expectations, monitoring and sampling requirements, and industrial stormwater compliance update.


APRIL
1 Managers’ Spring Forum. SC Hospital Association, Columbia.


14 Main Street South Carolina Business Retention and Recruitment Training. Open to Main Street SC members and nonmembers. Municipal Association’s office, Columbia.

15 Municipal Court Administration Association Spring Meeting. Columbia Conference Center.

For more information about these and other Municipal Association training, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: training).