

# UPTOWN

## MASC Annual Meeting encourages officials to celebrate municipal successes

**W**ith more than 600 municipal officials in attendance at MASC's 65th Annual Meeting, speakers stressed the importance of building partnerships and using available resources to provide valuable services to the citizens of South Carolina.

"I stress the need for us to work cooperatively with our counterparts on the county and state levels," said 2004-2005 MASC President Tom Peeples, mayor of Hilton Head Island, during the Opening Session. "I feel these partnerships are critical. When thinking of forging partnerships, we

sometimes think narrowly. We have to look to our educators, health care providers and business leaders because municipalities are the hubs and hearts of our regions. We are the centers of commerce and home to major medical, educational, cultural and recreational facilities. If we aren't building these types of alliances, I submit to you ... we are not doing our jobs as municipal elected officials."

Keynote speaker Dennis Archer echoed these comments. He is a former mayor of Detroit and past president of both the National League of Cities and the American Bar

Association. Archer reminded attendees about the tale of "Stone Soup," a story of inspiration during challenging times in which members of a community each contributed an ingredient to turn a soup that started out with just a stone into a delicious meal everyone could enjoy. "It is a strong reflection of what we do every day — stretching limited resources and realizing the enormous power of partnerships," said Archer.

"You know your cities and towns better than anybody ... we run [for election] because we think we can

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### Property tax: The rest of the story

**O**nce again, the state legislature is taking aim at the property tax, the base funding source for local government in South Carolina. Senate President Pro Tem Glenn McConnell of Charleston and Speaker of the House Bobby Harrell, also of Charleston, have appointed blue ribbon committees to find ways to cap or eliminate the property tax.

Property taxes have long been the whipping post of those who like to rail against local government.

For years, property taxes were the only own-source revenue for local governments. Since the passage of the Home Rule Act in 1975 and following a constitutional amendment approved by the voters, county and municipal governments have had more options

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**September/October 2005**

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# Snapshots of MASC's Annual Meeting



# Snapshots of MASC's Annual Meeting



## MASC president sets the tone

*From remarks made by 2005-2006 MASC President Elouise James during MASC's annual business meeting July 22.*



"[There is] one message ... one song for every city/every town of our state. Everyone has to be included and no one left out. The health and welfare of our cities and towns in South Carolina are critical to the health and welfare of

the state. When cities and towns are financially healthy with locally elected officials making good decisions on behalf of the citizens, our state is healthy. We, the elected officials of the towns and cities, working together with the counties, school districts and the state, should all be playing on the same team, in the same game, with the same goal. And that goal should be to win the game by strengthening and improving our communities, and thus our state, for all citizens.

It sounds so simple — How could anyone possibly miss the target? How could anyone not know or understand the message of the song? We started writing the song a few years ago under Lillian Flemming. With Tom Peeples at the helm, the notes of the song were

put on paper this past year ... I'm asking you to learn the words and sing it out loud and clear and as often as possible. I'm asking you, the elected officials of South Carolina, to partner with me and the rest of the board in the coming year to get this message out whenever we can and wherever we are. This song is part of a process, and it is critically important to the health and survival of all our communities. No one can do it alone, and it is going to take all of us singing out the same message and singing it in unison. ... I need you to join me as partners. Partners working together, standing together and especially singing together to accomplish bigger and better things for all of our communities, and thus for our state."

## Annual Meeting continued from cover

make a difference in the quality of life ... we have to work together to make a difference," he added.

Even in his update on federal legislation affecting South Carolina municipalities, United States Senator Lindsey Graham discussed the importance of working together. "We are all in this together — we've got to help each other out.

"We need to be on the same sheet of music for everybody when it comes to roads, water, basic infrastructure." He said the way to make the money go as far as possible was regionalism. "I'll bring the money to the table, but you better bring a friend to the table if you want to get any of it — we are going to work together." He urged officials to combine their resources. "If we look at things from our little corner of the world, we will bankrupt our state."

Graham thanked the attendees for their service. He acknowledged his belief that "the government closest to the people is not only the best ... but I think is the most challenging ... [it is] hard, but very rewarding ... [you] can see every day your progress and success."

Throughout the Annual Meeting, attendees learned the importance of sharing successes with citizens.

Luncheon speaker Lyle Sumek encouraged officials to find their city's successes — great and small — and create a memory for citizens to connect city tax dollars to a valuable city service. He stressed the importance of reaching out and talking to citizens — "not just the ones you normally run into — but the ones you don't usually see." He also encouraged officials to get citizens involved, to educate them on the city as a whole

and to hold them accountable for their community.

"It is in the sharing of our successes that we communicate the value of our municipalities, not just to our citizens, but to all South Carolinians," said Peeples. "We must communicate the importance of the services our cities provide. We must emphasize — indeed, celebrate — the uniqueness of our communities and the contributions we make toward the betterment of South Carolina.

"Celebrating the successes reinvigorates us," Peeples added. "It energizes us to tackle the next task."

for funding police, fire and other requested services. This has allowed municipal government to decrease its dependency on the property tax.

“Municipal government long ago realized the same property taxpayer cannot adequately fund cities, counties and schools,” explained MASC Executive Director Howard Duvall. “We have pushed for more diverse funding sources, and the legislature has approved several options.”

The Local Option Sales Tax (LOST), passed in 1990, has allowed municipalities in the 29 counties that have adopted the LOST to reduce property taxes and, in some cases, eliminate them completely. Since 1990, more than \$600 million in LOST has provided property tax relief to Charleston County citizens. A substantial portion of the LOST is collected from tourists visiting the area.

In Florence County, which adopted the LOST in 1994, an owner of a home valued at \$100,000 and living in the City of Florence pays no property taxes! The LOST revenue pays the county and municipal property tax.

Richland County citizens adopted the Local Option Sales Tax in November 2004. This year’s property tax bills will be reduced by \$52 million because of the sales tax. This reduction will go a long way to ease the impact of the property tax reassessment.

Other taxes, such as the Local Hospitality Tax, the Local Accommodations Tax, Development Impact Fees and business license taxes, allow municipal government options to reduce the burden on the property taxpayer. From 1990 to 2000, municipal government decreased its dependency on the property tax as a percentage of own-source revenue from 45.4 percent to 32.8 percent. This decrease shows municipal elected officials heard their residents’ frustration with property taxes and responded. With additional

### Suggestions for the study committees

1. Adequately fund public education with state tax resources.
2. Allow school districts to participate in Development Impact Fees.
3. Change the school funding formula, which forces unnecessary property tax increases.
4. Provide for income-related circuit breakers to protect low-income citizens from property taxes.
5. Provide income-related circuit breakers for existing Homestead exemptions.
6. Allow the Local Option Sales Tax to be enacted by ordinance of the county council if 100 percent of the revenue is devoted to property tax relief.
7. Remove restrictions on the uses of Local Accommodations and Hospitality Taxes, and allow local elected officials to decide how to best use this revenue.

tools from the legislature, municipalities can reduce the burden even more.

A property tax study done for then-Governor Carroll Campbell concluded, “We do not have a property tax problem; we have a school funding problem.” Since then, the problem of funding our children’s education has grown into a crisis. “School funding, which is a state government responsibility, should be the focus of the legislative study committees,” declared Duvall.

State Senator John Drummond of Ninety-Six agreed. “If tax reform is the answer, it should be comprehensive

and farsighted, reasoned and lasting. We need to acknowledge that local governments, mostly school districts, are hamstrung with property taxes as basically a single source of funding. I agree with those who believe our first step is to examine school finance. The reason for starting here is straightforward — schools are limited to property taxes (with the exception of marginal ‘fees’); hence, the focus should start here.”

The 2000 Municipal Financial Report of the SC Budget and Control Board shows statewide, 59.9 percent of property tax revenues go to school districts. This compares to just 27.4 percent for county governments, 8.7 percent for municipalities and 4 percent for special purpose districts. More than 85 percent of a school district’s operating revenue comes from the property tax. From 1990 to 2004, millage for school operations climbed by 40 percent compared to a 2 percent increase in municipal millage.

South Carolinians are awaiting a circuit judge’s ruling that could alter the way the state pays for education. Judge Thomas Cooper’s ruling on *Abbeville County School District et.al. vs. the State of South Carolina* will determine if the state is providing school children with a “minimally adequate education” as guaranteed by the state constitution.

“Municipal government looks forward to working in partnership with the legislative study committees to find solutions that reduce the property tax burden on home owners and address our school funding crisis,” said Duvall. “We can show that a diversified menu of tax sources allows local elected officials the flexibility to choose how to fund necessary services. We can show that the Local Option Sales Tax works to reduce the burden on property taxpayers. We can show that working together, we can solve any problem facing our state.”

# Achievement Awards program recognizes local government excellence

*Each year, MASCO honors outstanding local government projects in South Carolina.*

*In 2005, 32 municipalities entered the Municipal Achievement Awards program.*

*The seven winners (Trenton, Woodruff, Marion, Orangeburg, Rock Hill, Columbia and Aiken) were featured in the August issue of Uptown. The following are descriptions of the additional 2005 entries.*

## City of Bennettsville

Less than a decade ago, City officials hired a consulting firm to help develop a master plan for the downtown area. With citizen input, civic leaders identified three major projects they felt would play a key role in the City's future. These projects included constructing a new police department/fitness center, developing downtown housing and reviving its chamber of commerce.

In 2004, the City committed \$275,000 to purchase a vacant downtown building to house the police department and a fitness center. The department went from a 1,200-square-foot building to 6,000 square feet. The City also began a public-private partnership known as the Downtown Upper Story Housing Project. The project called for property owners to sell their property at a "rock bottom" price so the buildings could be renovated and leased for residential and commercial use. The project created 22 low- to moderate-income apartments. Finally, the City decided it was in the best interest of the businesses and citizens of Bennettsville to restart the local chamber of commerce that had been dissolved due to financial reasons. The new chamber has been instrumental in revitalizing the community by sponsoring a number of events that have not only entertained, but have also brought together the community.

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## City of Clemson

Downtown parking is scarce, especially in college towns. The City of

Clemson viewed building a parking deck as an essential infrastructure project to ensure that private investment continued in the downtown area. The project also sent a strong message that the community cared about its downtown and business investors could feel comfortable in making long-term investments in the downtown area.

The parking deck also provides special event parking for the downtown trick-or-treat event, Christmas parade, "Picnic in the Park" and athletic events that bring customers to downtown retail and restaurant establishments. Hourly parking fees and monthly reserved parking fees pay for the deck's operational costs. The deck's electronic parking meters take more than the usual silver coins; they also accept "Shop Clemson" tokens. The tokens are available to area merchants at a discounted rate to encourage their customers to use the parking deck.

The City is already seeing the benefits of the parking deck. A private investor is completing construction of a five-story mixed-use building adjacent to the deck.

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## City of Clinton

When a local industry closed in 2001, the once-thriving textile city faced many challenges. The City was not prepared for such a change, but knew it had to do something. The City brought together dozens of concerned citizens who volunteered their time to analyze six areas: infrastructure, health care, appearance, quality of life, city government and economic development. The project was called

the "Clinton Challenge 007." To help the local economy, Clinton knew it needed to market itself as a community and promote economic development. Clinton also needed an identity — a brand — to market itself locally, statewide and regionally. Clinton also took advantage of its location along two highways and a major interstate. Collaborating with local land owners, several corporations and a development firm, the City developed ClintonPark. The multiphase ClintonPark project includes constructing a Hampton Inn and a new frontage road, expanding manufacturing facilities and constructing new sites. ClintonPark will not only bring jobs back to the area, but also funds into the local economy. By discovering where changes needed to be made, along with marketing the local community, Clinton was able to turn around the fate of its town and the local economy. Residents are no longer wondering if they will find a job in Clinton.

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## Town of Edgefield

After the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor opened one of four Discovery Centers on Main Street in Edgefield, the Town made a major effort to create a self-sustaining tourism economy by improving the look of its downtown. A two-part streetscape project was designed years earlier, but the second phase remained unfinished. Work on the second phase began in 2004 and included making improvements to restore an "old-time" look to the streets. Funding became an issue,

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but with help from community organizations, the Town collected enough money to complete the project. The improvements included installing new lighting, burying utility lines and planting oak trees along Main Street. All played a large part in helping beautify the Town's main entrance and the remainder of the downtown area.

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### City of Florence

After extensive research, the City recognized no development or residential expansion had taken place in the northern or eastern parts of Florence. City leaders knew they needed to take action to ensure the survival and validity of these regions. Using eight acres of city land, the Community Services Department developed North Point subdivision, a planned neighborhood of 27 affordable single-family homes. Using an upscale approach, the neighborhood will have curbs and gutters, decorative lighting, underground utilities and sidewalks. A Community Development Block Grant will provide partial funding for this \$2.5 million project. City planners believe new residential areas will be a positive opportunity for low-to moderate-income families in the housing market. Leaders also know that developing this region will be a catalyst for further growth.

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### City of Greenville

Protecting historically significant property is an important task for any government, especially when the property is a cemetery in which many influential civic leaders have been laid to rest. Protecting the property not only preserves history, but also acknowledges the importance of the leaders' contributions to the community. The City committed to not only preserve, but to also revitalize both Richland and Springwood cemeteries in the

downtown area. Both cemeteries contain the burial sites of citizens who served the city and surrounding areas. City officials, along with Clemson University students, developed a comprehensive plan to beautify and protect the two cemeteries. After extensive planning, the City outlined the project's goals, determined the benefits and created a feasibility plan. This sort of investment of time and resources shows Greenville respects its past and is determined to not only beautify its city, but to also honor those who made it the successful city it is today.

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### City of Greenwood

When making a community a better place for its citizens, partnerships with those willing to invest in the community's future are key. The City found these partners after it acquired, along with the county, the historic Federal Building in its uptown area. City and county officials formed the Partnership for a Greater Greenwood County and Economic Alliance. After a market analysis, the group decided to create the "Emerald Triangle," a cultural centerpiece for the area, using the Federal Building and the surrounding theater and museum. City officials received a Self-Family Foundation grant and collaborated with the Arts Council and the county to revitalize the Federal Building. The City also acquired a Department of Transportation grant for streetscape improvements. The revitalization has encouraged businesses to relocate and renovate their own property. Because the City successfully developed partnerships, the entire community will reap the rewards.

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### City of Greer

To achieve long-term success, civic leaders must have a unified vision and a thoughtful plan for where they want their city to be in the future. In 1998, Greer officials recognized its fast-paced growth made such a plan not just a luxury, but also a necessity. They started to ask residents what issues they thought were most important. While forming the plan, Greer officials discovered four independent groups were doing similar work regarding planning. All parties recognized the importance of joining forces and resources to make a significant impact on Greer's future. Together, they formed the Partnership for Tomorrow coalition. The coalition reached out to the community. With a 31-member board and 187 investors, the coalition is community-run and -funded. Its mission is to craft a vision for Greer's future through a focused economic development strategy encompassing downtown revitalization, parks and recreation development and civic pride initiatives. Greer is a model for its efforts in establishing partnerships among businesses, education, government and community leaders to create a thriving workforce capable of supporting existing businesses and industries, in addition to new and emerging industries in the Greer area.

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### Town of Hilton Head Island

Many natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods and tornadoes have threatened Hilton Head Island throughout the years. To effectively manage recovery efforts, the Town adopted a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. The plan recommended burying power lines to lessen the chance of a power loss. However, burying the Island's 76 miles of power lines would cost almost

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\$35 million and take 15 years to complete. An opportunity arose when the Palmetto Electric Cooperative's franchise agreement needed to be renewed. Under the previous agreement, the Town charged a \$50,000 annual fee. Most franchise fee agreements range from 3 percent to 5 percent of gross revenue collected within municipal boundaries. A 3 percent franchise fee represents an annual payment of \$1.8 million to Hilton Head Island. The Town decided to dedicate this revenue to pay for costs associated with burying power lines. As part of the renewal agreement, the cooperative agreed to bury all existing and future lines within 15 years, to assist the Town's efforts to build pedestrian pathways and re-development projects and to work with residents and commercial customers as they hook up to new power lines. The Town adopted an ordinance requiring customers to hook up to the newly buried power lines. Using the proceeds from the franchise fee, the Town will reimburse customers for reasonable hookup costs. With buried power lines, the island will be less vulnerable to power outages, residents will be able to operate their businesses and re-enter their homes soon after a natural disaster, and public service districts will be able to quickly restart their operations. As an added benefit, the aesthetics of the island will be improved as the power lines move underground.

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### City of Isle of Palms

For years, the City wrestled with what to do with the area known as "Front Beach." The enormously popular destination was wide, unsightly, difficult to maintain and impossible for pedestrians to safely navigate. Over the years, private re-development in the area exacerbated the problem by

decreasing the number of on-street parking spaces. The local business community became concerned because of decreased access to the beach and stores.

In 2002, the City tasked an engineering company with creating a more visually pleasing, pedestrian-friendly area while not compromising the SC Department of Transportation's line-of-sight requirements. The City wanted to slow vehicular traffic and improve pedestrian access to the beach and stores without the loss of on-street parking spaces. Additional project requirements included installing a solar-powered, multispace parking system and a lighting system, which would provide adequate safety lighting but not create ambient light adversely affecting turtle nesting. The solution involved removing a portion of the area from the state system. While this gave the City the responsibility for future maintenance, the positive result allowed the City to move forward with a more creative layout, and the proposed road reconfiguration captured approximately one-third of an acre of undeveloped property for the City's future use. The City met with and shared the plan with every area business and all community groups that might be affected. At each of these meetings, new ideas and recommendations were made, which resulted in a positive "give and take" and tweaking of the project. The final addition to the project was a piece of public art created by a local artist.

The Front Beach Enhancement Ocean Boulevard Beautification Project is a \$1.3 million project funded predominately with local accommodations tax revenues. The City also raised nearly \$100,000 by selling bricks, benches and palm trees for the project area.

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### Town of Johnston

Unclean water and low water pressure caused by deteriorating, half-century-old water lines plagued Johnston for many years. Residents grew accustomed to orange-tinted water and water pressure that rarely allowed for a comfortable shower. Town officials solicited input from citizens, the Edgefield County Water and Sewer Authority and the Upper Savannah Council of Governments on how to address the water supply problems. The Town secured two grants totaling more than \$900,000 to make significant improvements to the water supply system. As of May 2005, the Town replaced more than 47,000 linear feet of water lines and added 54 new fire hydrants. The perseverance of Johnston's residents and City leaders resulted in cleaner water, a safer community with more fire hydrants and a dramatically improved quality of life.

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### City of Lancaster

Lancaster faced a problem common to many towns: how to rejuvenate a downtown while, at the same time, generate interest in economic development for the entire city. For many years, Lancaster was identified with Springs Mills, then later Duracell batteries. In the 1990s, the central business district left Main Street for the bypass area. City Council knew it had to do something to attract new businesses downtown and to Lancaster in general. They used a charrette process to get public input about what made Lancaster unique. The charrette also helped Lancaster determine ways to market and brand its notoriety of being the "Red Rose City." Council members selected the SEE LANCASTER Board to implement the charrette's recommendations. With the

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help of a marketing firm, a logo and brochure using a red rose graphic were the first materials developed to help market restaurants, hotels and historical buildings. Lancaster has illustrated the planning necessary for a municipality to thrive by drawing on its uniqueness and strengths.

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### Town of Lexington

Lexington knows crime rates lower when there is a visible and interactive police force in the community. To accomplish this, the Town implemented a Mobile Records Management/NCIC (National Crime Information Center) project. This initiative integrates state-of-the-art technology in providing remote access and reporting capabilities to a variety of police data. The Town purchased 14 laptops and the needed computer software with grants from the SC Department of Public Safety and other funding sources. Right at their fingertips, officers can access NCIC data, the Lexington Police Department's warrant list, a victim's or subject's history and booking photos. Being able to perform this research on their own has increased officers' NCIC data look-ups 39 percent from last year.

With this equipment, officers can also complete incident reports in the field, eliminating the need to handwrite the reports. The project has saved more than 14,000 man hours because officers no longer need to return to the station to complete incident reports. Once completed, the officers send the reports to the station wirelessly from the laptop in their vehicle. This translates to adding 1.5 patrol officers to the payroll without increasing staffing levels.

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### City of Lorris

Re-development and revitalization are two essential components of any city plan striving to ensure economic

prosperity and civic pride over the long term. For the last five years, Lorris has illustrated a tremendous commitment to both of these values by implementing a comprehensive plan to improve its central business district. The five-phase plan dealt with issues ranging from encouraging business relocation to extensive beautification projects. The plan far exceeded residents' expectations, and Lorris has reaped the benefits of its hard work. Since January 2000, the City has issued almost \$25 million in construction permits, 22 businesses have opened, and Lorris has received \$500,000 from a Community Development Block Grant. The grant funds will be used for a storefront facade and parking improvements in the central business district. Lorris has done a tremendous job of regenerating the charm, vitality and economic validity of the central business district. Likewise, City officials have shown the type of commitment necessary to achieve great results.

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### City of Mauldin

Since purchasing Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) in 1998, Mauldin has seen firsthand the life-saving rewards of having these devices available when the need arises. Firefighters have saved three lives, including that of a 16-year-old basketball player, using an AED. City officials felt it was important to equip city facilities with AEDs. Mauldin purchased six units, which can be used with both adult and pediatric patients. City officials placed units in City Hall, the police department, the street department, the sanitation department and the City's community building. A unique aspect of these devices is they can guide an untrained person through the process of using the AED. However, Mauldin requires all employees be trained in the use, maintenance and

location of the AEDs. The City is doing all it can to ensure its city motto remains true: "Quality Life You'll Love to Live."

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### Town of Mount Pleasant

When the Town needed to replace nearly 23,000 90-gallon garbage containers because of worn-out bottoms, Town leaders needed to find a less-costly, more environmentally friendly alternative. The Public Services Department approached a local plastics manufacturer to develop a professional-looking, cost-effective and easy-to-install liner to fit on the containers' bottoms. The manufacturer developed and engineered a prototype liner that costs only \$15. Compared to replacing an entire container at \$60 each, the Town projects the NuBottom™ could save Mount Pleasant more than \$1 million in future sanitation service costs. By doubling the container's life span, NuBottom™ saves the Town money while protecting the environment.

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### City of North Myrtle Beach

After months of careful research and planning, the City of North Myrtle Beach decided to build an \$8.6 million aquatics/community center. While public opinion polls showed residents wanted the facility, they were unwilling to pay more property taxes. Using proceeds from a small increase in the local accommodations tax and obtaining lease agreements from other agencies wanting to use the facility, the City issued bonds to finance the center's construction. Lorris Health Care Systems leased space and provided exercise equipment for the center. It will also supply a full-time health professional and offer wellness programs, health fairs and other seminars. The center includes an indoor swimming pool, therapy pool, fitness area, aerobics

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studios, racquetball courts and gymnasium. It will be open to both residents and tourists. North Myrtle Beach served its residents by developing a plan that not only has the potential to improve public health, but will also be a catalyst for economic growth.

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### Town of Patrick

In 2004, Town Council embarked on a project to design a town flag representing the town's beauty and charm. The longleaf pine tree, found throughout the town, became the flag's focal point. Two circles surround the tree to represent the 95,000 acres of land surrounding Patrick. The flag's blue background represents the springs and streams flowing through the area and the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. (Patrick was once considered the beach. Sand dunes, which resemble the ones along the ocean front, are prevalent in the area.) Placed under the two circles are the words, "Town of Patrick established 1906." The flag was presented to the Town during a ceremony in December.

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### Town of Port Royal

For many years, the port of Port Royal was a drain on the town's economy. Residents and leaders always dreamed of the day when the port's 40 acres of waterfront property could be used to benefit the area's economic and social life. In 2003, Governor Sanford announced plans to close the port. With strong support from area legislators, the General Assembly passed a bill allowing the closure. Closing the port opened the door for re-development. It also represented an excellent example of a local government collaborating with state elected officials to benefit the entire area. Civic leaders, with public input, combined their efforts to create a conceptual plan to

re-mesh the property with the existing town while providing ample economic opportunity with appropriate scale and access. By stating from the onset the vision had to be based in economic reality, reasonable parameters were established and worked within. With assistance from a Baltimore design firm and community input, the Town developed a realistic and logical approach to re-development and conducted an extensive amount of research to determine the current and future economic impact of the proposed plan. The economic component gave legitimacy to the planning effort. Because citizens took such a vested interest in the issues facing the port of Port Royal, re-development is no longer a distant dream. Soon the citizens will benefit from the port's re-development and be able to reap the rewards of their hard work.

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### City of Seneca

It is always positive when a city undertakes a project that benefits the community in multiple ways. Seneca found such a project when it renovated the Gignilliat Community Center, a dilapidated building that once hosted high school athletic events, into a much-needed community center. With the City's current Shaver Recreational Center bursting at the seams and a vision of bringing tourism to the City by hosting regional tournaments, the City purchased the 1950 historical landmark for \$1.5 million using proceeds from its hospitality and accommodations tax. Local businesses helped with the renovation by donating materials, equipment and manpower. The new center houses the original gymnasium with restored hardwood floors, bench seats and a state-of-the-art sound system. There are also meeting rooms with Internet access, a kitchen and concession area and office space. In addition to sporting events, the new

center hosts meetings, conventions and weddings. With the Gignilliat Center renovation, the City increased the aesthetic value of its downtown while transforming an unused building into a highly utilized facility.

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### City of Simpsonville

Simpsonville City Council felt the community needed a gathering place that would also commemorate the men and women who served in the armed forces. Veterans Corner became a reality through the efforts of the City of Simpsonville with minimal expenditures of City funds and no corporate funding. A Council-appointed committee spearheaded the Veterans Memorial project, which features a monument dedicated to veterans. Fund-raising efforts included seeking individual donations and selling bricks engraved with veterans' names for the monument's base. The City's Public Works Department contributed labor and equipment to prepare the site and install the monument. Clemson University students designed a wood model of the monument, which was then used to cut the actual monument out of Georgia marble. The monument sits on a prominent corner in the downtown and is the focal point for the city's Veterans Day and Memorial Day observances. The monument is surrounded with flagpoles displaying a flag from each military branch, the state and the United States, in addition to POW/MIA flags. The Upstate South Carolina Association of Lawn and Landscapers landscaped the area. Veterans Corner, with its marble sculpture of a waving American flag, is a source of pride and remembrance for the citizens of Simpsonville.

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### Town of Summerville

Several accidents in the downtown area influenced Council to find a way to make the downtown area safer for pedestrians and motorists. Town leaders believed having a more traditional downtown environment would increase safety and make the area more aesthetically appealing. They also believed improving the area would enhance economic development efforts in the downtown area. With the Town's engineering staff members managing the project, portions of Main Street were narrowed to one lane on each side, giving a 12-foot to 15-foot buffer between the road and sidewalk. This provided a safer environment for pedestrians. Dedicated left-turn and right-turn lanes were incorporated into the plan to keep traffic moving fluidly. On-street parallel parking was made safer by adding a three-foot buffer between the travel lane and the parking space. Staff incorporated "Streetprint," an economical alternative to brick pavers, in several medians and crosswalks. With the downtown area more functional and safer, businesses and shoppers are encouraged to come back to Main Street.

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### City of Sumter

Realizing the need to develop a strategy for commercial growth and to re-develop former commercial sites, the City appointed the Downtown Committee. The City had a detailed market analysis performed to determine the best areas in the community to market for growth. For the downtown component, the City created new streetscapes with \$1.5 million in grants, renovated parking lots and public spaces with a tax increment financing bond and developed two open-space parks with donated funds from local organizations. One of the parks, the Brody Pavilion area, hosts monthly concerts from April to October.

The City invested in dilapidated buildings, demolished them and gave the land to developers to construct new buildings. A former Western Auto and former federal building will bring more than 1,200 students to the downtown area when Central Carolina Technical College programs move in. For the commercial component, the City is working to attract a blend of restaurants, retail shops and other businesses to the city. By using existing staff and refocusing efforts placed on commercial growth, the citizens of Sumter will enjoy being able to shop at home while the local government receives additional revenue from permit fees, utility fees and licenses associated with the new growth.

*Contact: Susan Wild, 803.436.2586*

### Town of Wagener

After surviving severe weather in January 2004, the Town developed a list of improvements needed to confidently face future natural and man-made disasters. Two priorities included developing emergency procedures and creating a plan to identify and assist senior citizens and other residents with special needs. All departments developed emergency procedures to cover what actions should be taken in case of power outages, inclement weather or other incidents causing an evacuation. Each procedure was written so that someone unfamiliar with the process could complete any task described. To provide a true test of the procedures, the Town held a tabletop exercise simulating a disaster for all groups that would respond during an emergency. Lasting more than two hours, everyone involved walked away with a better appreciation of the roles and expectations of the various responders. To address the second priority, Town officials identified senior citizens within Town limits and those with special needs. They were invited to participate in a program with three

options. The first option involved having police officers check on the individual during and immediately after inclement weather. The second offered well-being checks, either by periodic visits or phone calls from a Town employee. The third option combined the first two options.

*Contact: Steve Carver, 803.564.3412*

### City of York

Effective municipal management often means tackling a number of important issues at once. In the fall of 2003, York City Council adopted a five-year capital improvement plan. The broad scope of the projects funded, the innovative revenue sources and the open, public process resulted in a comprehensive capital improvement plan. The plan included police department renovations; City Hall expansion and improvements; renovations to the City gymnasium, including a new roof and new sports floor; a master plan for the downtown area; a new public works building; and enhancements to the gateways into the city. The projects, totaling almost \$4 million, will be funded through general obligation debt, a hospitality tax, the county and an increase in revenues from a franchise fee.

The creative process associated with formulating the plan was a major factor in its success. York conducted a needs assessment, studied the City's comprehensive plan and reviewed a previously adopted re-development plan. Officials also opened up the process by advertising the plan and discussing it in open, public meetings. The openness and availability of the "work in progress" resulted in communitywide support. The extensive planning and innovative funding used illustrates that York's leaders and citizens alike are committed to improving their community for years to come.

*Contact: Trey Eubanks, 803.684.2341*

# Main Street South Carolina: Strengthening and growing our cities and towns

**M**ain Street South Carolina (Main Street SC) is a newly restructured program — one focused on South Carolina's cities and towns in the purest sense of economic and community development.

"We are getting back to the basics," explained Howard Duvall, MASC executive director. "Under the new guidelines, Main Street SC will be measured by the performance standards set forth by National Main Street. That means our programs have some work to do."

Main Street South Carolina (formerly the South Carolina Downtown Development Association, and later Community Builders) has been working for South Carolinians for 22 years. This is only three years less than the National Main Street Center has been in existence. "So we have matured along with the national organization and want to continue to bring that knowledge and the many

## The Mission of the National Trust Main Street Center

*The National Trust Main Street Center's mission is to empower people, organizations and communities to achieve ongoing downtown and neighborhood district revitalization based upon the principles of self-determination, resource conservation and incremental transformation represented through the comprehensive Main Street Four-Point Approach™.*

## The Mission of Main Street SC

*Main Street South Carolina empowers citizens with the knowledge, skills, tools and organizational structure necessary to revitalize their downtowns, neighborhood commercial districts and cities/towns into vibrant centers of commerce and community. Main Street South Carolina follows the National Main Street's Four Point Approach — Organization, Promotion, Design and Economic Restructuring.*

benefits to your Main Street," said Beppie LeGrand, Main Street SC manager.

Because South Carolina's Main Street program has been in existence for more than 20 years, so have some of its members, such as Main Street Beaufort, USA. During this transition, Main Street SC will survey Beaufort and other members to assess their status and needs to meet performance standards mandated by the National Main Street Center. Current members have until January 2007 to comply with these standards.

The performance standards help ensure the local programs are successful in bringing their commercial corridors back to life. They are based on eight principles:

1. A comprehensive approach, including activity in

**MAIN STREET**  
continued on page 13

## Main Street South Carolina Membership

	<b>0 - 4,999 Population</b>	<b>5,000 - 14,999 Population</b>	<b>15,000 + Population</b>
<b>First Year</b>	\$7,500	\$10,000	\$12,500
<b>Second Year</b>	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$10,000
<b>Third Year or Until Meets Required Performance Standards</b>	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$10,000
<b>Meets Performance Standards*</b>	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$7,500

\*Once a new program meets national performance standards, the annual membership fee decreases.

## Main Street continued from page 12

each of Main Street's Four-Point Approach;

2. An incremental approach, leading to much longer-lasting and dramatic positive change in the Main Street area;

3. A self-help approach, producing long-term success by local leadership fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort;

4. Strong partnerships — Both the public and private sectors have a vital interest in the district and must work together to achieve the common goals of Main Street's revitalization;

5. Identify and capitalize on existing assets;

6. Emphasize quality in every aspect of the revitalization program;

7. Changes in attitude and practice are slow but definite; public support for change will build as the Main Street program grows and consistently meets its goals;

8. Implementation: To succeed, Main Street must show visible results that can only come from completing projects.

These eight principles are crucial to a successful Main Street program.

Along with meeting performance standards are fee changes for existing graduate-level programs. The increases will be phased in to allow current members time to adjust their budgets. "Membership increases will allow each local program to receive the best of the best of what Main Street South Carolina and the National Main Street Center have to offer," LeGrand explained.

All fees are based on population. Current members less than 5,000 in population will see a one-time fee increase in 2006 of \$2,000, bringing their membership fee to \$3,000 per year. For those with populations between 5,000 and 14,999, the increase will be phased in over a two-year period, raising the amount of investment to \$5,000 by 2007. And if your population is 15,000 or more, there will be a three-year phase-in to reach \$7,500 per year.

"This transition plan allows for a thoughtful and methodical process, enabling each program to reach National Main Street performance standards and receive the tools and resources they need to strengthen their local organizations while improving the overall health of their commercial districts," LeGrand said. Internationally known consultants and workshop facilitators are resources being added to Main Street South Carolina.

Main Street SC will use the membership fee structure in the chart below for new Main Street programs admitted in January 2007.

The Main Street South Carolina network provides many benefits for community revitalization. State program staff and regional and national experts provide:

- Vision-planning sessions
- Resource team visit to evaluate the current situation, assess needs and make recommendations for next steps
- Initial training for staff, committees (organization, economic restructuring, promotion and design) and board of directors
- Ongoing educational training for staff, committees and board of directors
- Six-month and annual reviews
- Listserv access
- Main Street South Carolina and National Main Street Center networks

- Workplan development for board of directors and committees

- Main Street SC and National Main Street Center Web site access ("members-only" area)

- Two façade renderings each year (call for additional design services and quotes)

- Customized workshops (call for topics and fee quotes)

- Discounted publications from the National Main Street Center

- Quarterly education meetings

- Annual awards program

- National Main Street basic membership

- Consultations via telephone and e-mail

- Issue-specific technical assistance visits

- Use of the Main Street™ name

- Competitive scholarships to the National Main Street Conference

To join the Main Street South Carolina program, municipalities must submit a completed application by the first Monday in October 2006.

Applications will become available in July 2006 and will be available on the Main Street Web site, which is hosted by MASC. Main Street will notify applicants on the first Monday in November 2006 of the final selections. New programs will be admitted January 1, 2007.

"We are very pleased to offer the best Main Street program to our members," said Duvall. "While there will be some growing pains, the benefits will be exceptional to our members in the long run."

*For additional information or to receive an application, contact Beppie LeGrand at 803.933.1231 or [blegrand@masc.sc](mailto:blegrand@masc.sc).*

# MASC 2005-2006 Board of Directors

The following officers were elected to one-year terms:

**President** — Councilmember Elouise James of Clemson

**First Vice President** — Mayor Doug Echols of Rock Hill

**Second Vice President** — Mayor Fred Cavanaugh of Aiken

**Third Vice President** — Mayor Rick Danner of Greer

**Immediate Past President** — Mayor Tom Peebles of Hilton Head Island

Board members are elected to three-year terms. The board is composed of representatives from each of the 10 regional planning districts and three at-large seats.

## Board Members

Mayor Carol Burdette of Pendleton  
*Representing:* Appalachian Council of Governments  
*Term expires:* July 2008

Mayor George Rush of Ware Shoals  
*Representing:* Upper Savannah Council of Governments  
*Term expires:* July 2006

Mayor Edith Cantrell of Lowrys  
*Representing:* Catawba Regional Planning Council  
*Term expires:* July 2006

Mayor Ed Kyzer of Newberry  
*Representing:* Central Midlands Council of Governments  
*Term expires:* July 2008

Mayor Paul Miller of Orangeburg  
*Representing:* Lower Savannah Council of Governments  
*Term expires:* July 2006

Mayor Kevin Johnson of Manning  
*Representing:* Santee-Lynches Council of Governments  
*Term expires:* July 2007

Mayor John Douglas of Chesterfield  
*Representing:* Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments  
*Term expires:* July 2007

City Manager Tom Leath of Myrtle Beach  
*Representing:* Waccamaw Planning & Development Council  
*Term expires:* July 2006

Mayor Michael Sottile of Isle of Palms  
*Representing:* Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments  
*Term expires:* July 2007

Mayor Ralph Tuten of Ridgeland  
*Representing:* Lowcountry Council of Governments  
*Term expires:* July 2007

Mayor Samuel Murray of Port Royal  
*Representing:* At-large  
*Term expires:* July 2008

Mayor William Alston of Awendaw  
*Representing:* At-large  
*Term expires:* July 2007

Mayor LaRue Alford of Lake City  
*Representing:* At-large  
*Term expires:* July 2006



## Classifieds

■ The Town of Central is accepting applications for a town administrator. Prefer master's degree in business administration or closely related field and previous experience. Request application by contacting Administrator, PO Box 549, Central, SC 29630, via phone at 864.639.6381 or via e-mail at [cityofcentral@cityofcentral.org](mailto:cityofcentral@cityofcentral.org).

■ The City of Asheville, North Carolina, is accepting applications for a building safety director. Submit application and resumé to City of Asheville, Human Resources Department, PO Box 7148, Asheville, NC 28802-7148, via fax at 828.259.5479 or via e-mail at [rnix@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:rnix@ashevillenc.gov). Applications are available at [www.ashevillenc.gov](http://www.ashevillenc.gov).

■ The City of North Myrtle Beach is accepting applications for a master electrical inspector. Submit letter of interest, resumé and minimum salary requirements to Personnel Division, City of North Myrtle Beach, 1018 2nd Avenue South, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582-3106.

■ The City of Columbia is accepting applications for the position of chief financial officer. Visit [www.columbiasc.net](http://www.columbiasc.net) for more information or to apply.

■ The City of Isle of Palms is accepting applications for the position of parks and grounds maintenance supervisor. Submit application or resumé to Norma Jean Page, Recreation Director, City of Isle of Palms, PO Box 508, Isle of Palms, SC 29451 or via e-mail at [npage@iop.net](mailto:npage@iop.net).

# MASC announces winners of 2005 Photo Contest

A photo of Charleston's Waterfront Park submitted by the City of Charleston won first place in a photo competition hosted by MASC. Mayor Tom Peebles, MASC's 2004-2005 president, announced the winners during the Awards Breakfast at the Annual Meeting in July.

"We had a great response from our cities and towns," said Eric Meyer,

MASC manager for municipal advocacy. "Forty-three cities and towns submitted a total of 150 photos. We were pleased to see so many entries depicting our Annual Meeting theme, 'Celebrating Success ~ Envisioning Possibilities.'"

The City of Goose Creek won second place for a photo taken of fireworks during the City's spring

concert; the City of Greenville won third place for a photo of children playing during its Ritmo Tropical Festival.

"Every year, South Carolina's cities and towns strive to exceed the expectations of their residents and continually motivate their communities for a better future. We were looking for photos capturing that vision," said Meyer.



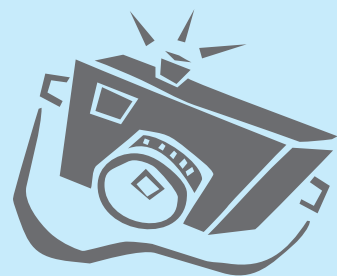
**First Place: City of Charleston**  
Charleston's Waterfront Park



**Second Place: City of Goose Creek**  
Fireworks during the City of Goose Creek's spring concert



**Third Place: City of Greenville**  
Children playing during Greenville's Ritmo Tropical Festival



# SC Planning Education Advisory Committee requires training

“The Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC), the SC Chapter of the American Planning Association (SCCAPA) and the SC Association of Regional Planning Councils (SCARC) have collaborated to provide the training required by the SC Planning Education Advisory Committee,” announced Howard Duvall, MASC executive director.

The training is mandatory for local government planning commissions, boards of zoning appeals and architectural review and staff who directly or indirectly work with planning officials. “The consequence for not attending this mandatory training is severe. An appointed official can be removed from office, and a professional employee can be suspended or dismissed,” said Duvall.

The partnership has developed a six-hour curriculum provided in one-hour segments on DVD. It will be available for local governments to use, along with a trained instructor, beginning in November.

The DVD is based on scripted presentations by speakers and panels using zoning and planning maps, still photography, video of planning and zoning projects in local cities and towns and sample ordinances and resources, such as MASC’s Comprehensive Planning Guide for Local Governments. Case studies are also used to facilitate discussion between the trainer and participants.

“The DVD allows the training to be provided in an entertaining and interactive way conducive for participants to learn and retain important lessons from the curriculum,” said Michelle James, MASC director of education and training. “Training can be fulfilled during a city or town planning commission meeting, at local councils

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 and staff who directly or indirectly work with planning officials in municipalities and counties.

- Local governments with more than 35,000 population must receive the training by January 1, 2006

- Local governments with below 35,000 population must receive the training by January 1, 2007

MASC will offer the required training at its office Tuesday, November 15 and Wednesday, December 14.

of governments (COGs) or at full-day sessions held in November and December at MASC’s office in Columbia.”

## Segment One: Overview of Planning and Local Development

This segment reviews the history of planning and the rights of property owners. An overview of the Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 is presented, along with discussion of the following:

- The land development process
- Development — the private sector perspective
- Players in the development process
- Roles of the public sector in creating land value

- Development potential — what creates value?
- Local planning and the regulatory process

## Segment Two: Planning Roles and Responsibility

Segment Two reviews the roles and responsibilities of the planning commission, boards of zoning appeals and architectural review. It also examines the relationships between these commissions/boards and the local government staff, attorney, public and external agencies.

## Segment Three: The Tools of Local Planning

Planning officials need specific tools to perform their duties and responsibilities. This segment looks at sample forms of notices and zoning permits and an appeals checklist.

## Segment Four: Planning and the Law

Planning officials and staff must follow the legal provisions established for them to carry out their duties. This session provides an overview of the legal foundation of local government planning and zoning. Significant case studies and court decisions are examined as they pertain to local government planning.

## Segment Five: Effective Meetings and the Public Process

Conducting effective meetings is an important part of the planning process. Equally as important is the value of public input at meetings of planning commissions and boards of zoning appeals and architectural review. Segment Five shows how to facilitate an effective meeting using parliamentary procedures.

SC PLANNING continued on page 17



# City of Charleston to receive NLC's assistance to create city-schools youth plans

by Rebecca Makar, NLC Program Associate

The City of Charleston is one of six cities selected by the National League of Cities (NLC) to receive technical assistance through its MetLife Foundation City-Schools Youth Planning Initiative.

NLC also selected Diamond Bar, California; Des Moines, Iowa; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Lakewood, Ohio; and Edmond, Oklahoma.

The application process was limited to the 13 cities that participated in NLC's June 2005 Leadership Academy on City-Schools Youth Planning, which provides a base for the technical assistance.

## Definition of youth planning

City-schools youth planning — sometimes called youth master planning — is a process in which city leaders bring together a broad range of community stakeholders to establish long-term, communitywide plans and priorities for youth. These stakeholders include young people, school administrators and principals, parents, business leaders and representatives of youth-serving organizations.

There are four stages of city-schools youth planning:

- Pre-planning — Answering tough questions, such as “Who?” “Why?” and “What?”
- Initiating — Focusing on building support for youth and understanding their world.
- Action planning — Knowing where you're headed and choosing a path to get there.
- Implementation — Keeping the plan alive through celebrating, institutionalizing and mobilizing.

## Planning is a municipal function

Municipal planning departments typically create master plans that provide a long-term framework and guide for future actions and investments. Most often, they are framed as land use documents, but they also include elements that address human infrastructure.

Youth master planning falls within and reinforces this tradition of communitywide plans developed by local government with extensive input from citizens and key stakeholders.

“If we are able to include youth programs strategically into the City Council long-term plan, we can institutionalize the continuity and the process,” said Saundra Naifeh, mayor of Edmond, OK. “This [project] will prove invaluable to strengthen and extend our efforts to equip and cultivate the next generation of leaders.”

## Opportunities for all cities

Although the individualized technical assistance opportunities are limited to the selected cities, NLC's MetLife Foundation City-Schools Youth Planning Initiative will include opportunities for all cities to participate in and learn from this project, such as:

- One or more audio conferences focusing on city-schools youth planning.
- An action kit, to be published in 2006, as a comprehensive guide for municipal officials on the process of city-schools youth planning, and
- Dissemination of lessons learned about collaborative planning.

For more information about the city-schools youth planning initiative, visit [www.nlc.org/iyef/program\\_areas/youth\\_development/810.cfm](http://www.nlc.org/iyef/program_areas/youth_development/810.cfm).

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## SC Planning continued from page 16

The presentation also reviews the standards for holding public hearings and obtaining effective public input from local citizens, developers, etc.

### Segment Six: Planning and Ethics

The final segment examines the basics of what constitutes ethical and unethical behavior. The session also provides an overview of the SC Ethics Act and examines the rules of conduct for public employees in South Carolina. Attendees will practice how

to apply ethical values and principles within the planning environment. Models for resolving ethical dilemmas such as conflicts of interest are explored.

If you would like to be a trainer or are interested in 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). Potential trainers must meet one of the following criteria: be

certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners, hold a master's or doctorate degree in planning from an accredited college or university, hold a master's or doctorate degree or specialized training or experience in a field related to planning as determined by the South Carolina Planning Education Advisory Committees or have a license to practice law in South Carolina.

# City of Florence one of 12 cities selected for National League of Cities' Afterschool Technical Assistance Project

The National League of Cities (NLC) recently selected Florence as one of 12 cities to participate in the City Leaders Engaged in Afterschool Reform (CLEAR) technical assistance project.

The CLEAR project is being carried out by NLC's Institute for Youth, Education and Families (YEF Institute) with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, which provides grants for efforts to promote a just, equitable and sustainable society.

This initiative will assist mayors, councilmembers and other municipal officials in creating or strengthening citywide systems to support expanded learning opportunities for youth after school.

In Florence, the Mayor's Coalition for the Prevention of Juvenile Crime is

a partnership between the police department, the parks and leisure services department, the parks commission, the school district and the city manager's office. The coalition examined the underlying needs and conditions that contribute to youth-related challenges and "identified a need for systematic reform to coordinate the efforts of our in-school and afterschool providers," said Florence Mayor Frank Willis.

"With NLC's assistance, we can increase the number of young teens who have something constructive to do," Willis added.

NLC also selected the following cities: Alexandria, Virginia; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Boise, Idaho; Bridgeport, Connecticut; Burlington, Vermont; Carolina, Puerto Rico;

Chicago, Illinois; Denver, Colorado; Las Cruces, New Mexico; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Waterloo, Iowa.

Forty-seven cities applied for the CLEAR technical assistance project, demonstrating a strong interest by municipal leaders in addressing the needs of young people in the critical hours after the school day ends.

The 12 cities chosen will participate in Phase I of the CLEAR project — a six-month project that will engage the selected cities in an "opportunity scan" in which YEF Institute staff will work with each city to assess the city's readiness to develop a citywide system that supports afterschool programs.

Each city will receive individual assistance and access to resources and expertise through conference calls and networking opportunities.

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## Orangeburg and Georgetown counties named 2005 All-America Cities

In June, two South Carolina communities earned the prestigious designation of "2005 All-America City" from the National Civic League (NCL). Named among the 10 winners, Orangeburg County and Georgetown County both credit communitywide cooperation and collaboration for their success.

Orangeburg City Administrator John Yow remarked in a local news story, "The award is a result of the steady improvement in collaborations between the county and municipal governments."

An editorial in *The Georgetown Times* noted, "Communities honored by the All-America City distinction

demonstrate the measurable success that can be achieved when citizens join together to address critical issues."

"Great achievements are accomplished when people come together and work together," explained Lynn Wood Wilson, mayor of Georgetown. "Georgetown County definitely created a wonderful and valuable sense of community pride with this most distinguished All-America City award."

NCL judges selected the 10 winners from a field of 30 finalists. The South Carolina cities of Greer and Fort Mill were among the 30 finalists that traveled to Atlanta for the last phase of the competition. Overall, the

competition attracted 800 entries nationwide.

Finalists had 10 minutes to make their case before the 10-person judging panel. Orangeburg County's "One Team, One Dream" highlighted renewal of its penny infrastructure tax and improved quality of life in every area in the county. The original capital projects sales tax funded 108 projects across the county, totaling \$71 million. The "new" penny is expected to fund 116 projects, totaling \$53 million. To demonstrate its quality-of-life efforts, representatives from Orangeburg County pointed to the revitalization of the downtown

**ALL-AMERICA continued on page 19**

# Regional meeting dates slated to discuss key legislative issues

When the General Assembly reconvenes in January, it will be dealing with several issues of municipal interest, such as billboard compensation, property tax reform, municipal capital project sales tax, annexation and changes in local government's ability to use eminent domain. MASC has scheduled a series of regional meetings for municipal officials to discuss these key legislative issues.

Plan to attend these sessions to learn about these key issues and how you can help. All meetings will begin with a lunch at 11:30 a.m. and conclude no later than 1:00 p.m. on their respective dates. To register, contact Gary Cannon at 803.933.1203 or [gcannon@masc.sc](mailto:gcannon@masc.sc), or Michelle Willm at 803.933.1259 or [mwillm@masc.sc](mailto:mwillm@masc.sc).

**October 13** — Beaufort  
Lowcountry Council of  
Governments Office Building  
634 Campground Road,  
Yemassee

**October 20** — Greenville  
Palmetto Expo Center  
One Exposition Avenue,  
Greenville

**October 26** — Columbia  
MASC offices  
1411 Gervais Street,  
Columbia

**October 27** — Charleston  
North Charleston Convention  
Center  
5001 Coliseum Drive,  
North Charleston

**October 28** — Myrtle Beach  
Radisson at the Convention  
Center  
2101 North Oak Street,  
Myrtle Beach

**November 10** — Rock Hill  
City Club of Rock Hill  
140 E. Main Street,  
Rock Hill

## All-America continued from page 18

districts in Elloree and Orangeburg and to countywide youth and outreach projects.

Georgetown County featured its initiatives in three areas: youth, health services and planning. Georgetown highlighted "Service Over Self," a youth volunteer organization addressing issues such as litter, drug and alcohol abuse and teenage pregnancy. It also highlighted "Visions for the Future," a 30-year strategic planning process involving leaders from all sectors of the county, including nonprofits, health, professional, political entities and retirees.

All-America Cities typically see benefits from their designation in three areas: economic stimulus, community pride and community collaboration. According to the NCL, "Winners find it easier to attract and retain businesses that generate jobs and a stronger tax base. They attract and retain residents

who want a healthy community. Winners have also seen an increase in tourism, grants and bond ratings."

"These communities serve as models for the rest of the country. They are tackling challenges that seem insurmountable and producing positive and tangible results with ingenuity and collaboration," said NCL President Christopher Gates.

"It is like a *Good Housekeeping* Seal of Approval for a community. It does not mean that a community is perfect, but that it has demonstrated a very creative approach to problem-solving and collaboration within a community," said Bill Clark, Orangeburg County administrator.

"The designation of All-America City is a coveted award and will be instrumental in attracting new industry and individuals to live in our county," explained Orangeburg Mayor Paul Miller. This sentiment was echoed by Elloree Mayor William Bookhart.

"Receiving the All-America City designation will certainly enhance promoting our town and businesses. It will also hopefully attract additional industry to our region."

Representatives from Georgetown and Orangeburg counties will attend a formal award presentation this fall at the White House.

The National Civic League is America's original advocate for community democracy. It is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization dedicated to strengthening citizen democracy by transforming democratic institutions. NCL fosters innovative community building and political reform, assists local governments and recognizes collaborative community achievement.

*For more information about the All-America City Program, visit the NCL's Web site at [www.ncl.org/aac/index.html](http://www.ncl.org/aac/index.html).*



## Educational Opportunities

### SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association

■ **October 11-13**, will hold its Annual Meeting at the Hilton Resort at Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach. Topics include evaluating budgeting software applications, Robert's Rules of Order review and State Retirement System changes.

### SC Business Licensing Officials Association

■ **October 12-14**, will hold its Annual Meeting at the Hilton Resort at Kingston Plantation in Myrtle Beach. Topics include code enforcement and licensing property management companies and developers.

### SC Municipal Managers and Administrators

■ **October 21**, will hold its Quarterly Meeting at the Embassy Suites in Columbia.

### Municipal Technology Association of SC

■ **November 2-4**, will hold its Fall Meeting at the Hilton Oceanfront Resort in Hilton Head Island. Topics include Voice Over IP, GIS, online payments and court software.

### SC Utility Billing Association

■ **November 10**, will hold its Fall Meeting at the Embassy Suites in Columbia.

### SC Municipal Personnel Association

■ **November 16-18**, will hold its Annual Meeting at the Bay Watch Resort in North Myrtle Beach. Topics include benefits law, retirement, deferred compensation, wellness and safety.

### SC Association of Stormwater Managers

■ **November 18**, will hold its Quarterly Meeting at Seawell's in Columbia.

### SC Municipal Attorneys Association

■ **December 2**, will hold its Annual Meeting at Seawell's in Columbia. Topics include "The Municipal Attorney in Small Towns," "Mutual Aid Agreements and Other Lessons of Big Train Wrecks" and "Recent Developments in Zoning."

### Hometown Legislative Action Day

■ **February 22**, the Municipal Association of SC will hold its annual legislative meeting at the Columbia Marriott 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](http://www.masc.sc).



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