



Cities Mean **BUSINESS**

A PUBLICATION OF THE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA | ISSUE 2 | 2010

**A different
approach**

**New ways to stimulate
economic development**

**Tourism means
business**

**Small cities and towns create
plans to increase tourism**

**Recycling is key
to growth**

**Recycling programs are a new
tool to attracting businesses**



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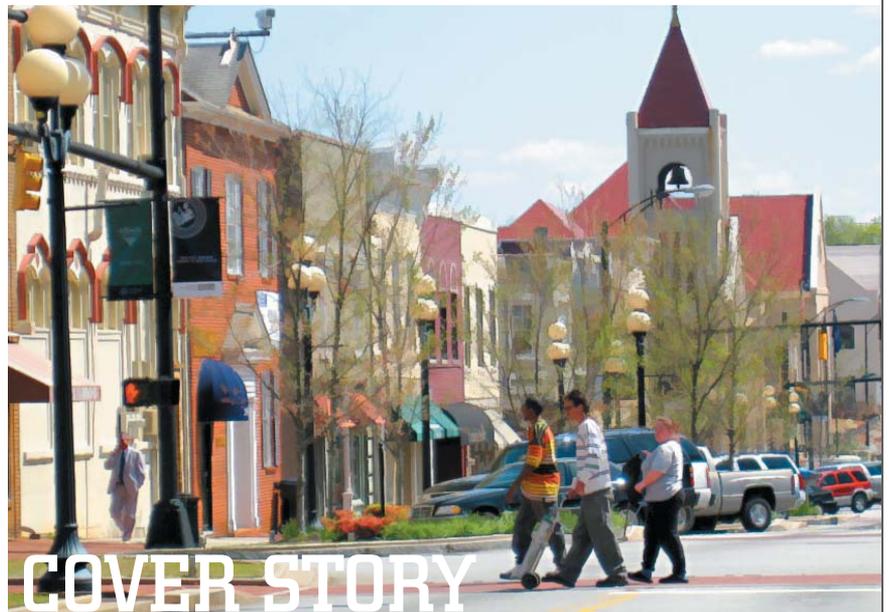
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Cover photo: Downtown Anderson (Image provided by Pixel Point Graphics and the Main Street Program, Anderson, S.C.)



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Letter from the **EDITOR**

As we start to see a few positive signs that the state of the economy is getting better, leaders in cities and towns around the state are observing that our economic development efforts will look different when we come out on the other side of this economic crisis.

This issue of *Cities Mean Business* magazine examines a variety of approaches cities and towns are taking to look at economic development through a new lens of collaboration and partnership. Leaders in the field of economic development agree that the days of focusing primarily on recruiting large manufacturing companies is a thing of the past. Today's economic development efforts mean looking strategically at diverse partnerships and public/private collaborations locally, regionally and statewide.

A story on new approaches to economic development shines a light on the important advances in clusters of similar businesses. This story also examines what two Upstate cities are doing to step up efforts to retain existing local businesses.

Tourism has long been considered a driver of the state's economy. Read about the way small towns — that may sometimes be considered “off the beaten track” compared to traditional destinations — are getting in on the action and working with SCPRT to help market their local assets.

Trash may not be the first thing you think of when planning for local economic growth, but a statewide focus on recycling as an economic development tool is taking hold. From innovations in curbside recycling to collection of oysters and grease, read how cities and towns around the state are working closely with local businesses to make recyclables a significant contributor to our economy.



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Editor

Everyone benefits from working together using creative economic development strategies

By Kevin Johnson



Kevin Johnson

In recent years, we've watched economic development in our state move from a primary focus on industrial development to a more diverse strategy of collaboration and regionalism. In today's context, economic development includes not only recruiting manufacturing or industrial companies but also growing clusters of similar businesses and encouraging growth of existing businesses.

In large cities and small towns all over South Carolina, we are seeing an increased spirit of cooperation within regions to stimulate economic growth. Leaders recognize that a win for the region is a win for the city and a win for the city is also a win for the region.

The more we can tear down the turf barriers that often exist regionally as we vie for economic development projects, the more successful we can be in collectively marketing our state's assets and bringing new jobs to our residents.

We are seeing the results of our successful collaborative efforts with the growth of clusters among several types of business around our state. Take the

recycling cluster for instance. With government and business support, recycling is recognized as both good for the environment and good for the economy. By bringing together companies and governments that all see the benefits of recycling as an economic development tool, everyone benefits.

There's also the concept of the creative cluster where entrepreneurs translate their creative passions into thriving and successful business models. In many cases, it's the direction provided by the leaders in our cities and towns that serves as a catalyst for attracting these innovative — and often young — entrepreneurs.

Leaders in our cities and towns are also working to grow their existing businesses. From façade grants to streetscape projects, local leaders understand supporting the businesses already located in their communities brings tremendous value to economic development efforts.

Throughout this economic downturn, we keep hearing about the “new normal.” This “new normal” may mean a more collaborative and creative approach to economic development in our state. ♡

Kevin Johnson is the Mayor of Manning and president of the Municipal Association of SC.



Municipalities vital to statewide economic development efforts

By April Allen



April Allen

In South Carolina, discussions of large-scale

economic development often have a county or regional orientation. While it's true that most manufacturing- and distribution-related projects seek large spaces that are often available outside city limits, the importance of municipalities to the broader economic development process must not be overlooked.

Cities and towns provide the amenities — inviting downtowns, cultural and recreational offerings, specialty retail, advanced health care facilities, higher education institutions and so on — that give a region character and a sense of place. Increasingly, company decision-makers want to locate in an area with a high quality of life that includes these amenities. That's why the municipality's role in the economic development process — and its weight as a factor in location decisions — is so important and is increasing.

"The amenities that our municipalities have — places like Beaufort, Port Royal, Bluffton and Hilton Head Island — each have their own identity and are a key factor when trying to recruit companies," says Kim Statler, executive director of the Lowcountry Economic Network and Alliance. The Network is recruiting on all fronts for mixed-use developments as well as commercial and industrial, including "green" industry.

"We rarely have a prospect who doesn't have familiarity with (communities in) the region" Statler says. "Our municipalities are a very important factor in what we're trying to accomplish."

The growing emphasis on adding knowledge-based businesses to South Carolina's industry mix is another reason that municipalities are becoming a more integral part of the economic development process. These kinds of businesses rely on highly educated and skilled

workers who tend to cluster in communities that offer interesting cultural and recreational options.

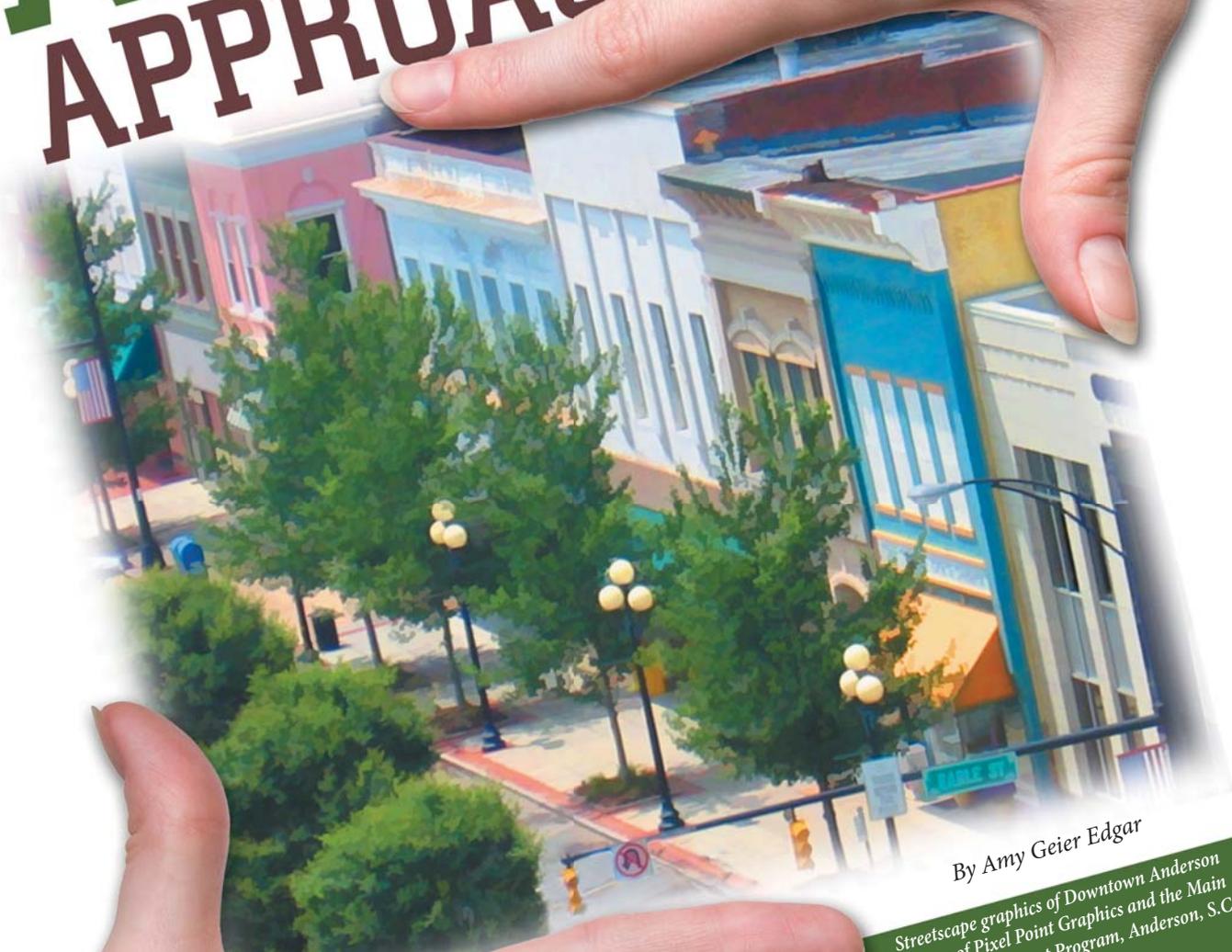
As municipalities work to attract the talented and creative people who help drive economic growth, they are joining with other public and private partners on economic development initiatives that emphasize quality-of-life features such as higher-density and pedestrian-friendly districts in which people can live, work and play.

Columbia's Innovista, located on the USC campus, is an incubator focused on high-growth areas. The Charleston Digital Corridor consists of five districts that are promoted as locations with the ideal business, physical and social environment in which technology companies can thrive. In Greenville, there is the Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research, as well as a downtown that has diversity in business, food, music and sports. Cities such as Pendleton, Sumter, Newberry, Florence and Spartanburg have all capitalized on their downtowns' uniqueness as a draw to their communities.

At its core, economic development is about increasing a region's economic strength and standard of living. At SCEDA, we know the value that municipalities bring to the table is a critical factor in our members' ability to win a project, whether it's a manufacturing facility or a call center locating outside city limits, or a corporate headquarters moving downtown. We are very thankful for our members and allies at all levels — municipal, county, region and state — who are working together to bring jobs, investment and prosperity to South Carolina. 📍

April Allen is board chairman of the SC Economic Developers Association.

A NEW APPROACH



By Amy Geier Edgar

Streetscape graphics of Downtown Anderson
courtesy of Pixel Point Graphics and the Main
Street Program, Anderson, S.C

Faced with a struggling economy, city leaders and economic development experts know they must find new ways to stimulate wealth. Increasingly, officials are working with clusters and other regional partners to spur economic development, as well as stepping up efforts to retain the local businesses that are the heartbeat of downtowns.



Anderson's downtown is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. (Photo/Pixel Point Graphics and the Main Street Program, Anderson, S.C.)



City and county leaders worked together to bring the Boeing Co. to North Charleston. (Photo/Boeing Co.)

One new approach to economic development is through the formation of “clusters.”

New Carolina, South Carolina’s Council on Competitiveness, is a public-private partnership that aims to increase the state’s economic competitiveness by building clusters of similar businesses. Companies within clusters get together to increase efficiency and innovation within their industry, while boosting the overall economy in their region, said New Carolina’s Executive Director George Fletcher. The clusters work together to support new business development, enhance existing business and recruit new companies to an area, he said.

“Robust clusters have innovation, efficiency and entrepreneurship,” Fletcher said.

South Carolina has numerous clusters both statewide — such as automotive, recycling, textiles and tourism — and regionally, such as aerospace in the Lowcountry, hydrogen and fuel cells in the Midlands, and medical devices in the Upstate. Some of the clusters extend over multiple states, like the nuclear cluster, which spans the Carolinas and Georgia, Fletcher said.

One of the great things about a cluster development strategy is that it provides opportunities for diverse areas throughout a region, said David Ginn, president and CEO of the Charleston Regional Development Alliance.

“Take the aerospace cluster, for example,” Ginn said. “Larger scale manufacturing and assembly will locate in the region’s industrial parks while many of the supporting businesses can locate in more commercial areas. Some businesses may need direct interstate access while others can locate further from the major transportation corridors. R&D operations will likely want to be close to our academic institutions.”

Cities are an important consideration in the cluster approach because they are the principal economic drivers of the region, Fletcher said. Strong cities result in a strong state, he said.

“One of the unfortunate things is that we’ve had a longtime state policy of choking the growth of our cities,” Fletcher said.

He said North Carolina and Georgia, which have policies that make room for growth of cities, have per capita income rates 10 points higher than South Carolina because of their large cities.

“We don’t have Atlanta, with large corporations like Coca-Cola, or Charlotte, with the banking industry,” Fletcher said.

With state law allowing little opportunity for municipalities to offer incentives to new and prospective businesses, cities must provide some of their own incentives in order to be competitive, said Arlene Young,

downtown development director for the city of Anderson.

Anderson has an economic development incentive program designed to attract new businesses downtown. To qualify for the grant, potential businesses must have a minimum threshold investment of \$300,000. The city determines the grant incentive amount based on the amount of the capital investment and new revenue generated as a result of the capital investment as calculated over a period not to exceed five years, Young said.

Eligible businesses include certain types of retail, tourism-related businesses, cultural arts activities and businesses, corporate headquarters, research and development, and high technology growth businesses, Young said.

It is a helpful tool for Anderson, where the downtown is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Many businesses that locate downtown need to make some type of renovation to their buildings, Young explained.

Downtown is the pilot area for the incentive program, but the city structured the ordinance so that it can apply to other locations in the future, said Anderson Assistant City Manager Linda McConnell. Once the city has established a track record and evaluated



Business owners in hip, historic Greer Station may take advantage of the Greer Development Corp's business retention program, which has helped downtown thrive despite a struggling national economy. (Photo/Steve Owens, City of Greer)

the program, it may be extended to provide a boost to neighborhood areas. If applied to other geographic areas, the city may adjust the minimum threshold investment and the types of eligible businesses, McConnell added.

For now, officials are hopeful that the grant program, which began in April, will encourage more private investment downtown.

"Recruiting new businesses that complement the downtown's retail and service mix will boost the downtown's overall market effectiveness," Young said.

The city of Greer has a business retention program that makes sure businesses stay put once they are recruited and operating. The program is a partnership among the city, the Greer Development Corp., the Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce, the Greer Commission of Public Works, and several other workforce training and educational groups.

Through the program, officials schedule visits with companies, said Reno Deaton, executive director of Greer Development Corp. They try to assess challenges and growth possibilities, and offer assistance and resources to business owners.

"New business recruiting gets the most attention, but business retention is the most important thing we do," Deaton said. "Companies that have already made the

decision to invest here — they participate in our schools, volunteer for our organizations. They are great corporate citizens. Our goal is to do all we can to keep them in the community."

The program has helped business owner Carmen Geschke. Her company, Protec Enterprises LLC, is an automotive supplier of services and products.

Geschke said the program has been very helpful for her business, which opened in 2004. Her business has taken advantage of additional training offered by the business retention program in 2008. These needs were identified through the business retention program visits.

Business retention programs like Greer's are important for all cities, Geschke said.

"We provide jobs, even if we are small businesses. Even if we have only five employees, that's five families that can eat," she said. "It should be a give and take. We are taxpayers. We receive support from the city, and we also give back to the city."

Deaton said the program has been well-received by local businesses and brings value back to the companies that choose to invest there.

"We want to see them not just survive, but to thrive and grow," Deaton said.

Cities that focus on both retention and new business recruitment can often benefit the most by taking a regional approach to economic development. Ginn's group in the Lowcountry, CRDA, represents the entire market, which includes three counties and 27 incorporated cities and towns.

"Even with all those designated county and city lines, we really do function as a single metropolitan area," Ginn said, noting that the entire area benefits from the Port of Charleston in Charleston County and from Interstates 26 and 95 intersecting in Dorchester County.

When working with the cities in a region, it's important to understand the kinds of businesses they're looking to attract and what sorts of real estate opportunities they have to support those businesses, Ginn said. That way, if a company is interested in the area, the regional alliance knows what's available in each city that might meet the company's requirements.

"At the end of the day, our job is to attract new opportunities to this region," Ginn said. "We rely on our cities and counties to have the right product in place to meet their needs." 🍷



TOURISM MEANS BUSINESS

FOR CITIES AND TOWNS 'OFF THE BEATEN TRACK'

By Ashley Cook

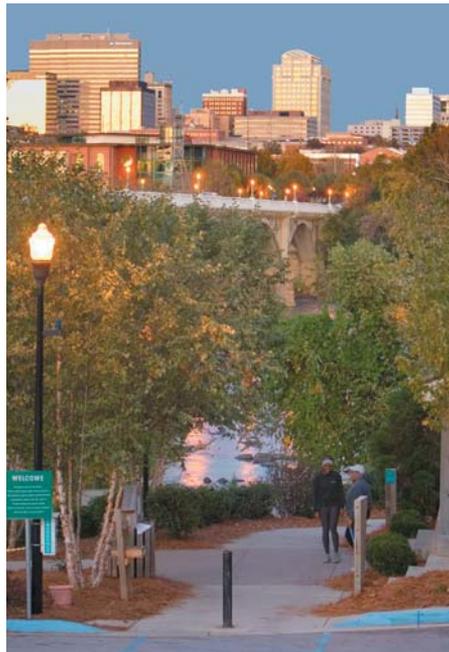
Tourism is one of South Carolina's most important economic drivers. Natural beauty abounds all over the state, while historic and hospitable towns attract their fair share of visitors. However, to get visitors to a destination, a marketing strategy is critical. In today's world, tourism marketing in the state means more than just attracting visitors to the coastal areas, major historic sites or large cities.

Smaller cities and towns that some visitors may consider "off the beaten path" are developing tourism marketing plans and regional collaborations as part of their local economic development strategy. Chad Prosser, director of the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, believes tourism could be a \$40 billion industry by 2020 if South Carolina plays its cards right.

"We have to look at our assets through the eyes of a visitor," said Prosser. "They don't care where one town ends and the next begins — we must work together regionally to attract tourists."

Cities and towns looking for guidance on how to attract tourists are finding help in SCPRT's eight Tourism Action Plans in development for each region of the state. These multi-faceted plans highlight each region's tourism strengths (natural, commercial, historical, etc.) and suggest plans for the work to be done. These improvements cannot be done without what Prosser calls the "essential collaboration" between the public and private sectors — local officials and business owners.

"For tourism to impact the state and local economies," suggests Prosser, "the effort must happen at the municipal level — passing ordi-



Riverwalk Park in West Columbia. (Photo courtesy Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports & Tourism)

nances, providing infrastructure and bringing community leaders together."

The town of Cheraw is a place where these public/private strategies are working. "The prettiest town in Dixie" has worked hard to promote its heritage by embracing the business community in its historic downtown as well as its many antebellum houses, military history and its famous son, musician Dizzy Gillespie.

Last year, Cheraw was honored as a Preserve America Community. The designation rewards preservation and heritage tourism efforts with a White House recognition and increased visibility on a national level.

"It certainly gives us a lot of credibility," said Phil Powell, tourism director for the town.

"We've worked with the Merchants Association and the Chamber of Commerce for more than 20 years repurposing historic buildings, streetscaping and marketing ourselves."

In the Upstate, the city of Pickens is working hard to promote tourism. Although the city doesn't have a full-time tourism director, Pickens' marketing campaign is in full force. City officials teamed up with business leaders to establish a steering committee dedicated to attracting visitors to Pickens.

According to George Case, the owner of a downtown antique store, getting tourists in town hasn't been too hard. "We didn't have to change *who* we are, just how we made our case," he said. The recent effort includes a new slogan, beautification and a welcoming committee for potential businesses.

The steering committee also recognizes the importance of embracing the mountain region. "There are a lot of retirees buying homes in the mountains in our county. We are doing everything we can to lure them into town," explained Case.

In the Midlands, West Columbia is focusing on tourists who may be in the area for something else, such as a University of South Carolina sporting event or the art museum.

"It would be foolish to try to separate ourselves from Columbia," said Donna Smith, economic development director for West Columbia. "In fact, part of our marketing has always been that we have the best view of the capitol."

West Columbia has traditionally been a place for overflow, not the destination. But that is changing.

Palmetto Outdoors, a rafting outfitter located on the Riverwalk, brings in tourists

from the entire east coast, boasting a river adventure attractive to all ages.

“Last year, about 10 percent of the folks we sent down the river were from out of state,” said Michael Mayo, owner of Palmetto Outdoors. He credits the leadership of city officials with part of his enormous success.

“They let me operate on the Riverwalk, which is huge,” Mayo said. “They know that when people get out of the rafts they check in to a local hotel and dine at West Columbia restaurants.”

Happy rafters also check out West Columbia’s new antique district. Created by businesses owners and designated by the city, the new district encompasses a few blocks of stores near the river.

“They came to us and asked us to designate the area,” said Smith. “We were glad to support them.”

Down the road in Orangeburg County, the small town of Elloree is making strides in marketing itself as a tourist destination.

In Elloree it’s all about community events and activities.

“Everyone pitches in and helps,” said Elloree Mayor Van Stickle. “We have a town-wide yard sale, a barbecue competition and a huge Fourth of July celebration. We may not have a lot of money to put into tourism promotion,” he continued, “but we feel like if we can provide the infrastructure — clean streets, parks and such — then our business community can take it from there.”

Business leaders are also doing their part. They established the Elloree Business Association to develop the town as a tourist destination. Building on the popularity of the privately-owned Elloree Heritage Museum as well as the SC Heritage Corridor that runs through town, the Association works to promote Elloree as a historic place with modern flare.

Further south in Walterboro, officials started the Walterboro Tourism Council to promote the city’s assets — from nature sanctuaries to antiques and art. The council is made up of business and education leaders as well as local government officials. Together, they came up with Walterboro’s new tag line, “The Front Porch of the Lowcountry,” as well as a logo — a red rocking chair.

Now, the city is teeming with red rocking chairs — in front of businesses, on stickers in shop windows and adorning billboards along



Interstate 95 — as everyone in town shows their support for the initiative.

“We have proactive, energetic business owners,” said Hank Admundson, economic development coordinator for Walterboro. “They are partners in our strategy.”

While Admundson is proud of what the city has done to increase tourism, he stresses the city can’t take the credit. “We are very happy to be playing a role in this machine — not *being* the machine,” he said.

“This has been a long-term vision,” agreed local business owner David Evans. “We all worked together to bring out the natural wonderfulness of Walterboro.”

All that work is paying off. “When I first got here, there were 30 empty storefronts downtown,” said Evans. “Now, if I don’t get to the shop before 8 a.m., I can’t find a parking spot.”

Across the state, parking spots in small cities and towns are filling up as local officials partner with local businesses to showcase their communities and entice tourists “off the beaten path.”



Top: Bright red rockers outside Interstate 95 Antiques in Walterboro. (Photo/Jorge Ruiz) Middle: Sidewalk sale in downtown Elloree. (Photo courtesy/Town of Elloree) Bottom: Antique district in West Columbia (Photo/ Donna Smith, City of West Columbia)

GROW

RECYCLING INDUSTRY IS KEY

By Amy Geier Edgar

Sustainability is no longer a “nice to have” goal for business and government. Leaders in the public and private sectors are concerned about conserving materials and saving energy. A large part of their focus is recycling. The growing recycling industry benefits businesses, taxpayers, governments and the environment, and some experts are touting it as the latest economic development tool.

We know that recycling is good for the planet. It helps the environment by conserving natural resources, reducing pollution and saving energy. But recyclables also contribute significantly to the economy.

They fuel manufacturing industries, making them more competitive and sustainable. Recycling helps businesses and communities avoid disposal costs associated with landfills and incinerators.

WINNING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



*The iRecycle and Win prize patrol PT Cruiser.
(Photo/Brandy Gutierrez)*

A 2006 study conducted by the College of Charleston's Department of Economics and Finance showed that the recycling industry has a \$6.5 billion impact on the South Carolina economy and provides more than 37,000 jobs to South Carolina residents.

It is also one of the fastest growing sectors of our economy, with a 12.5 percent annual growth rate. In comparison, the tourism industry has an annual growth rate of about 3.9

percent, according to Chantal Fryer, with the S.C. Department of Commerce. Fryer manages the S.C. Recycling Market Development Advisory Council.

Along with the Advisory Council, New Carolina — South Carolina's Council on Competitiveness — has focused its attention on the recycling industry by creating a "recycling cluster" in 2007. The industry's size and economic impact, and the fact that the aver-

age annual income of those involved with the recycling industry was well above that of the average South Carolinian, fit nicely with New Carolina's goal of increasing the per capita income in the state.

"Recycling really is like a 'field of dreams,'" said Gerry Fishbeck, chairman of the Recycling Market Development Advisory Council and vice president of United Resource Recovery Corp. "If you build it, they will come."



Left: Residents recycle oyster shells in Mount Pleasant. (Photo/courtesy of Town of Mount Pleasant) Right: John Crocker, BI-LO #519 store director, and Betty Jo Godfrey, an iRecycle and Win gift card winner. (Photo/credit Sonya Culbreth)



Recycling businesses will be created when another new business is built, he explained. For instance, when BMW came to town, new businesses were created to supply parts and others were created to deal with the waste products.

The prevalence of a recycling industry also will impact some new business recruits that might be looking for a supply of recycled products, a way to handle their waste, or simply the good quality of life that comes from having fewer landfills in an area, Fishbeck said.

Municipalities play an important role by ensuring recycling is available in their communities and by partnering with local businesses to encourage new and creative recycling efforts.

“If municipalities make a commitment to collect and to recycle, it’s amazing what kind of businesses will be attracted the area,” Fishbeck said.

Those businesses include entrepreneurs and developers of green technology. Many businesses have utilized the low-cost materials from local recycling programs to develop cutting-edge technologies and products.

One example is waste tires, which are used in many applications including rubberized asphalt for paving roads. South Carolina has been a national leader in developing this technology, thanks in large part to the work of the Asphalt Rubber Technology Service, which is housed at Clemson University and funded through an S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control grant.

Several cities have developed unique education, outreach or payment programs to encourage residents to recycle.

Earlier this year, the city of Spartanburg began a new recycling promotion with Coca-Cola and BI-LO supermarkets. Sponsored by Coca-Cola of Spartanburg, “iRecycle and Win!” was designed to reduce the amount of material going into landfills by offering prizes to city households that recycle using their new blue curbside recycling carts.

Coca-Cola delivered stickers with its “Give it Back” message to homes with the new recycling roll carts. The program’s Prize Patrol visited neighborhoods on recycling collection days, looking for recycling carts with the sticker. Randomly selected carts were inspected, and the household was awarded a \$50 BI-LO gift card if the residents followed the recycling guidelines established by the city’s Public Works department. One winning household was selected each recycling collection day.

The city of Columbia has launched a glass recycling program in partnership with restaurants and bars, thanks to a \$100,000 grant from DHEC.

“This grant will allow the city of Columbia to tap into a virtually untouched recycling market, both in terms of increased collection of glass and diversion of materials from the landfill,” said Mary Pat Bauldauf, sustainability facilitator. “The program will also offer restaurants and bars a financial incentive to participate — a reduction in garbage disposal costs — which is particularly important during these tough economic times.”

The city’s goal is to involve 125 restaurants and bars in areas of high restaurant/bar density, such as the Congaree Vista and Five Points.

One city moving to the relatively new concept of “Pay-As-You-Throw” waste management program is Chester. A PAYT program charges residents for the garbage they throw away. Waste, therefore, is treated like a utility. You pay for what you use, said Richard Chesley of DHEC’s Office of Recycling.

The city of Chester provides residential curbside garbage collection through a variable size roll cart. Residents pay a fee based on the size of the container they choose. Annual fees range from \$84 for a 40-gallon roll cart to \$204 for a 90-gallon roll cart. By reducing waste and recycling, residents have the opportunity to cut their solid waste service fee in half.

Recycling is more than curbside collection, however. In Chapin, leaders are encouraging residents to recycle household grease to avoid sewer clogs. Chapin Utilities is distributing free fat-trappers at Town Hall.

“The purpose is to pour greasy or oily food waste into the container and not down the drain or garbage disposal,” says Town Clerk Adrienne Thompson. The containers of grease can then be recycled or taken to the dump.

In Mount Pleasant, town officials are working with local businesses to increase oyster shell recycling. The used shells are recycled to build and restore oyster reefs along coastal marshes.

Several years ago, the town of Mount Pleasant partnered with the S.C. Department of Natural Resources to provide a recycling location East of the Cooper. Located at the town’s maintenance facility, this site is one in the top oyster shell collection sites for the South Carolina coast, according to Hillary Repik, stormwater manager in Mount Pleasant.

Individuals or businesses can bring shells to the drop-off site. DNR collects and sanitizes the shells so they can safely be used in reefs to encourage growth of new oysters. Not only does this project encourage public-private partnerships and help improve water quality, it also encourages community involvement.

“We cross-promote their reef planting activities and businesses often volunteer to help plant the reefs. Ours was done in coordination with a local middle school,” Repik said.

“Recycling is not going away,” DHEC’s Chesley said. “There are environmental benefits and economic benefits. People have accepted that it’s a way of life.”



You see a police car.

We see a police officer named Hal who works closely with fire departments and EMS, who knows every business owner downtown, who can name every city street and who buys 12 snow cones on Saturdays even though his T-ball team has never won a game.

MASC Municipal Association
of South CarolinaSM

Magnets for good living



Quality of life is an essential element in attracting new businesses.

The good life. In this state, you only have to look as far as our cities and towns to find it. A pro-business attitude, diversified economies and a commitment to enhancing overall quality of life are the cornerstones of the almost 300 hometowns across our state.

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To learn more about how strong cities contribute to the state's economic prosperity, visit www.citiesmeanbusiness.org.