

UPTOWN

Annual Meeting to bridge cities' successes with the state's competitiveness

The 2007 Annual Meeting will be headlined by a high-energy opening general session highlighting the first year of *Hometown, SC* and making further connections to the important roles strong cities and towns play in the state's competitiveness.

"Last July at Hilton Head Island, we launched the *Hometown, SC* initiative with the long-term goal of increasing the influence of cities and towns with our state's business leaders, key influencers and policy makers," said Doug Echols, mayor of Rock Hill and MASC president.

"In the past year, we have started a new dialogue with business organizations such as the state Chamber of Commerce and New Carolina — SC's Council on Competitiveness," Echols said. "Plus we have focused our legislative

efforts to align with the state's overall economic development priorities. This opening general session will celebrate our successes this year and also give us insight into the bigger picture efforts going on in the state to raise our competitiveness."

The keynote speaker at the opening general session will be M. Edward Sellers, chairman of SC's Council on Competitiveness and chairman and CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina. The Competitiveness Council and its partners are driving the movement toward a "New Carolina" — a South Carolina with a brighter future and a competitive, winning economy.

The focus is on a strategy to play to the strengths of the state's core industries, emphasize education, and build an

environment that fosters innovation. The road map was developed by Harvard Professor Michael Porter and outlines recommendations for the state to increase its ability to compete regionally, nationally and internationally as the world economy moves away from industrial toward knowledge-based jobs.

"Competition is accelerating around the world," Sellers said. "The contest for

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M. Edward Sellers

Innovista . . . Columbia's answer to succeeding in the new economy

In the years to come, downtown Columbia will be transformed. Workers will be able to walk from their homes to their jobs at research labs or high-tech companies. They will be steps away from dining and entertainment. They can spend their down time at a waterfront park on the Congaree River.

It's all part of the development project known as Innovista... Columbia's answer to the emerging new economy.

Innovista is the product of a creative partnership between the City of Columbia and the University of South Carolina. The research district will be home to university research labs and private companies. It will stretch from USC's central campus to the downtown Vista entertainment area. Officials expect it to attract the best and the brightest as part of the state's move toward a knowledge-based economy.

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Public gardens bring beauty and value to South Carolina cities

By Amy Geier Edgar

As temperatures begin to thaw and colors burst in gardens and treetops, families will shed their winter layers and venture out to enjoy nature. Spring is the perfect time for South Carolinians to experience all the beauty and wonder of their state's parks.

In most cities, you need go no further than your own backdoor. City parks offer beautiful gardens, wildlife and recreation – many in the heart of downtown.

Falls Park in Greenville is a 32-acre public garden located on the City's West End.

The park has numerous public gardens on both sides of the Reedy River, connected by a curved pedestrian suspension bridge. Designed by Washington, D.C.-based landscape architect Andrea Mains, Falls Park features a collection of "garden rooms" with both ornamental and native plants.

"The quality of the gardens, the bridge, the falls – it all makes residents even more proud of the downtown," said Director of Parks and Recreation Paul Ellis. "When visitors come to Greenville, that's what you take them to see."

In another part of the state, visitors come to see the roses at Edisto Memorial Gardens. The Orangeburg park features more than 50 beds of roses ranging from miniatures to grandiflora to climbers on 175 acres. The gardens also offer a wetlands park, a butterfly garden and a sensory garden.

More than 600,000 visitors from around the country and around the world flock to the gardens each year to see the All-America Rose Selections award-winning roses and azaleas. The Orangeburg Festival of Roses is



Visitors from around the country visit Edisto Memorial Gardens during Orangeburg's Festival of Roses every May.

held every May to celebrate the blooming of the roses.

Visitors come to Swan Lake in Sumter to see the Iris Gardens – and of course the swans. Swan Lake is the only public park in the country to feature all eight swan species. It also is dotted with Japanese iris, which bloom yearly in mid to late May and last until the beginning of June. The gardens also are filled with camellias, azaleas, day lilies and Japanese magnolias.

The beginnings of Swan Lake-Iris Gardens are rooted in a simple mistake. The land was a private fishing retreat for local businessman Hamilton Carr Bland in the 1920s. After unsuccessfully planting Japanese iris bulbs on the grounds of his home, Bland ordered the bulbs dumped in the swamp. They bloomed the next spring. Over the years, the gardens have grown with land donations.

The swans, which were originally imported by Bland, come from Australia, North America, South America, Europe and Asia. Some of the Australian Black swans at the garden are descendants of the original birds. The 150-acre Swan

Lake is maintained by the City of Sumter.

In Spartanburg, Hatcher Garden & Woodland Preserve began with the vision of retirees Harold and Josephine Hatcher. The couple wanted to create a public green space. They started off with an acre of neglected land, and began amending soil, building paths and ponds and planting greenery. The Hatchers

expanded it over the years by buying nearby properties.

As the garden grew, community members and volunteers began assisting with labor and finances. Today, the Hatcher's dream of a garden is a reality: Hatcher Garden & Woodland Preserve consists of 10 acres in the middle of the City with plants and flowers, water ponds and walking trails.

The park receives hospitality tax dollars from the City of Spartanburg because it attracts numerous tourists, said Evelyn Tice, deputy city manager for Spartanburg.

"It probably is one of the hidden jewels in Spartanburg," Tice said. "It takes you away from the urban noise and traffic. You hear birds chirping, water flowing; plant life is active and teeming. It's a beautiful site that we're fortunate to have."

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creation of wealth, for jobs, and for growth is becoming fierce in every state and in nearly every country of the world. We in South Carolina have held our own in the last 15 years. Our per capita income has remained at 82 percent of the national average. But the pace is changing. If we are to increase the wealth and well-being of all South Carolinians, we must change the speed with which we grow, in which we enhance education, in which we attract those who can create growth.”

An essential ingredient in encouraging this growth is strong cities and towns that provide the services, innovative programs and amenities that support the quality of life these workers of the “new economy” will want, Sellers said. But this growth won’t just take place in the larger cities, Sellers emphasized. “Cities and towns of every size and in every geographic region of the state have an

important role to play in this long-term approach to making our state stronger.”

Sellers’ speech will focus on the theme for this year’s meeting — “SC Hometowns...Bridges to Success” — to highlight the role of cities and towns of all sizes in building a strong and competitive economy for our state. He will encourage city leaders to choose strategies that will help ensure their cities, regardless of size, can reap the benefits of this new economy.

Sellers’ speech will be followed by a panel discussion that will bring this topic to a more local level to further drive home how cities of all sizes are important to the state’s efforts to build a new economy. This part of the program will be more locally focused to give city leaders specific ideas on what they must do to lay the groundwork for the new economy in their own cities and towns.

MASC will mail the Annual Meeting registration information on May 10. Also, MASC will place the information on its Web site (www.masc.sc) on the same day.

Greenville’s got the whole world in its hands!

Well, not the whole world – and it’s not in their hands – but a lot of world-wide companies conduct business in this part of SC! More than 240 international firms have located here, including Michelin and Hitachi. BMW also maintains its only North American auto assembly plant in Greenville. Frontrunners in the overseas game are Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland and Japan, which have invested the most foreign capital in the area.

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The City has had a pivotal role in the development of Innovista, said Dr. Harris Pastides, USC’s vice president for research and health sciences.

“It would be impossible to overstate the role of the City and the region,” Pastides said. “The support from the mayor, city council and the business community has been second to none. There would be no Innovista if there were no major support from the City.”

The City has helped to provide infrastructure for the project, including two parking garages, said Columbia Mayor Bob Coble. The City also is assisting with zoning issues.

“Research campuses are viewed as one of the primary economic engines,” Coble said. “To have a research campus in the heart of an urban area is ideal.”

The highly paid and well-educated employees of knowledge-based companies seek urbane, cosmopolitan

environments to work and live, Pastides said.

“Some companies think they have to go to San Francisco for that,” he said, adding that Innovista aims to offer those amenities in Columbia.

Innovista Executive Director John Parks, a former city councilmember from Ames, Iowa, also praised the City for setting the stage to allow Innovista to occur.

“The City has done much to improve that area over the years. They’ve preserved lots of uses and created character in (the Vista),” he said. “That required elected officials with vision and talented staff people to offer guidance.”

Innovista depends on the support of the City, but it also will benefit it, Pastides said.

Not only will other local cities in the area see economic development stemming from Innovista, but it also will benefit the state, he added.

“This is ultimately about job creation,” Pastides said. “Innovista is a feather in South Carolina’s cap. It’s a tool in its arsenal of opportunities.”

The activity in Innovista is likely to attract other growth, Parks explained.

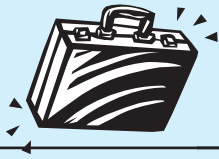
“I like to think of it in terms of an engagement with technology companies, as opposed to just a real estate development,” Parks said. “We fully realize the benefit is not just to develop a 500-acre parcel. It’s to create growth that takes on clusters.”

Those clusters of research and high-tech jobs can raise the per capita income of the state, Coble added. “It’s good for every part of South Carolina,” he said.

With Innovista, Columbia is part of a sea change for urban areas, Parks said.

“There probably is a new urbanism afoot in a lot of areas in the United States,” he said. “There’s a rebirthing of downtowns.”

News Briefs



■ Members of the SC Utility Billing Association elected their 2007-08 board of directors: President: Eric Boykin, meter reading supervisor, Hartsville; Vice President: Darwin Reed, utility billing supervisor, North Myrtle Beach; Secretary/Treasurer: Lynwood Givens, utility finance division manager, Florence; Members-at-Large: Chris Hendricks, meter operations manager, Charleston Water System; Fredia Snow, customer service manager, Greer CPW and Candi Healon, utility business director, Sumter.

■ Members of the SC Local Government Assurance Group elected the following to serve three-year terms on the Board of Trustees: Janet Bethea, finance director, Dillon; Sharon Boyles, finance director, Ridgeland; and David Hudspeth, city manager, Fort Mill.

■ In April, MASC welcomed four new employees. Julie Hollaway joined the staff as administrative assistant in the advocacy and communications area. Krishana Wilkerson is the new receptionist. Jeff Bennett filled the newly created position of operations manager, while Marisa Cebulski joined the education and training area as junior staff associate.

■ The Municipal Association of SC will administer the Accreditation in Business Licensing test sponsored by the Business Licensing Officials Association at 10 a.m. at the MASC office, 1411 Gervais Street, Columbia and at 10 a.m. at the City of Greenville Town Hall 1st floor Conference Center, 631 S. Main Street, Greenville. Contact Melanie Dozier at 803.933.1238.

Municipal employees achieve

In March, five graduates from the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute (MCTI) were recognized upon their completion of the program. MCTI is a three-year program that provides municipal clerks and treasurers with the skills critical to their profession.

Spring 2007 graduates include Alma Maner, clerk for the Town of Allendale; Meg Benko, deputy clerk for the City of Greenville; Sandy Brown, clerk for the Town of Central; KaTrina Johnson, assistant finance director for the City of Allendale; and Mary Johnson, clerk for the Town of Summerton.

To earn certification, the graduates attended more than 100 class hours on topics such 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.



Top left – bottom right: Sandy Brown, clerk for the Town of Central; KaTrina Johnson, assistant finance director for the City of Allendale; Mary Johnson, clerk for the Town of Summerton and Alma Maner, clerk for the Town of Allendale.



Spring 2007 graduate Meg Benko, deputy clerk for the City of Greenville, presented her Capstone Project during the Institute.

Before receiving accreditation from IIMC, candidates must complete a final requirement, the Capstone Project. Benko completed her Capstone Project in March. Her project focused on electronically archiving Greenville's agenda packets, dating back more than 30 years. She also developed a plan to make these agenda packets available online to the public as well as to city staff, including the Clerk's office.

During the Spring Institute, Susan Pack, city clerk and finance officer for New Ellenton, received a three-year scholarship to attend MCTI. The scholarship is sponsored by the Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association and is underwritten by SCANA Corporation.

MCTI is sponsored by MASC; the SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association; and the Center for Governmental Services at the University of South Carolina's Institute of Public Service and Policy Research.

City uses mixed-income housing, resident input to stabilize ailing neighborhoods

Faced with aging and deteriorating neighborhoods, the City of Greenville worked with residents to create a plan to rehabilitate properties and provide home ownership opportunities.

Thirteen areas of the City meet the Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of low to moderate income, said Ginny Stroud, Greenville's community development administrator.

Work began in the 1970s to revitalize these areas, but City officials did not see the long-term impact they wanted. In the late 1990s, the City developed its "special emphasis" plans – seven master plans designed to cover current problems and also address residents' ideas for the future of the neighborhood.

The neighborhoods are in various stages of revitalization. Work in the Viola Street neighborhood is the furthest along: it's expected to be wrapped up by June, Stroud said. Originally, there were 125 houses on Viola Street – all crowded together and deteriorating, she said.

City officials asked residents how they wanted to shape their neighborhood. The residents' top concern was having more home ownership opportunities, Stroud said.



So the City purchased property and demolished rebuilt units. When work is complete, there will be 86 single-family dwellings and eight rental units, Stroud said.

The houses have been sold to families with various income levels. The neighborhood will be made up of young families, singles, couples and the elderly, she said.

To create the mixed-income housing, the City partnered with both non-profit and for-profit developers. The non-profit developers work to create dwellings for the elderly and low-income families.

The City owned the properties and sold them to the developers through a competitive proposal process. In the proposal, the City required a certain percentage of the units be available at an affordable price, Stroud said. The City then helped by providing those homebuyers with down payment assistance, she added.

Buyers were recruited from both inside and outside of the neighborhood, as residents "requested new faces in the community," Stroud said.

Throughout the process, that resident feedback has been key, Stroud said. "Community input is critical to the master plan," she said. "We help the neighborhood develop the master plan, but (the neighborhoods) are really owned by the community."

In all the neighborhoods, residents want homes rehabilitated and maintained. They are seeking increased homeownership opportunities and good quality renters, Stroud said.

In many neighborhoods, rentals make up 70 percent of the housing, with only 30 percent being owner-occupied, Stroud said.

"Residents want to see that flipped, with more home ownership and with tenants who will contribute to the revitalization of the neighborhood," she said. "They feel homeownership is the one thing that brings stability."

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To afford homes, some residents need jobs, or better-paying work, Stroud said. That's where the City's job training and placement program comes into play. The SHARE program recruits residents from the special emphasis neighborhoods to work out a job plan and help them to get training and interviews.

The City offers additional programs to help residents raise their income levels, overcome hurdles to home buying and rehabilitate their homes. They also work with homeowners who need emergency assistance with issues such as leaky roofs or electrical problems, and offer aid to developing neighborhood associations.

"We work to address all the different issues where residents might have needs," Stroud said. As the deteriorating neighborhoods improve, so too do the nearby areas. "With Viola Street, we've also seen surrounding neighborhoods improve. There's been a rippling effect," Stroud reports. And that is the goal, she adds. "We hope our investment will stimulate additional investment."

Ginny Stroud will discuss this topic in greater detail at the South Carolina Community Development Association's Annual Meeting May 20-22 at Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach.

For more information, call Kili Gilmore at 803.933.1254 or e-mail kgilmore@masc.sc.



June 2007 Hometown Happenings

Each month, municipal officials have the opportunity to download materials that will help them share the value of cities and towns with the community and, more specifically, their key influencers. Through each suggested activity and corresponding materials, municipal leadership will form partnerships with the local business community, the media, local non-profit organizations, and policy makers. In response to requests from MASC members, this month *Hometown Happenings* adds sample proclamations to the inventory of available resources.

June *Hometown Happenings* information, as noted below, will be posted to the MASC Web site in early May. Let MASC know how/when you participate in a *Hometown Happenings*. Call Casey Fields at 803.933.1256 or e-mail cfields@masc.sc.

- **National Safety Month** – Ensuring a positive quality of life for all residents of cities and towns means making communities safe and secure. June is National Safety Month and an opportunity to show business leaders and key influencers the city government is taking all measures to keep the safety and security of its residents as top priority. Send a press release to your local paper about your safety initiatives and hold an information meeting with your municipal law enforcement partners to help residents stay safe in the summer months.
- **Fireworks Safety Month** – Prevent Blindness America recognizes June as Fireworks Safety Month to educate everyone on the dangers of fireworks and their affects on healthy eyesight. Use this month for your fire personnel to educate your residents on the ways to prevent serious injury from fireworks and celebrate safely.
- **Hurricane Season Begins** – June 1 marks the beginning of the 2007 Atlantic hurricane season and that means getting prepared now for what disaster could happen in the coming months. The National Weather Service is calling for an active hurricane season. After the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina, cities and towns from the Upstate to the Lowcountry need to be prepared. Let your local media and residents know what you are doing as municipal leaders to keep the town up and running in the event of a hurricane.
- **Municipal Budget Year** - Show the value of your city or town by educating residents on the ins and outs of the municipal budget. With a new fiscal year starting July 1 in many cities and towns and current legislation threatening to cap municipal spending, this is a perfect time to give residents, key influencers and local media a City/Town Budget 101 class. Open government is the best government, and what better way to get support and practice your commitment to freedom of information than to share budget priorities and goals with your community.

Visit the MASC Web site to download *Hometown Happenings* materials.

Mandated criminal domestic violence training dates set

Chief Justice Jean Toal of the Supreme Court of South Carolina has mandated all summary court judges receive domestic violence training in 2007. The Office of the Attorney General is conducting the training seminars. For additional information, visit <http://www.scattorneygeneral.org/public/women.php>.

Magistrates and Municipal Summary Court Judges

May 24	STOP Training, Attorney General's Office	Bluffton
June 21	RDV Training, Attorney General's Office	Florence
July 19	STOP Training, Attorney General's Office	Orangeburg
August 1 <i>(Date Tentative)</i>	Magistrate and Municipal Court Judges Orientation School (New Judges Only)	Criminal Justice Academy (Columbia)
August 23	STOP Training, Attorney General's Office	Greer
November 1	STOP Training, Attorney General's Office	Conway
November 2	Magistrate's Mandatory School <i>(Magistrates Only)</i>	Columbia



Classifieds

■ The Town of Allendale is accepting applications/resumes for the position of police officer. Applications are available from the Town of Allendale Town Hall, PO Box 551, Allendale, SC 29810, 803.584.4619. Applications accepted until position filled.

■ The Town of Central is accepting applications for the position of police chief. All resumes must have a completed job application attached. Applications are available at www.cityofcentral.org, or Town Hall, 1067 W Main Street, Central, SC. Send completed applications to: Sandy L Brown, Town Clerk, PO Box 549, Central, SC 29630. Applications must be received by May 14.

■ The City of Sumter is accepting applications/resumes for an urban planner II. Send resume to HR Director, PO Box 1449, Sumter, SC 29151. Position open until filled.

■ The Town of Pine Ridge is accepting applications for a law enforcement officer. Candidate must be Class I Certified with the SCCJA. Mail applications to Town of Pine Ridge, Attn: Chief Elizabeth Wright, 2757 Fish Hatchery Road, West Columbia, SC 29172.

■ The City of Greer is accepting applications for an assistant city administrator. Visit www.cityofgreer.org for a complete job description and application. Send resume and required city application to City of Greer, Human Resources Department, 106 South Main Street, Greer, SC 29650-2019, fax 864.416.0039 or e-mail ashirk@cityofgreer.org. Position open until filled.

■ The City of Rock Hill is accepting applications for a planner III (Transportation/Long-Range Planning). To apply, submit resume or request an application from the Human Resources Department, City of Rock Hill, PO Box 11706, Rock Hill, SC 29731. For more information, call 803.329.5570.

■ Anderson County Environmental Services Division is accepting resumes for storm water manager. Forward resume and cover letter to Vic Carpenter, Director, Anderson County Environmental Services Division, 731 Michelin Blvd., Anderson, SC 29626, or fax 864.260.1002. For more information, call 864.260.1001.

■ The City of Charleston is accepting applications for a senior engineering project manager with a heavy emphasis on stormwater related projects and programs. For more information and an application, visit www.charlestoncity.info/dept/content.aspx?nid=1238, scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click on "Current Employment Opportunities."

A complete listing of available positions is available on MASC's Web site: www.masc.sc/misc/jobs.html



Educational Opportunities

SC Association of Stormwater Managers

■ **May 8**, will hold its quarterly meeting/stormwater forum at the Clarion Townhouse Hotel in Columbia.

SC Business Licensing Officials Association

■ **May 11**, will hold its spring meeting at Embassy Suites in Columbia. Topics include licensing real estate developers, PSC classification, filming and problem areas.

SC Local Government Assurance Group

■ **May 17**, will hold its annual meeting at the Embassy Suites in Columbia.

SC Municipal Human Resources Association

■ **May 18**, will hold its spring meeting at the Embassy Suites in Columbia. Topics include "GASB 45: How to Communicate Your City's Decision to Staff" and the Freedom of Information Act.

SC Community Development Association

■ **May 20-22**, will hold its annual meeting at Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach. Topics include community enterprise programs, International Building Code participatory planning and mixed-use development/affordable housing. See related article on page 5.

Main Street SC

■ **May 23**, will conduct a training session "Fundraising for Main Street" at the MASC office at 1411 Gervais Street in Columbia from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Hometown Connection

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

SC Association of Stormwater Managers

■ **June 8**, will hold its second quarterly meeting at the SC Hospital Association in Columbia.

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



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