



UPTOWN

a publication of the municipal association of south carolina



Law Enforcement Reform Under Discussion in Legislative Session

The killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers in 2020 and the widespread civil unrest that followed was the catalyst for law enforcement policies and procedures becoming a major topic of discussion.

At the request of Speaker Jay Lucas (R-Darlington), the South Carolina House of Representatives established the House Equitable Justice System and Law Enforcement Reform Committee to consider several topics for reform such as hate crimes, civil asset

forfeiture and law enforcement training, tactics, standards and accountability.

One bill to emerge out of this committee's work, H3050, moved through the House during the 2021 session, gathering components from various other bills along the way. After passing the House in 2021, the bill moved to the Senate, which referred

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President:
Councilmember Kathy Pender,
Rock Hill

Executive Director:
Todd Glover tglover@masc.sc

Managing Editor:
Meredith Houck mhouck@masc.sc

Editor:
Russell Cox rcox@masc.sc

Editorial Assistant:
TJ Lundeen TLundeen@masc.sc

Contributing Writers:
**Dena DiOrio, Urica Floyd,
Page Ivey, Christopher Radcliff,
Megan Sexton, Erica Wright**

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the bill to the Senate Judiciary Committee for work during the 2022 session.

Here are some of the provisions in the bill following the work during last year’s session:

Failure to intervene

The bill would add to the statutory definition of misconduct “failure to intervene when observing another officer physically or psychologically abusing members of the public or prisoners.” State law requires officer misconduct be reported to the SC Criminal Justice Academy for investigation and action.

Chokehold ban

The bill would modify state law so that the “use of a chokehold or carotid hold is justifiable only if a law enforcement officer reasonably believes that deadly force is necessary to protect the life of a civilian or a law enforcement officer.” Unjustified use of these holds could result in criminal prosecution. The bill would direct the SC Law Enforcement Training Council to provide training on when these holds are justified.

New minimum standards

H3050 would create numerous minimum operating standards for law enforcement agencies to adopt regarding these topics:

- Use of force under various circumstances
- Vehicle pursuits
- Duty to intervene in the actions of another officer
- Hiring and firing practices
- Mandatory field training for officers who have graduated from the SC Criminal Justice Academy
- Use of body-worn cameras
- “No-knock” warrants

- Processes for filing complaints against agencies and employees, and investigating those complaints
- An “early warning” system to track problematic employee behavior and intervene when needed

Training Council Compliance Division

The bill would also create a Law Enforcement Training Division Council to inspect the procedures of every South Carolina law enforcement agency once every three years and take corrective actions against noncompliant agencies. Agencies already accredited with the SC Law Enforcement Accreditation Council or Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies would be exempt from this requirement.

Fines and penalties

H3050 would establish a structure for civil fines to bring noncompliant law enforcement agencies into compliance. In cases where fines do not prompt a law enforcement agency to make changes, the bill would allow the Training Council to temporarily suspend the certifications of the officers working for the noncompliant agency.

Law enforcement discussion during Hometown Legislative Action Day

Several members of the General Assembly will join a panel discussion on law enforcement reform during the Municipal Association’s Hometown Legislative Action Day, Tuesday, February 1, in Columbia.

Find the full agenda for HLAD, as well as the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government courses, taking place on Wednesday, February 2, at www.masc.sc (keywords: HLAD, MEO).



Complete the Statement of Economic Interest by March 30

The State Ethics Commission's required Statement of Economic Interests forms aim for transparency on any potential personal benefit that a public position could create. Officials must use the forms to report their income as well as any economic interest in real, personal or business property.

Who is a 'public official?'

These types of officials must complete a Statement of Economic Interest form:

- Public officials who are elected or appointed to office
- Anyone appointed to fill the unexpired term of a state or local elected official
- Candidates for state and local public office
- The chief administrative official of each political subdivision, including water and sewer districts; as well as city administrators, managers, supervisors or chief administrative official, by whatever title
- The chief finance and chief purchasing official of each agency, institution, or facility of state government, and of each county, municipality, or other political subdivision

What is an economic interest?

For the purposes of the SEI, the Ethics Reform Act, found at SC Code Section 8-13-100(11)(a) defines an economic interest as "an interest distinct from that of the general public in a purchase, sale, lease, contract, option, or other transaction or arrangement involving property or services in which a public official, public member, or public employee may gain an economic benefit" in an amount of \$50 or more.

Economic interests to disclose

Public officials must disclose any real estate interest they or their immediate family have if it can be reasonably expected to create a conflict of interest.



They must also disclose the economic interest if there has been \$200 or more of public improvements, such as streets, lighting or water systems, made on their property or adjoining properties. Public officials must report any real or personal property sold, leased or rented by a public official or immediate family member to the state or any other public agency.

Finally, the public official must report the name and relationship of every business or other entity in which the public official or immediate family member has a 5% or greater economic interest in the entity's value, so long as the value of the interest exceeds \$100,000. If the municipality contracts with a business where the public official works, has an ownership interest or investment in, or has any other association, the official must disclose the relationship and compensation received from the business.

A 2017 change in the law requires that all those completing a SEI form to include income, both source and type, of members of the official's immediate family. This includes spouses, children residing in the household, and anyone else claimed as a dependent. Reportable income for these people includes anything of value reported on an IRS form.

SEI forms are due by electronic filing by noon on March 30. File the form online at www.ethics.sc.gov.

NEWS BRIEFS

Paula Payton, municipal clerk for the Town of West Pelzer, received her Master Municipal Clerk designation from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks.

The SC Municipal Human Resources Association elected its 2022 board of directors. They are **President Lynn Dooley**, City of Cayce; **First Vice President Leonard Lowery**, Town of Kingstree; **Second Vice President Hilary VanOrsdel**, City of Goose Creek; **Member at Large Lynn Smith**, City of Conway; and **Past President Rebecca Mejia-Ward**, City of Fountain Inn.

Numerous municipalities received funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program. Recipients include the **City of Dillon** for a law enforcement drone purchase, the **City of Lake City** for a garbage truck purchase, the **Town of Lake View** for a garbage truck purchase, the **City of Walterboro** for police vehicle and fire pumper truck replacement.

Anita Lancaster of the Municipal Association of SC received her Master in Business Licensing designation from the SC Business Licensing Officials Association.



Food Truck Friday's have taken place in Rock Hill's Fountain Park since 2015. Photos: City of Rock Hill.

Staying on Top of Food Truck Regulations

After the City of Rock Hill completed Fountain Park and instituted Food Truck Friday, Project Specialist Martin Lane said the city did not know what to expect. It had put together about eight food trucks and expected maybe 600 or 700 people to attend. Instead, 4,000 came.

"It was crazy," he said. "We knew then that we had to expand on that."

Food Truck Friday takes place the third Friday of every month in the summertime, bringing together food trucks and local restaurants with children's activities and live music. The large event involves several street closures around the park.

Lane presented recently, along with Beaufort County Business License Director Edra Stephens, on the process of managing compliance and licensing for food trucks to the Joint Academy of the SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association and the SC Business Licensing Officials Association.

They advocated maintaining a checklist for food truck business owners to ensure the owners understand what they need in terms of inspections and other regulations.

A handout from the City of Rock Hill, for example, notes the need for SC

Department of Health and Environmental Control and city approval, business licenses and food service permits. It also describes relevant zoning regulations on when and where the city allows food trucks at special events, breweries and retailers.

The Beaufort County website, meanwhile, lists all of the county's requirements for food trucks. Beyond items like licensing, hospitality tax remittance and permissions from the property owner, it also notes that a photo of the truck is needed, that the truck's location can't create traffic or safety problems, and it cannot be left overnight. The food truck owner is responsible for identifying restroom locations for employees, and for removing garbage and litter. The website also provides maps of areas in the county zoned for food trucks.

Land and Stephens also advocated maintaining checklists for the licensing staff to keep them from missing items like lease agreements for the food truck's location.

Making the process as easy as possible can lead to food trucks coming back, the presenters said. Stephens described the importance of developing and maintaining good working relationships with business owners.

"You're going to have a relationship with them, one way or the other," she said.

Lane described the process of learning about all the aspects of handling food trucks, from the need for a South Carolina Retail License to liability insurance — food truck owners can become confused over why their vehicle insurance is not the same as liability insurance — and the need to avoid discharging greasy water down drains and clogging them. Rock Hill has a fats, oil and grease discharge permit application for food truck vendors. The overall process, he said, is designed to focus on many types of concerns, from liability to environmental to safety, given that food trucks come with the hazards of food preparation and fire safety.

The presenters noted that working with food trucks can create concerns about the trucks serving as competition for brick-and-mortar restaurants, but that is not necessarily the case. At Rock Hill's Food Truck Fridays, Lane said, the size of the event meant an overflow of crowds, with some of the people coming to the park before walking to nearby restaurants.

"What we found," he said, "is that the restaurants actually benefitted from these events."



ASSOCIATION HIGHLIGHT

City Connect Market

City Connect Market, a cooperative purchasing partnership between the Municipal Association of SC and HGACBuy that was launched in 2021, allows South Carolina's cities and towns to take advantage of volume discounts for many of their purchases.

The partnership brings to South Carolina a purchasing program first created by the Houston-Galveston Area Council of Texas. HGACBuy staff receive bids and assist with local government purchasing around the nation. In addition to improving pricing through volume purchases, the program improves efficiency by eliminating the need for each municipality to handle all details of every competitive

bid process. The program helps with purchasing in 41 major categories of products as well as with services offered by more than 800 contractors.

The City Connect Market page, available at www.masc.sc (keyword: City Connect), has links to product listings under all of the categories. Users can search through the available products or services, or they can contact the Municipal Association with a request. The Association will work with the vendor to ensure that the municipality receives a quote using the HGACBuy pricing guidelines. After the municipality receives and approves a quote, the Association will work directly with HGACBuy to place the order.



True or False?

The property tax assessment ratio for commercial and owner-occupied residential property is the same.

Answer: False

The South Carolina Constitution sets eight classifications of property, each with a different property tax assessment rate. The constitution establishes the different rates so owners who earn an income from their property would pay a higher tax. Property used for manufacturing, for example, has a 10.5% assessment rate. Commercial property has a 6% rate, while owner-occupied residential property is assessed at 4%.

The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government offers the required course "Basic Budgeting and Municipal Finance" in person and as an online, on-demand course. After the MEO Institute offers Sessions A and B on February 2 in Columbia, the budgeting and finance course will be offered at the regional councils of governments locations on March 22. The registration deadline for that course will be March 14. Learn more about the MEO Institute at www.masc.sc (keyword: MEO).

Building (and Operating) Multifunctional City Buildings

Multifunctional building facilities have become a common feature for municipal governments, whether it is a city hall that combines various departments or a venue that can be rented for special events. Developing buildings this way can improve facilities and create revenue streams, but it can have more benefits still. Offering spaces in city facilities for weddings, family reunions or other celebrations doesn't just make financial sense for a city — it can build community pride, too.

Consider the City of Greer, where residents have the opportunity to rent everything from a small city hall conference room, large event spaces for parties or a popular park amphitheater.

“Inviting the community into city facilities — and being able to offer discounted rental fees to city residents — helps them better understand the value of living in a municipality and generates civic pride when holding an event,” said Steve Owens, Greer’s communications manager.

When city officials were making plans for the new Greer City Hall and City Park, they realized the need for event space in the Greer Station downtown area. When the city hall building opened in 2008, it included conference rooms for small meetings and a 4,500-square-foot events hall. The large hall can be subdivided and into smaller spaces, too. The city park includes an amphitheater and gazebo — a popular spot for an outdoor wedding. It also has a picnic shelter that is a favorite for birthday parties, Owens said.

Meanwhile, a building that was originally constructed in 1937 as the National Guard Armory and used in later decades by the Greer Parks and Recreation Department as a gym, was reborn in 2012 as the Cannon Centre. It features about 5,600 square feet of space with a deck that overlooks the gazebo and pond. With its



Greer’s Cannon Centre features a 4,500-square-foot events hall. Photo: City of Greer.

exposed brick walls, high ceilings, full kitchen and seating for up to 350 people, it is a popular spot for weddings and other large events.

“City officials realized that municipal events space is crucial to quality of life and incorporated that into their vision for growth. This includes making available space for weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, class and family reunions, quinceañeras, proms and community or corporate meetings. Those are just a few of the events the city has hosted since City Hall opened in 2008,” Owens said. “With state-of-the-art audio/visual equipment in each meeting space and available catering kitchens, organizers have the ability to make their events as specialized as desired.”

North Augusta is another city that considered adding rental space when it was building its municipal center, deciding to turn the top floor of the four-story building into an event venue. The Palmetto Terrace opened in 2009 and features a large ballroom, kitchen, atrium area and an outside area with a view of

North Augusta, including its new baseball stadium.

“North Augusta built its city hall for the future. We’re thankful, because now we’re 12 years into it. It may cost more upfront, but you’ll be thankful and you’ll grow into the space,” said Karl Waldhauer, superintendent of facilities and programs for North Augusta’s Park, Recreation and Tourism Department, which oversees the event rental spaces.

He said the addition of a Crowne Plaza Hotel within walking distance of the city hall building has helped make the Palmetto Terrace a popular spot for Friday rehearsal dinners and Saturday weddings, with indoor and outdoor space available for both.

“We get to provide an affordable venue for our residents to use a city facility that’s centrally located,” he said. “Our elected officials had some forward thinking. City hall was the first major structure in that district. Our downtown is getting revitalized and is in walking distance. You can park your car on Friday, stay at the hotel and go back to a rehearsal dinner and wedding and not have

to get in your car. There are plenty of restaurants to grab something to eat in walking distance. It's between downtown and our Riverside Village district. It's become the new place to be in the [Central Savannah River Area,] which includes Aiken County and Augusta."

And while the majority of the bookings are wedding related, others also rent the space.

"We also have high school proms. And Augusta University's dental school students just had their formal here. That's pretty cool. It exposes younger folks to a good city facility," Waldhauer said.

The city also has the North Augusta Community Center built in the early 1980s, a standalone rental space offering a more traditional, formal venue.

Both Greer and North Augusta point out the importance of providing adequate staffing for event spaces.

"You can have a great facility, but you want to have a dedicated staff to do it right. You don't want your planning department people to have to stop what they're doing and show customers the rental space at 2 p.m.," Waldhauer said. "With event spaces, you have a lot of window shoppers. They're pricing it out. Most people want to see it and visit it, and that takes time. You can't assign that task to just any department."

North Augusta has two full-time staff members to handle the space rentals in city hall and the community center, and uses its housekeeping crew to supplement set up and cleaning.

Greer's Owens reiterated that point: "Having dedicated staff to show event spaces and to assist during an event is paramount. They are the city's ambassadors and are invaluable when some portion of an event doesn't go as planned, and that seems to be the norm. Customer service is a huge part of ensuring that quality experience."

Owens said rental fees are reinvested to pay for staff and facility maintenance to ensure a quality experience for guests and to offset the cost of additional resources.

"The demand for high-quality audio/visual capabilities is now a common



*The Palmetto Terrace is located in the upper portion of North Augusta's Municipal Center.
Photo: City of North Augusta.*

thread and requires keeping up with advances in technology. There is now an expectation that Blu-Ray and streaming capabilities and upgraded speakers will be available," he said. "Committing resources to technology and its maintenance is just as important as ensuring furniture and carpets are spotless."

The Town of Chapin offers an example of a municipality combining a police station, courthouse, town hall and meeting area in one 15,000-square-foot multifunctional facility.

"As a small town ... Chapin officials determined they could govern most efficiently with all town services housed in one facility. Chapin is able to best serve its community from a single location. Furthermore, it was not feasible for the town to construct separate administrative facilities for its utility and police departments," said Nicholle Burroughs, director of public affairs for Chapin.


Burroughs said the town council decided to build its town hall with money from its utility funds and the town's general fund. Water and sewer utility and administrative offices were planned for one wing of the building and the police department and court offices were to be housed in a separate wing. These two divisions would be separated by a reception area and community meeting room.

"As the Municipal Building was being planned in the early 2000s, council believed that its growing utility department, serving a large portion of the northern end of Lexington County, would in short order occupy about half of the building, with police and court facilities taking up most of the rest. It was thought that the new facility would be large enough to accommodate anticipated growth," she said. "As it turned out, the Chapin area continues to experience substantial growth. The utility department, which had relied on contracted services, grew exponentially, with the town taking over the engineering and administrative functions as well as operation and maintenance. The police department also expanded, and additional administrative personnel were added for general operations. The building, a decade after its opening, is already filled to capacity."

Burroughs said the best advice she has for municipalities who are thinking about a multifunctional building is to carefully plan and anticipate needs for the next 10 to 20 years.

"Plan a facility which can be increased to at least double its size, surrounded by adequate parking areas, and ideally a site large enough on which a separate building or two could be constructed as needed," she said.

Last Call for 2022 Achievement Awards

Purpose	Categories	What to Submit	Dates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize innovative projects, share them with other municipalities and the public Demonstrate the value of South Carolina's cities and towns 	<p>Population categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – 1,000 1,001 – 5,000 5,001 – 10,000 10,001 – 20,000 <p>Subject categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Economic Development Public Safety Public Service Public Works <p><i>*Municipalities with populations of 20,000 or fewer can compete in a population category or a subject category. Municipalities with populations greater than 20,000 can compete in a subject category only.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed application form signed by the mayor Completed responses to the 10 application questions Supporting material Three digital photos 	<p>Submission deadline: Wednesday, February 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emails confirming receipt will be sent by February 16. Cities competing in subject categories will be assigned an oral presentation time on February 28 or March 1 Award winner recognition during the Annual Meeting on July 16

For more information and the awards application, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: achievement awards).

Business Licensing Essentials: Manufacturers

Every month in 2022, the Municipal Association's Local Revenue Services is hosting "Business Licensing Essentials," a series of virtual training sessions on the specifics of the business licensing process. The session on the business licensing process for manufacturers will be Wednesday, February 9, 10 to 11:30 a.m. Learn more at www.masc.sc (keyword: training calendar).

Under Act 176, which took effect in January 2022, manufacturers seeking a business license may choose one



of several ways to report gross income for the license tax calculation, including

- ordinary gross income — revenue received in one calendar or fiscal year, with some additional rules;
- income allocated or apportioned to a manufacturer's location within the municipality for state income tax purposes; and
- the amount of expenses attributable to a manufacturer's location within the municipality as a cost center.

The city or town that licenses a manufacturer can require it to justify the option it chooses.

Learn more about the renewal notice process at www.masc.sc (keyword: standardization).



Negligent Hiring, Training Can Impact Police Liability

Liability comes in many forms for law enforcement agencies, including the risk of police officers harming others in the course of their duties. This makes careful and appropriate hiring a critical task for police departments, even in an era where officer recruitment has grown more difficult. After the officer is hired, proper and thorough training plays a key role in preventing dangerous situations and liability.

In a case where a police officer has injured a person, a court could find that the officer's law enforcement agency knew — or should have known — specifics about the officer's background that would indicate the officer had a dangerous or untrustworthy character. A court can use this finding to hold the municipality employing the officer liable.

Agencies can reduce the risk of this outcome with a hiring practices policy aimed at making sure that it selects qualified employees without issues in their background.

The hiring process for an officer should include numerous steps:

- physical agility and aptitude testing,
- an oral interview,

- a background investigation,
- a conditional offer,
- a medical physical,
- drug testing and
- psychological testing.

The training process that comes after officers are hired includes both departmental training and training through the SC Criminal Justice Academy to become certified. In South Carolina, law enforcement officers must then have 40 hours of training every three years for recertification. This includes mandatory training for legal updates, domestic violence, emergency vehicle operation and mental health. Training should go well beyond the standard yearly training — it should be a key component in ongoing development of an officer.

Every person hired as a police officer is likely to have a keen interest in some particular area of law enforcement, so training officers can often make the process more meaningful by understanding each officer's interests and building on them.

Police officers who remain in the profession long enough can be expected to encounter difficult incidents. An officer engaging in a wrongful act or unnecessary

violence can greatly damage a community and its relationship with its law enforcement.

While strong department policies and procedures can help to guard against bad policing outcomes, there can be no replacement for careful training of officers and tests to make sure they have a full comprehension of the law and what is expected of them. A police department facing an excessive force allegation should be able to show documentation of the date that an officer received training, and that the officer passed comprehension questions.

Possible changes to police training are one of the items currently considered in the law enforcement reform bill, H3050. For more information, see page 1. Also, the Municipal Association's Risk Management Services provides a law enforcement hiring process and other policies and training resources for its member departments. Find more information at www.masc.sc (keywords: SCMIT, SCMIRF).

A Day in the Life of a *Police Chief*

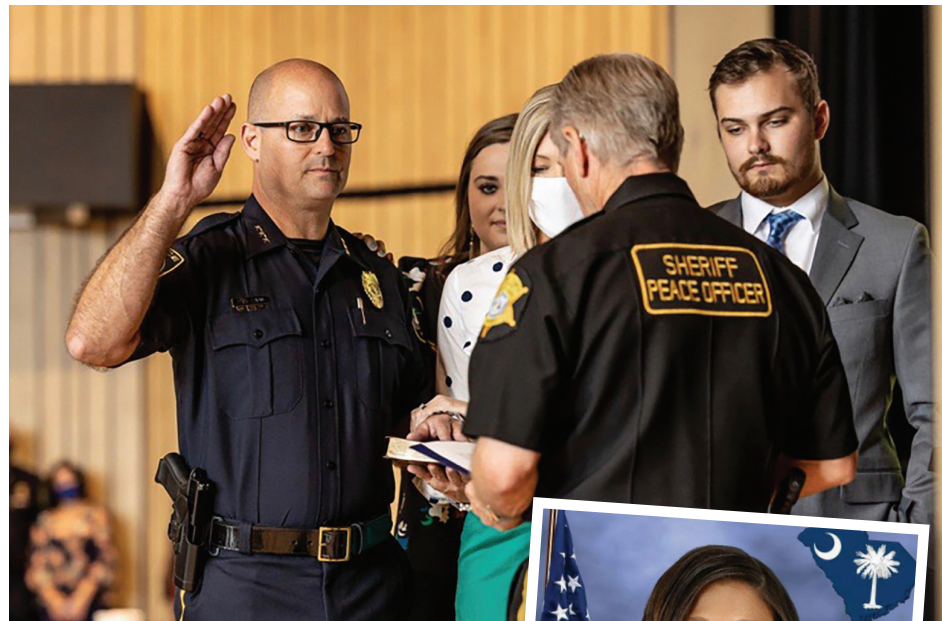
As cities and towns evolve, so do modern-day policing and law enforcement. To oversee dynamic shifts in public safety, police chiefs serve a critical role, directing the day-to-day operations, recruiting, retaining, and training officers, and engaging with their respective communities.

On his first day on the job as the new chief of police of the City of Cayce, Chris Cowan was tasked with the responsibility of creating a new department. Cayce had operated a public safety department combining the police and fire departments for decades, but has now moved to create separate departments for each.

Before taking the helm as Cayce's chief police officer, Cowan spent 29 years serving the Richland County Sheriff's Department, most recently in the operations division overseeing the specialized units. Cowan credited part of his professional success to having the opportunities to work at the vocational and corporate levels of policing around the world.

Cowan described one of his new challenges as identifying and realigning responsibilities within the police department by creating a new operational capacity, a new culture, and a new strategic plan. One way to achieve "focused policing," he said, is to reengage the community by way of what he called the "three C's:" community from the commercial side, community from the clerical side, and community from the residential side.

Cowan emphasized the importance of focusing on these communities independently. He said he is looking to take the talent that is within the Cayce police department, bring them together as a



Above: In October 2021, Chris Cowan, Cayce's new police chief, was sworn in. Photo: City of Cayce.

Right: Laurens Police Chief Chrissie Cofield Latimore currently serves as president of the SC Police Chiefs Association. Photo: City of Laurens.



team, and then providing the community with what it wants in terms of service.

Another key to his success, he said, has been the relationships he has had at the local, state, and federal levels. These relationships have allowed him to implement leadership training at the command level, mid-level and beginning level, as well as experience to implement implicit and unconscious bias training within the department.

"Cayce is a very diverse community, and we want to understand our community," he said.

To make this a reality, Cowan said that the department is partnering with local universities to provide training and expand its understanding of the community in which it serves. The department also arranges several social opportunities for community engagement, including a culinary competition, "Cooking with the Chief," with the Lexington School District 2 Innovation Center culinary program. Engagement with the community has proven to be a recipe for success for the City of Cayce.

In the City of Laurens, Chief of Police Chrissie Cofield Latimore faces similar challenges leading her team of approximately 28 officers.

Latimore, currently working on her doctorate, said that her master's degree in criminal justice with an emphasis on command-level and executive-level training was instrumental to her progression through the ranks of law enforcement. After being diagnosed with lupus in 2001 while in her mid-20's, she knew that she had to come up with a plan. That's when Latimore decided to pursue the educational component of her career, which she said opened doors for her as a leader.

The 21-year veteran with the Laurens Police Department also served one year with SC Law Enforcement Division and is the first African American police chief and first female police chief in Laurens County. In addition to her department responsibilities, Latimore was recently elected as president of the South Carolina Police Chiefs Association.

Since stepping into the command position in 2018, Latimore said that hiring, training, and retaining of officers have been a revolving challenge. Vetting candidates has also been challenging as officers have to go through many psychological evaluations and assessments, as well as a physical fitness test. Training is critical, from the bottom to the top, she said, whether it be implicit bias training or deescalation.

"The more we learn who we are, the more we understand ourselves," said Latimore.

Community service and engagement are equally important for her department.

"That's why we're here; to be of service to our community," she said. On leadership, Latimore added that it is more than just telling people what to do. "You have to be a server to the people that you are leading as well as to the community that you swore to serve and protect."

Chief Wesley Palmore oversees the Prosperity Police Department in Newberry County.

Palmore has had extensive leadership training while in the military, first joining



Prosperity Police Chief Wesley Palmore, at left, focuses on community engagement activities. Photo: Town of Prosperity.

the National Guard while in high school and serving 27 years in the armed services. Palmore entered into law enforcement in 1992 with the Newberry County Sheriff's Office. His career path led him to the City of Columbia's police department, where he served for three years, before returning to the Newberry County Sheriff's Office to become a school resource officer, a position he would hold for over 20 years. After being promoted to lieutenant, Palmore then assumed the role of Prosperity's police chief.

Recruiting officers is an ongoing problem, as most departments struggle with competing against one another for candidates. The Town of Prosperity, Palmore said that his department has been fortunate to retain its officers, working with the town council to get them pay raises, equipment upgrades, and to administer basic and advanced training.

"The town council has been very supportive," he said, adding that they have been quick to address the department's needs.

Vetting and training are crucial to the application process. Palmore emphasized

how important the vetting system is in hiring qualified candidates for law enforcement. Psychological assessments, physical assessments, background checks, reference checks and even social media checks all play a vital role in assessing candidates. Training is ongoing, led by an in-house training officer. Additional training is offered through partnerships with larger departments.

To address public safety issues, Palmore promotes community policing. The department achieves this through various community engagement activities such as festivals and other partnerships like National Night Out and the Chapin "We Care" food pantry.

"We appreciate the support that we get from the community and from the [town] council; we're looking forward to continuing our partnership with our citizens and our community."

A day in the life of a police chief is a demanding — yet rewarding — position that requires leadership, tenacity, and resilience to selflessly serve the diverse communities in which the department operates.

Training Opportunities Help Police, Fire Reach Out

Police officers and firefighters sometimes see people only during difficult circumstances, but many departments across South Carolina are working to have more positive interactions with the residents they serve.

These interactions include weeks-long citizens academies that provide a glimpse into the inner workings of the local police department, training sessions, free naloxone to treat opioid overdoses and helping new parents properly install child safety seats.

“We’re here to help people and that’s why we’re doing these things,” said Don Calabrese, public information officer for the Mount Pleasant Police Department.

For the Mount Pleasant Police Department, one of its oldest community programs is its Citizen Police Academy.

Operating since 1998, the program has graduated 37 classes of 20 students each, who meet for two hours a week for 10 weeks. The participants in that program hear from every part of the department, from SWAT and K-9 demonstrations to traffic patrol, crime analysis and detectives.

“It lets us open our doors and let people into our world,” Calabrese said. “Everybody gets to see what we do day in and day out, then we have 20 new ambassadors to help spread our message.”

Calabrese said a key element of the program is having each class choose one member to sum up the experience and speak for the class. One recent class spokesman said the group was most impressed by how dedicated officers are to their jobs.

“He said he knew the officers cared about their job, but he was pleasantly surprised at the passion each officer or staff member brought to their position,”



Above: Mount Pleasant Police Chief Mark Arnold speaks at a domestic violence awareness event in October 2021. Photo: Town of Mount Pleasant. Left: North Charleston’s baby shower event had the department distributing supplies to new and expectant mothers. Photo: City of North Charleston.

Calabrese said. “He said that they could tell officers were there for a reason and that was comforting for him as a citizen.”

In addition to the academy, the town partners with local support groups for a domestic violence awareness event to connect people with resources available for families in crisis.

The town also has two programs to take on the opioid epidemic — training in the use of NARCAN, a brand name for the medicine naloxone, which rapidly reverses an opioid overdose, and a drug take-back program to dispose of unused prescription drugs.

“Those kinds of things affect all sorts of households,” Calabrese said. “These are



people who may have no experience with the police, but with this training, they could save a life in their own home.”

Personal inspiration

For North Charleston Police Captain Matt Hughes, his department’s program to combat substance use disorder — Paths to Recovery, which includes a mental health component — is very personal.

“My older sister suffered from it, and she passed away several years back from

an overdose. That's the source of my inspiration for doing this. Seeing what this does to human beings like me and you, it's heartbreaking," said Hughes, adding that he has administered NARCAN to people who have overdosed at least six times while he was on duty.

"Part of what got me interested may have been a personal experience, but at the end of the day, it's seeing firsthand what substance abuse is doing to people and knowing that there's help right there," he said.

North Charleston's program includes providing free NARCAN and training on how to use it. The Paths to Recovery program also offers an online guide to community resources to support those dealing with substance use disorder.

"It's been said 100 times, we're not going to arrest our way out of this problem," said Francie Austin, the deputy city attorney who also works with the Paths to Recovery program. "We can arrest everyone with the pills and it's not going to solve anything unless we can get education and awareness out in the public ... We're just trying to keep everybody's head above water."

Austin said the program has shown it works because the number of overdoses — both fatal and nonfatal — has dropped from more than a dozen each week to less than five a week.

The North Charleston Police Department, which had to put its 7-year-old citizens academy on pause during the COVID-19 pandemic, has other community outreach efforts, including recently hosting a "baby shower" for first-time moms and dads to help them develop child-care skills. The event, called "Baby Changes Everything," was set up as a drive-through with a presentation projected onto a big screen and door prizes that included cribs, diaper bags and strollers.

'Always here to help'

Helping young families properly install child-safety seats in their cars is a big part



Inset: Sumter firefighters install smoke detectors. At top: Lt. Selena Ruth Smith of the Sumter Fire Department installs a child safety seat. Photos: City of Sumter.

of the Sumter Fire Department's community outreach efforts.

"We are fire and rescue," said Lt. Selena Ruth Smith. "We do go to accidents as well as fires, and we want to prevent injuries. Our most precious cargo is in those car seats, and we want them in the right car seat and the right-facing seat."

Smith said it has been easy to train firefighters to be car seat technicians.

"It's another part of our relation to the community," she said.

Fire department staff are also experts at installing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and educating the public on fire safety.

"The fire department is always here to help," said Division Chief Joey Duggan. "If the community needs something, people can give us a call and we will see if we can do something."

The education starts early with young people in elementary school, hands-on training for how to crawl along the floor to avoid smoke and learning to designate a safe place outside the home to meet a family if there is a fire.

"We continue to educate them through middle school, through high school and on job sites and in businesses," Duggan said. "We reinforce the message by repeating it."

Captain Tarrance Dupree is in charge of the department's smoke detector program, installing 10-year lithium battery alarms that come from South Carolina State Fire and the Red Cross.

Residents can request an evaluation of their needs, including carbon monoxide detectors and devices specifically for the hearing impaired.

While he is installing the detectors, Dupree makes sure to go over all the exit possibilities for residents in the home and other safety issues.

Some of the department's safety initiatives have had to go digital because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but that has offered a new way to reach residents with fun videos on social media outlets like Facebook.

"We know our message is getting out," said Smith, who is the creative director behind the videos. "Our fire deaths have come down."

Open-Carry Restriction Signage

The Open Carry With Training Act, which went into effect in August 2021, provided for the open carry of firearms for valid permit holders, but it also allows cities and towns to enact open-carry restrictions during certain organized events.

Since the law went into effect in August 2021, numerous cities and towns have passed ordinances to restrict the open carrying of a firearm while on public property and while attending a permitted event, for example, a festival, parade, rally or protest. The law requires that when municipalities do this, they “must be specific in the area, duration, and the manner in which the restriction is imposed and must provide prior notice when feasible.”

The restriction cannot extend beyond the beginning and end of the event. Any ordinance banning open carry for any extended period of time would be a violation of the new law.

The law also requires that events with open-carry restrictions must have signage indicating that the restrictions are in place. State law also does not allow permit holders to carry concealable weapons into the office or public body meeting place of a municipality or special-purpose district, among others, according to SC Code Section 23-31-215(L)(4).

State law creates detailed requirements for how the “no concealed weapons” signs are to be created and posted, both for applicable indoor locations, and for



A sign prohibiting concealed weapons is posted at the Goose Creek's Crowfield Golf Club. Photo: City of Goose Creek.

permitted events and other locations. Here are the rules governing these signs:

For applicable buildings (SC Code Section 23-31-235(B))

The sign must be placed at each entrance of the building and be:

- Clearly visible from outside the building.
- Be 8 inches wide by 12 inches tall in size.
- Contain the words “NO CONCEALABLE WEAPONS ALLOWED” in black one-inch tall uppercase type at the bottom of the sign and centered between the lateral edges of the sign.
- Contain a black silhouette of a handgun inside a circle 7 inches

in diameter with a diagonal line that runs from the lower left to the upper right at a 45-degree angle from the horizontal.

- Placed not less than 40 inches and not more than 60 inches from the bottom of the building's entrance door.

For permitted events or other applicable locations without doors (SC Code Section 23-31-235(C))

The sign must:

- Be 36 inches wide by 48 inches tall in size.
- Contain the words “NO CONCEALABLE WEAPONS ALLOWED” in black 3-inch-tall uppercase type at the bottom of the sign and centered between the lateral edges of the sign.
- Contain a black silhouette of a handgun inside a circle 34 inches in diameter with a diagonal line that is 2 inches wide and runs from the lower left to the upper right at a 45-degree angle from the horizontal, and must be a diameter of a circle whose circumference is 2 inches wide.
- Placed not less than 40 inches and not more than 96 inches above the ground.
- Posted in sufficient quantities to be clearly visible from any point of entry onto the premises.

How Officers Can Address Open-Carry Situations

The Open Carry With Training Act took effect in South Carolina in August 2021. The legislation redefined a “concealable weapon” in a way that allows valid permit holders to openly carry firearms, as well as carry them concealed. The portion of the law concerning permits for concealable weapons can be found at SC Code Section 23-31-215.

When an officer is looking to check for a permit, different circumstances govern how the check can proceed.

Consensual encounter without any reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct

Openly carrying a weapon without any other indication of criminal conduct does not create the “reasonable suspicion” necessary for an officer to engage in anything further than a consensual interaction.

The idea that an officer does not need either reasonable suspicion or probable cause for a consensual encounter with

a person comes out of the 1991 U.S. Supreme Court case *Florida v. Bostick*. That court ruling held that a consensual contact between a person and an officer can be determined by whether a reasonable person “would feel free to decline the officers’ requests or otherwise terminate the encounter.” Engaging in this kind of contact, the Supreme Court ruled, does not violate the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits “unreasonable searches and seizures.”

In a situation with someone open carrying but not creating reasonable suspicion, officers can approach anyone in public to ask questions, including questions about a permit, and offer assistance. The person does not have to answer any questions or respond in any way. Officers cannot detain the person or temporarily restrict their freedom.

Reasonable and articulable suspicion of criminal activity

The legal concept of reasonable suspicion comes from the 1968 U.S.

Supreme Court decision in *Terry v. Ohio*. The decision found that police officers could stop and briefly detain a person for questioning when the officers reasonably suspect the person was involved in criminal activity, without violating the Fourth Amendment.

If officers have reasonable suspicion of criminal activity with a person who is open carrying, then in accordance with SC Code Section 23-31-215(K), the officers can identify themselves as law enforcement and request the person’s identification. When this happens, the law requires that those carrying the guns must indicate they are permit holders and present the permit ID card. If they do not do so, the officers can demand that they produce the permit.

If they are carrying a gun, openly or concealed, without a valid permit, then they are in violation of state law, and officers may arrest them.



Municipal Association of South CarolinaSM

1411 Gervais Street | PO Box 12109
Columbia, South Carolina 29211
Tel: 803.799.9574 | Fax: 803.933.1299
www.masc.sc

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Calendar

Scheduled in-person meetings are subject to change based on the Municipal Association's COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time of the meeting. Information about events and how members can access the virtual events will be updated on the Association's website.

FEBRUARY

1 Hometown Legislative Action Day. Marriott, Columbia.

Topics include law enforcement reform, federal advocacy, the political outlook for 2022, first responder assistance programs, census data, governmental civility and others. See page 1 for more information.

2 Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government. Marriott, Columbia.

Topics for Session A include an overview of local government planning and zoning; conducting public meetings; and strategic planning. Topics for Session B include municipal annexation, business

license tax administration, and ethics and public accountability. Advanced MEO Institute courses are "Advanced Municipal Economic Development" and "Advanced Advocacy and Intergovernmental Relations." Advanced Continuing Education topics include a movie screening and discussion about municipal fraud and a session on strategic planning and goal setting.

8 - 9 Main Street South Carolina First Quarter Training. Sumter Opera House.

9 Business License Essentials - Manufacturers. Virtual.

9 SC Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust Annual Members Meeting. Municipal Association of SC, Columbia.

17 SC Association of Municipal Power Systems Associate Member Lunch. Seawell's, Columbia.

24 Retail Recruitment Training: Sessions 5 and 6. Municipal Association of SC, Columbia.

MARCH

2 SC Business Licensing Officials Association Spring Training and Advanced Academy. Cooperative Conference Center, Columbia.

3 SC Association of Stormwater Managers First Quarter Meeting. Cooperative Conference Center, Columbia.

9 Business License Essentials - How to Calculate Business License & Declining Rates. Virtual.

14 - 16 SC Utility Billing Association Annual Meeting. SpringHill Suites Greenville Downtown.

22 Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government: Basic Budgeting and Municipal Finance. Appalachian COG: Greenville, Central Midlands COG: Columbia, Pee Dee Regional COG: Florence, Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester COG: North Charleston, Waccamaw COG: Georgetown.