

# UPTOWN

## MASC Annual Meeting

### “Safeguarding South Carolina’s Quality of Life”

If you Google the word “safeguarding” on the Internet, you get nearly 34 million articles. There are articles on everything from safeguarding children to safeguarding wireless networks. You can read about safeguarding livestock, health, economy, adults, community — the topics are endless.

With so much in our lives needing safeguarding, MASC will turn your attention to “Safeguarding South Carolina’s Quality of Life” during the 66th Annual Meeting. By attending this year’s conference, you will be exposed to a wealth of information that will guide you and your city or town in your efforts to safeguard the quality of life South Carolina residents enjoy.

During the Annual Meeting, topics for breakout sessions will range from

protecting your community against legal action in a session called “How Can I Sue Thee? Let Me Count the Ways” to a session titled “Communicating in a Crisis.” Other sessions will focus on safeguarding your police department, developing disaster response plans and coping with change in small towns.

Don’t miss the Delegate’s Luncheon featuring a stirring presentation from David Chadwick, who is well-known for his inspirational presentations throughout the Southeast. His message, “Principle-Centered Leadership,” recalls his days of playing for University of North Carolina Coach Dean Smith and the lessons learned from this coaching legend. Hear about the power of encouragement, sacrificing for the public good and statesmanship versus politics. Not

only will you enjoy a delicious lunch with your peers, but you will also leave with an uplifting message that will guide you to better lead your community.

An essential part of protecting quality of life in South Carolina is exercising our right to vote and electing the best candidates into governmental offices. A special session during the Annual Meeting will provide guidance in this area. MASC will invite all candidates for upcoming statewide elections and give them the opportunity to address you, the leaders of South Carolina’s cities and towns. This will be a great opportunity to hear from the candidates and get a better understanding of their goals for our state.

**ANNUAL MEETING continued on page 2**

## Tech demos are back by popular demand

City officials attending MASC’s Annual Meeting in July will have the chance to participate in some hands-on demonstrations of new technology. Back by popular demand this year, these technology demonstrations will allow local government leaders the chance to ask questions and learn about the latest technology from representatives of VC3, MASC’s technology partner.

Demonstrations will be presented in two mobile vans — CISCO Network On Wheels (NOW) and Microsoft Across America — Thursday, July 27, through Saturday, July 29.

**TECH DEMOS continued on page 2**

May 2006

## Inside This Issue

The Accreditation in Business Licensing designation adds credibility

**page 3**

Professionals restricted from councils and commissions

**page 4**

Required planning and zoning training brings members together

**page 5**

## Annual Meeting continued from cover

There are many more sessions planned that will offer critical information necessary for safeguarding South Carolina's quality of life. Start preparing

for this exciting opportunity to learn, network and relax in Hilton Head Island.

The meeting will be held July 27 through July 30 at the Marriott Beach and Golf Resort in Hilton Head Island.

Registration information will be mailed May 11. MASC will post information for hotel arrangements on its Web site at [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc) after noon on May 11.

## Tech demos continued from cover

At last year's Annual Meeting, Steve Willis, city administrator for Lancaster, first learned about the benefits of Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) through a 15-minute technology demonstration in the CISCO NOW Van. He expects Lancaster to have a VOIP phone system up and running this summer.

With nearly the same cost of the current system, the VOIP system will give the city an improved telephone system and enhanced data transmission among the six city buildings, said Willis.

"I think, in the long run, it's really going to be a good thing for the city," he said.

Other cities' officials will have a chance to look at a VOIP system similar to the one being implemented in Lancaster, said Sandy Reeser, president of VC3. Current telephone systems will eventually be phased out and replaced by VOIP, Reeser said.

"If you're looking at a telephone system in general, you're looking for something that will give you seven to 10 useful years," Reeser added. "All the major suppliers say that the new generation of phones is going to be VOIP."

VOIP allows callers to make calls across a data network like the Internet. Because it's digital, VOIP may offer features and services that you can't get with a traditional analog phone, according to the Federal Communications Commission. And Reeser said most VOIP systems cost about the same as or less than telephone systems.



Visit the CISCO NOW Van during MASC's Annual Meeting, where several technology demonstrations will be held.

Along with the VOIP demonstrations, the CISCO NOW Van will also offer presentations about security agents, including firewalls and Virtual Private Networks (VPNs). Firewalls are systems that prevent unauthorized access to a private network. VPNs are systems that use the Internet for transporting data, but utilize security mechanisms to ensure only authorized users can access the network.

Part of the security presentation will also focus on new behavior-based security technology, Reeser said. This technology can identify online threats, such as worms or viruses, by their actions rather than looking for a specific pattern in the virus.

In the Microsoft Across America Van, visitors can catch a sneak peek at the new Windows Vista system, which is scheduled for release next year. The new Vista operating system for PCs will eventually replace Windows XP, said Dan Watson, account manager for VC3.

The Microsoft van will also offer demonstrations on the Microsoft SharePoint system. SharePoint allows organizations to more effectively collaborate by offering a central location through which they can share documents and information, Watson said.

The latest mobile devices, such as the Treo 700w, will also be on display. These devices let users take the office with them, allowing them to access mail and calendars, while also serving as a phone, Watson said.

The technology demonstrations offer something for both large and small cities, Reeser said. They provide a glimpse of industry trends for local government officials.

"The demonstrations will offer insight on how technology can help cities move forward to help constituents," Reeser added.

# The Accreditation in Business Licensing designation adds credibility

With each spring comes flowers and rain — and a fresh chance for business licensing professionals to earn their Accreditation in Business Licensing (ABL) designation.

The ABL and Master's in Business Licensing (MBL) designations demonstrate an expertise in the field for those administering and enforcing local business and professional license taxes.

Officials seeking the designation make a three-year commitment to the program. They must complete a training institute offered by the Municipal Association each spring, follow the ABL Code of Ethics and pass an exam. This year, the spring session will be held May 2 at the Embassy Suites in Columbia, and the exam will be given June 14 at the MASC offices in Columbia.

Each year, participants complete four hours of training on general licensing subjects, and two hours on problem areas such as alcoholic beverages, bail bondsmen or fireworks.

The exam is based on sessions offered by the Institute and information in the *Business Licensing Handbook*, available through MASC.

Business licensing professionals can take away a wealth of knowledge from the training sessions and handbook and apply it to everyday work, said Benny Genwright, code enforcement director for the City of Dillon and board member for the Business Licensing Officials Association (BLOA).

"It's very important," he said. "I hope every business licensing official is able to obtain that designation." Genwright has held his ABL since 2001 and his MBL since 2003.

The training gives you a more rounded view of licensing in general, said Rusty Lameo, code enforcement officer for the Town of Kiawah Island and

## Year one

- Overview of municipal and county government
- The business licensing official: Duties and responsibilities and state authorization
- Administration: Office procedures, applications and forms, and computer technology
- Problem areas

## Year two

- Business licensing procedures: "Doing business," classifications, rates/fees and gross income
- Freedom of Information Act
- Personal development: Communication skills
- Problem areas

## Year three

- Enforcement: Income verification, field inspections, assessments, audits, civil suits, warrants, penalties, revocation of license, payment under protest and tort claims
- "Swap Shop:" Open discussion with questions and answers
- Personal development: Telephone/listening skills, effective written communications and time management
- Problem areas

BLOA board member. It also offers helpful advice on specific issues that come up on a daily basis, such as dealing with contractors and subcontractors, he added. Lameo also received his ABL in 2001 and his MBL in 2003.

When a business licensing employee earns the designation, it helps bring awareness of the field to councilmembers and other officials, Lameo said.

"It's important to make them realize how important business licensing is," he added. "It's a huge source of revenue."

Earning the designation also demonstrates increased professionalism, said Lex Kirkland, business license/risk management administrator for the City of Aiken and BLOA board member. He earned his ABL last June and his MBL in October.

"It gives you some credibility as an expert in your field," he said.

Laurie Lane knows this firsthand. Lane, revenue technician/administrative assistant for the City of Hartsville and BLOA board member, said her colleagues approach her with all their business licensing questions.

"I'm pretty much the business licensing guru," said Lane, who earned her ABL last June and is working toward her MBL.

Lameo said the training serves as a great tool for officials, and he recommends all municipalities send their business licensing staff.

"The whole concept of accreditation is extremely important," he said. "We're hoping it makes people look more professional."

Those who want to further their professional development can work toward the Master's in Business Licensing. Officials must first earn the ABL, and then attain 50 experience points within seven years immediately preceding their application for the MBL designation. Eligible points include work experience and participation in training sessions.

*For more information about business licensing training, contact Melanie Dozier at 803.933.1238 or [mdozier@masc.sc](mailto:mdozier@masc.sc), or visit [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc).*

# Professionals restricted from councils and commissions



## Classifieds

A recent ruling by the state Ethics Commission could have a wide-reaching impact on firms that do business with cities.

In January, the commission issued an opinion stating that a city councilmember's firm may not appear before various city approval and permitting boards. The opinion effectively limits many professionals from serving on city council and commissions, said MASC Executive Director Howard Duvall.

"Anybody who has a firm that has any business with a municipality will not be able to serve on city council or boards," Duvall added.

Duvall said he thinks the opinion is too restrictive. "We have a difficult time convincing people to run for municipal elections as it is," he added.

One city councilmember in Columbia has already resigned his seat because of the Ethics Commission's opinion. Hamilton Osborne, an attorney, resigned following the release of the ruling because his law firm does business with the city.

The opinion amended a 1998 decision that had completely flipped state law, said Cathy Hazelwood, assistant director and general counsel for the Ethics Commission.

The law states a public official may not knowingly represent a person before any agency for which the public official has official responsibility "except as required by law." This had been interpreted too broadly, Hazelwood added.

The opinion says the prohibitions of the law apply unless a statute specifically

calls for a city councilmember to have certain business or professional experience.

"Clearly, an elected official does not serve pursuant to a statute specifically providing for a councilmember to be an engineer or a lawyer," the ruling states. "A councilmember serves because he has been elected to serve, not because his position on council is required by law to be filled by an engineer."

Duvall said he is concerned the opinion does not follow the intent of the law. He said he doesn't think the Legislature intended to restrict professional people from serving on boards.

The Ethics Commission added a grace period until March 2007 before the opinion takes effect. The grace period allows attorneys and others affected by the change to wrap up existing cases, but they can't begin any new cases, Hazelwood said.

Hazelwood added she has already heard from a number of people concerned about the opinion. Some people, she said, "have no clue that there's even a section of law discussing who can and can't represent clients before council."

*Individuals who have questions or find themselves in a situation in which there could be a conflict are encouraged to call the Ethics Commission at 803.253.4192.*

■ The City of Hartsville is accepting applications for the position of planning director. Send resumé to HR Director, City of Hartsville, PO Drawer 2497, Hartsville, SC 29551.

■ The City of Columbia is accepting applications for the positions of assistant superintendent of traffic engineering and forestry and beautification superintendent. For more information or to apply, visit [www.columbiasc.net](http://www.columbiasc.net) and click on "City Jobs."

■ The City of Greenwood is accepting applications for the position of accountant. Submit resumé to Personnel, PO Box 40, Greenwood, SC 29648, or apply in person at Room 230 of the Municipal Building, 520 Monument Street in Greenwood. Applications are also available at [www.cityofgreenwoodsc.com](http://www.cityofgreenwoodsc.com).

■ Main Street Laurens, a downtown revitalization and economic development organization, is accepting applications for the position of executive director. Send cover letter, resumé, two references and three letters of recommendation to Main Street Laurens, Attention: Executive Director Search, PO Box 1736, Laurens, SC 29360. For more information, visit [www.mainstreetlaurens.org](http://www.mainstreetlaurens.org).

■ The City of Beaufort is accepting applications for the position of finance director. Submit cover letter, application, resumé and references to Human Resources Manager, City of Beaufort, PO Box 1167, Beaufort, SC 29901. For more information, call 843.525.6016, e-mail [employment@cityofbeaufort.org](mailto:employment@cityofbeaufort.org) or visit [www.cityofbeaufort.org](http://www.cityofbeaufort.org).

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

# Required planning and zoning training brings members together

The Town of Lexington, in conjunction with the Central Midlands Council of Governments, is sponsoring a series of orientation training seminars to allow local government planning and zoning officials and staff to receive the required training to fulfill the state-mandated educational requirements. In March, more than 80 officials from 10 different government entities attended the first session, including those from Batesburg-Leesville, Blythewood, Cayce, Irmo, Lexington, Pelion, Pine Ridge, Richland County, Springdale and West Columbia. Other sessions are scheduled for May 17 and July 19 at Lexington's Town Hall.

The Town of Lexington is hosting the seminars as part of a "Building Partnerships" theme backed by Mayor Randy Halfacre and the Lexington Town Council.

"In Lexington, we are working toward progress by building partnerships with our neighboring government entities as well as the private sector," Mayor Halfacre said. "We are pleased to host these seminars as a gesture of good will toward our neighboring municipalities. We knew we had to get our own people trained, so we said, 'Why not invite everyone else?'"

Instructors for the seminar series are Wayne Shuler, regional planner for the Central Midlands Council of Governments, and Brad Cunningham, municipal attorney for the Town of Lexington. Both were certified by MASC to conduct the seminars after completing training in 2005.

The collaboration between the Town and Central Midlands was a key component in the success of the seminar, but the effort would not have

Title 6, Chapter 29, SC Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, Article 9 requires training for local government planning commissions, boards of zoning appeals and architectural review, in addition to staff who directly or indirectly work with planning officials in municipalities and counties.

- Local governments with a population above 35,000 must receive the training by January 1, 2006.
- Local governments with a population below 35,000 must receive the training by January 1, 2007.
- Annually, after the first year of service or employment, but no later than 365 days after each anniversary of the initial date of appointment or employment, each zoning official noted above must attend no fewer than three hours of continuing education.

been possible without the help of MASC, according to Shuler. "The fact that MASC materials are presented on DVD facilitates getting the information to as many people as possible," he said. "It certainly made things much easier for us." MASC, in conjunction with the SC Association of Regional Councils and the SC Chapter of the American Planning Association, created the orientation training program in 2005.

For those not able to attend the first session, discussions are underway regarding the scheduling of additional seminars and makeup dates.

"We have several options, including hosting makeup dates at Central Midlands," Shuler said.

Getting everyone compliant will not be easy, according to Cunningham. "We are hoping we can assist our fellow towns and cities in complying with the new law," he said, "but getting everyone in compliance will probably require other groups to host similar functions. We tried to schedule our seminars to accommodate as many people as possible, but there is no way to get everyone to attend the first time."

Those unable to attend the first session in March may still attend the May 17 and July 19 sessions.

MASC is developing curriculum to satisfy the three hours of continuing education requirements. The format will be similar to the orientation training on DVD and will also be facilitated by an approved trainer. MASC will have three hours of training available on DVD in October 2006 and will have an additional three hours available in November 2006. MASC plans to build a video library on planning and zoning-related topics so each municipality may choose a training video that fits the needs of its zoning and planning officials.

*For additional information about this training, contact Natalie Viers, MASC staff associate for Affiliate Services, at 803.933.1254 or [nviers@masc.sc](mailto:nviers@masc.sc), or visit [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc).*

## Five graduate from Clerks and Treasurers Institute

In March, five graduates of the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute (MCTI), a three-year program designed to provide municipal clerks and treasurers with the skills critical to their profession, received their certification. The spring 2006 graduates are Shirley Belton, administrative coordinator for the SC Department of Revenue; Tammy Duncan, clerk for the City of Greer; Kelly Lovette, clerk for the City of Goose Creek; Andrea McDonald, deputy clerk for the City of Hartsville; and Cynthia Miller, administrative coordinator for the SC Department of Revenue.

To receive their certificates, the graduates attended more than 100 class hours on such topics as financial management, overview of government, public administration, conducting meetings and the role of the municipal clerk.

Completion of MCTI satisfies the education requirements for certification from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) and the Association of Public Treasurers.

During the Institute, Sophia James, clerk/treasurer for the Town of Ridgeville, received a three-year scholarship to attend MCTI. The scholarship is sponsored by the Municipal Finance



Five graduated from MCTI in March (in alphabetical order): Shirley Belton, administrative coordinator for the SC Department of Revenue; Tammy Duncan, clerk for the City of Greer; Kelly Lovette, clerk for the City of Goose Creek; Andrea McDonald, deputy clerk for the City of Hartsville; and Cynthia Miller, administrative coordinator for the SC Department of Revenue.

Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association (MFOCTA) and is underwritten by SCANA Corporation.

MCTI is sponsored by MASC, MFOCTA and the Center for Governmental Services at the University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research.



Sophia James, clerk/treasurer for the Town of Ridgeville, accepts a three-year scholarship to attend the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute. The scholarship was presented by Anna Berger, senior public associate for the Institute for Public Service and Policy Research at the University of South Carolina.

### News Briefs



■ The Aiken Department of Public Safety has been named a flagship agency by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies Inc. Aiken is one of only 12 other agencies in the country with this designation. The department has been accredited since 1998. A department is not

eligible for this designation until it has been reaccredited three times; reaccreditation occurs every three years.

■ In March, South Carolina Utility Billing Association members elected their 2006-2007 board: President — Jimmy Harrison of Greenville Water System, Vice President — Eric Boykin of Hartsville, Secretary/Treasurer — Darwin Reed of North Myrtle Beach, Members-at-Large — Fredia Snow of Greer CPW, Harriet McDaniel of Charleston CPW and Lynwood Givens of Florence.

■ MASC is hosting a meeting for law enforcement and public safety communications professionals, municipal public information officers and other municipal staff with communications responsibilities to exchange ideas and share best practices on Tuesday, May 16, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the MASC offices in Columbia. For more information, contact Reba Campbell, MASC communications director, at 803.933.1245 or rcampbell@masc.sc.

## Let's talk money

While most South Carolinians believe municipal governments do a good job, those citizens who believe otherwise often contend cities “spend too much.” How can we better communicate the extraordinary value residents and nonresidents receive from the state’s municipalities? For starters, the annual budget provides an excellent opportunity to tell our story.

Every year, municipalities engage in a long budget process. Informing and involving residents in this activity helps them understand and appreciate how their tax dollars are being spent. At a bigger-picture level, budget time is also a great opportunity for city leaders to articulate their vision and illustrate exactly how their goals for the city tie into spending.

In many cases, the budget process can become just an annual ritual. While in the midst of number-crunching and negotiating, it’s easy for any public communication — whether it’s with a citizen or the news media — to turn into an act of defending spending, rather than a proactive approach of showing the value taxpayers receive based on the priorities set by city leadership.

By looking at the budgeting process as an opportunity to communicate vision and value, rather than just line items of spending, budget time can turn into a positive communications opportunity. Municipalities already post notices concerning their budgets and related hearings. Many make budget documents easily available at city hall and on their Web site. Several South Carolina municipalities produce an annual report or special budget document to explain town revenues and expenditures.

These basic budget communication documents can also be used to spell out city leaders’ vision beyond just reporting how dollars are spent. Consider the following tips when crafting your budget communication documents:

- Explain how the budget furthers city leaders’ vision for the future. Does your council have a well-articulated mission and vision statement? Are you working from a strategic plan? Make the connection between what you say you’re going to do long-term and how your budget supports these goals.
- Spell out and give examples of how the budget will improve the quality of life for your citizens. Reporters will often focus on spending increases as a way to illustrate their perception of “wasteful government spending.” By articulating upfront how budget items are tied to long-range vision, you can pro-actively state your case before the reporter starts asking questions.
- Use language and format that will be easy for a reporter or citizen to understand. Keep in mind that while we understand how the value of a mill relates to the budget, the average citizen won’t necessarily have this depth of knowledge. A simple FAQ can explain jargon and budget terms in layman’s terms and make your case stronger.

The Town of Saluda writes articles for the local newspaper if the council increases fees or taxes, needs to promote a special project or makes a significant change in revenues or expenditures. Town leadership takes the time to meet one on one with major businesses and key stakeholders throughout the year to keep them informed about municipal goals.

The City of Goose Creek produces an annual report for the public. The *2005 Report to the People* is a 29-page booklet that includes a message from the mayor, vision and mission statements, special project information, an activity summary for all municipal departments and a financial statement.

In addition to its annual report, the City of Goose Creek buys space in its local newspaper four times a year to publish an op-ed piece on important municipal topics, including the annual budget.

The Town of Hilton Head Island publishes a quarterly newsletter for its approximately 18,000 residents. Its fall 2005 *Our Town* newsletter, printed in full color in a traditional newspaper format, includes messages from the mayor and manager and fiscal year 2005-2006 budget information, and highlights four municipal projects.

“Residents have conveyed to us that our quarterly newsletter provides them a good, brief summary of the town’s accomplishments, projects and financial position,” said Greg DeLoach, assistant manager for the Town of Hilton Head Island. “The pro-active newsletter acts as a quarterly report card and allows our residents to judge what we have been doing and where we are going.”

The newsletter’s budget section uses colorful pie charts explaining where the money comes from and how it is spent by fund and type of expenditure. The publication also points out how much of a home owner’s property taxes goes to the municipality versus the county, public schools and public service district.

As South Carolina’s municipal community strives to create positive perceptions of the value of cities and towns, communicating to residents about the annual budget becomes essential. Publicly digestible reports, newsletters and presentations can help citizens understand how technically complex budget documents relate to city leaders’ vision. A municipal budget provides an excellent opportunity to brief opinion leaders and the media about effective and valuable municipal services.

*Next month, look for Part 2 of this article.*



## Educational Opportunities

### SC Community Development Association

■ **May 21-23**, will hold its Annual Meeting at the Embassy Suites at Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach. Topics include “Revitalizing Hometowns: How to Fund, Develop and Implement a Master Plan,” “Dollars and Sense: Maintaining a Strong Community Reinvestment Act” and “Statehouse Update: Legislation Affecting Community Development.”

### Hometown Connection

■ **May 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 at 1411 Gervais Street in Columbia at 10:30 a.m.

### SC Association of Stormwater Managers

■ **June 9**, will hold its second quarter meeting at the SC Hospital Association in Columbia.

### SC Association of Municipal Power Systems

■ **June 27-30**, will hold its Annual Meeting at the Marriott at the Grande Dunes in Myrtle Beach.

### SC Association of Stormwater Managers

■ **September 8**, will hold its third quarter meeting at the SC Hospital Association in Columbia.

### Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

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

For more information about these meetings or other MASC meetings not listed, please call 803.799.9574, or visit our Web site at [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc).



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