



UPTOWN

a publication of the municipal association of south carolina

The redeveloped Shelter Cove Towne Centre on Hilton Head Island emphasizes walkability.



Retail gets a refresh

Online shopping is up. Time spent inside a shopping mall is down.

Those trends and others are forcing cities to rethink how they build and redevelop retail property.

“Strip retail is retail for the last century,” said Ed McMahon, the keynote speaker at the Municipal Association’s 2017 Annual Meeting in July.

“The future belongs to main streets and town centers and mixed-use developments.”

That’s good news for Hilton Head Island’s Shelter Cove Towne Centre. It’s also no coincidence. Careful planning and design guidelines got them there. Built in the 1980s, the space was once known as the Mall at Shelter Cove. Today, the Shelter Cove Towne Centre is a very different place, boasting

restaurants, shops, a Kroger grocery store, nearby residential units and a pedestrian promenade on Broad Creek.

Shelter Cove Community Park, the green space along the promenade, hosts free outdoor movie nights, concerts and fireworks. A bike trail encircles the development and its green space, leading in from North Island, South Island, Palmetto Dunes and Shelter Cove Harbour. The site includes restrooms and other amenities, including a tire-filling station for bicyclists.

Common forces

In some ways, Hilton Head Island differs dramatically from South Carolina’s older, inland cities. It’s an island, after all, with bridge access to the mainland.

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Municipal officials toured Hilton Head's redevelopment sites during the Association's 2017 Annual Meeting, including the Shelter Cove Towne Centre, which offers a view of Broad Creek.

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But the town's redevelopment efforts still have plenty in common with all cities and towns. In particular? The forces that drive the need for redevelopment are present everywhere. They include aging infrastructure, millennials, empty nesters, changing lifestyles, shifting consumer habits, the economic downturn, population growth and outdated buildings with unmet maintenance needs.

At the old Shelter Cove mall, nearby Broad Creek wasn't used to its full potential.

"It (the mall) turned its back on this beautiful view," said Jennifer Ray, Hilton Head Island's planning and special projects manager, during a bus tour of the town's redevelopment successes. The tour was part of the Municipal Association's Annual Meeting.

"The mall started failing," said Ray of the old Shelter Cove shopping center. In the 2000s, Hilton Head's mall and many other indoor shopping centers faced

competition as online retail increased and as the economy started to weaken.

An earlier attempt to revitalize the mall did not come to fruition. The rezoning to allow an increase in density to include the addition of a theater to the mall was approved in 2009 but never developed. A few years later, an Augusta, Georgia-based developer got involved. Instead of a strip mall design, the developer created a village.

"The shops have a different flavor as you walk along. There are public spaces that encourage you stop and linger," Ray said. That includes the public park behind the development overlooking Broad Creek. "It would have been the loading dock in the back of the grocery store had the developer not been willing to say, 'That jewel out there that Hilton Head Island prizes is valuable to our tenants as well.'"

"We have an extensive design review board and design guidelines," said Ray.

HLAD comes before MEO Institute in 2018

In 2018, Hometown Legislative Action Day will be held one day before the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government and Advanced Institute, reversing the order from previous years. This change will allow more attendees to participate in the legislative reception and to save on travel.

Hometown Legislative Action Day

Tuesday, February 6
Columbia Marriott

Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government and Advanced Institute

Wednesday, February 7
Columbia Marriott

Brochures mailed and available on website

Wednesday, December 6

Hotel reservations deadline

Wednesday, January 10
Make hotel reservations at the Columbia Marriott by calling 1.800.593.6465 or 1.803.771.7000 and asking for the Municipal Association of SC HLAD rate of \$153 plus taxes.

Preregistration deadline for HLAD and MEO Institute

Tuesday, January 23

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“Island character is a concept this island was founded on when Charles Fraser started development here. We take that very seriously and have a high quality, sustainable product that will be beautiful and last for years. It also blends into nature, which is another one of the assets that people come here for.”

Creating the new Shelter Cove Towne Centre took creativity and care to get the aesthetics just right. One way was to add patches of public spaces, including benches and gathering areas, to the development.

Landscaping and pedestrian-level lighting also helped, as did rethinking the power lines.

“The town helped negotiate with Santee Cooper to move the power lines,” Ray said, so that it runs through the parking lot. “That’s not the area that you want to focus on. You park your car, and you get out and you move on.”

Lower-storied buildings were placed closer to where automobiles traveled. Larger buildings are situated farther back on the site. Coordinating bricks and building materials helped create a cohesive project.

“You never feel like you’re right in front of a large mass of large grocery (space) or big-box store,” said Ray.

Put paradise back

How about doing the reverse of what Joni Mitchell sang about in “Big Yellow Taxi,” a 1960s song that says, “They paved paradise and put up a parking lot?”

Reusing underperforming strip malls and fading shopping malls presents a prime redevelopment opportunity, said McMahon, who is a senior resident fellow at the Urban Land Institute and board chairman of the National Main Street Center.

In the City of Aiken, the Aiken Mall had been in foreclosure and faced an uncertain future. So business and community leaders traveled to Hilton Head Island to see if Shelter Cove concepts under the same development company, Southeastern, would be right for Aiken.

The Aiken delegation was impressed. And now redevelopment plans are in progress.

“We were so blessed to have a development team of this stature show interest in Aiken,” said City Manager John Klimm, adding that the redeveloped mall will feature a 1-mile walking path and will not be a traditional, fully enclosed mall when it is finished.

“The developers have a plan for a major park for not only their use for events but also for use by the community, which is very exciting,” Klimm said.

Recently, in the Town of Mount Pleasant, a former K-Mart shopping center has been redeveloped into Bowman Place Shopping Center, with new storefronts, restaurants and specialty stores.

Redeveloping old sites — retail and other kinds — as multifamily housing and mixed-use developments makes sense in some cases, since the infrastructure is already in place.

As McMahon put it: “Take these parking lots and put paradise back.”

NEWS BRIEFS

The South Carolina chapter of the Association for Talent Development awarded the **Municipal Association of SC** its “Best Practices in Distance Learning, eLearning and Blended Learning” recognition for the Association’s Municipal Elected Officials Institute training program.

The South Carolina Law Enforcement Accreditation granted reaccreditation to the **City of Florence** and initial accreditation to the **City of Beaufort**.

Garden & Gun magazine named the **City of Greenville** to its list of “Five Surprising Southern Food Towns,” celebrating the city’s “transformation into a true eat-and-drink destination.”

Money magazine and Realtor.com ranked the **City of Mauldin** No. 93 out of 100 cities that made a list of “The Best Places to Live in America,” describing them as “spots that offer a healthy economy, affordable homes, and a high quality of life.”

2018 Achievement Awards entry form online in December

Started in 1987, the Achievement Awards give cities and towns the opportunity to receive deserved recognition for successful and innovative projects that improve the quality of life for residents and add value to their communities.

The 2018 Achievement Awards entry form will be available on December 15 at www.masc.sc (keyword: achievement awards).

The Achievement Awards application has been revamped to provide an easy-to-use online form to highlight a project’s key points. Judges will look for projects that show innovation and

efficient use of resources, effective partnerships and adaptability to other hometowns.

The submission deadline is February 14. The main contact person and mayor for each city that enters will receive an email confirmation from the Association once the application has been successfully submitted.

Cities may submit an entry in one of the following population or subject categories:

Population Categories

- 1 - 1,000 population
- 1,001 - 5,000 population

- 5,001 - 10,000 population
- 10,001 - 20,000 population

Subject Categories

- Communications
- Economic Development – Joseph P. Riley Jr. Award
- Public Safety
- Public Service
- Public Works

For more information about the 2018 Achievement Awards, contact Meredith Houck at 803.933.1215 or mhouck@masc.sc.



WYFF-TV and the City of Greer teamed up on short segments offering safety tips. Photo: City of Greer.

Step up to the mic

When it comes to working with the news media and engaging the public, the bottom line is relationships are key.

That was one of the points that speakers made at the “One of Many Hats” workshop the Municipal Association hosted jointly with the South Carolina Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. The one-day workshop focused on building skills for city staff who have communications responsibilities as a part of their job.

Media relationships

Cultivating a mutually respectful relationship with the news media before any tragedy strikes is a big part of having a productive relationship, said Paul Vance, former lieutenant with the Connecticut State Police, who served as the sole police spokesman in the aftermath of the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings.

“Existing media relationships meant a high level of trust between local law enforcement and reporters immediately following the shootings,” he told about 50 workshop attendees.

Vance described several incidents during the weeks following the shootings when having trusting relationships with the media paid off. This was especially true in ensuring the privacy of the victims’ families.

He said that one of his top priorities in working with the media after the shootings was to make sure nothing happened or was said that could cause additional pain to the families. Because reporters already trusted him and the information he was sharing, they were more inclined to respect his requests about staying away from the grieving families, he said.

Vance said he approached building media relationships by treating reporters as if they were customers.

“When the press calls, you help, and that’s what I told my staff to do,” he said.

Engaging residents

Relationships are also central to engaging and involving residents in what’s going on in the community, according to Lauren Sims, executive program manager for the Town of Mount Pleasant. The town has found success with several outreach programs to engage residents.

“Our research showed our top outreach job should be letting people be heard.”

Town staff put together a multi-pronged strategy to get elected officials and staff out into the community engaging small groups at a time.

“We found people were more willing to talk honestly and engage when they were in a small group outside of city hall,” Lauren said. “This kind of engagement leads to ongoing relationships between city officials and residents, and that’s a win-win” in a city that’s one of the fastest growing in the country.

The town’s approach included gatherings that involved having coffee with the mayor, the town administrator’s e-brief and mobile office hours, roundtable meetings with neighborhood and community groups, reading patrol with police officers, and a planning college that teaches the public and people in businesses dealing with planning about the details of this city function. Mount Pleasant has won three municipal Achievement Awards for these outreach programs.

Make the case to the media

“Give me something with a ‘wow’ factor,” said Andy Shain, Columbia bureau chief with the *Post and Courier*, when asked about how to make press releases compelling. “Don’t tell me how many widgets your company is producing — Tell me how the widgets are making life better.”

He also said having a good relationship with reporters can help get your release picked up or your story covered. Reporters and communicators both have a job to do. Understanding that humanizes the exchange.

“Plus, the 24-hour news cycle means PR people and reporters have to work together,” Shain said.

He also gave his insights about the future of traditional newspapers. He said we could see a future when the Sunday edition of a newspaper might look more like a news magazine that you would read over the course of a week.

“Maybe you’d see a three-days-a-week print edition with seven-days-a-week online coverage,” he said.

Good relationships and FOIA requests

Relationships also come into play when responding to Freedom of Information requests submitted by members the public, including members of the media.

Bill Rogers, executive director of the S.C. Press Association, and Tiger Wells, the Association’s lobbyist who works on FOIA legislation, agreed that some newly enacted provisions of the law give requesters and the government entity more guidance and, in some ways, more flexibility in responding to requests.

“Both parties can work together to come to an agreement about when documents will be made available,” Wells said.

Rogers agreed — “Having an established relationship with reporters who are making requests can always help.”

An official campaign

The City of Greer partnered with WYFF-TV in Greenville to offer safety tips to residents about the “100 deadly

days of summer,” a period when teen drivers have a higher rate of automobile-crash fatalities.

Lt. Randle Ballenger with the Greer Police Department explained how this initial partnership with the television station resulted in an ongoing relationship with the station.

The initial four-part series continued as WYFF’s “4 Your Safety” with more than 40 segments. The series covered an array of topics, including the importance of yielding the right of way while driving, how to spray a fire extinguisher and how to clean out a lint trap in a dryer to prevent fires. While the Greer Police Department received positive feedback, WYFF’s viewers also began calling and emailing with segment ideas.

WYFF also shared stories on Facebook Live, garnering thousands of views. The results? Labor Day passed with zero traffic deaths in the city. And the city has the added benefit gaining a positive relationship with the television station.

How FOIA changed in 2017

Public officials and employees must stay abreast of the latest changes to the S.C. Freedom of Information Act. H3352 became law in May, ushering an assortment of changes to the process of requesting and producing documents under the law. Here are few areas where the law has changed:

Electronic versions

Specifies that an individual has the right to request and receive a public record by electronic transmission. However, the law now expressly states that a public body is not required to create an electronic version of a public record where one does not exist.

Fees

Limits a deposit to no more than 25 percent of the reasonably anticipated cost for reproduction of the records. The law specifically requires that any balance must be paid at the time of production. Before H3352 passed, a records custodian could charge a “reasonable” deposit before searching for and making copies of records.

Timeline

Reduces from 15 to 10 business days the time a public body has to respond to a written FOIA records request. If a requested record is more than 24 months old, the deadline is 20 business days. The public body is not required to provide notice of redactions during this initial response period.

Protecting the public

Requires local governments and political subdivisions to provide notice of the prohibition against using the personal information for commercial

solicitation. They must take reasonable steps against improper access. The law does not specify what steps must be taken, but the public body’s attorney should determine how this required notice should be given to those requesting information. This sample language could, for example, be included in the public body’s initial response or included in a form the requesting party completes when the request is fulfilled: “S.C. law provides that it is a crime to knowingly obtain or use personal information from a public body for commercial solicitation.”

Circuit court relief

Allows a public body to request a hearing with the circuit court for relief from unduly burdensome, overly broad, vague, repetitive or otherwise improper requests. Public body may also request a hearing when it is unable to make a good faith determination regarding information’s exemption from disclosure.



Cities use tools to attract investment

Askilled fisherman knows that to attract and ultimately land a trophy fish, you must use the right lures. Attracting, landing and retaining a new business is very similar to fishing for trophy specimens. So how can cities increase the attractiveness of its lures?

Business prospects want a location that offers strategic business advantages and the lowest possible financial risk. In many cases, areas targeted for economic development lack these ideal conditions.

In these situations redevelopment activity is unlikely to occur without sufficient financial incentives. Performance-based incentives rebate a portion of taxes and fees to development projects that meet public purpose goals or performance thresholds set by the governmental

entity. Accelerating redevelopment activity through performance-based incentives allows both the developer and city to win.

Performance-based incentives have several benefits: The public benefit is not speculative; the risk to the entity offering the incentive is minimal; compliance with performance standards occurs before payment of the incentive credit or rebate; and failure to meet performance standards in the future terminates the incentive. South Carolina cities have several performance-based incentives that have proven to be successful tools.

Tax Credits

Tax credits are one of the most commonly used forms, and many of them can be combined to maximize investor

benefit and, for larger projects, can even be sold to increase developer equity. These credits fall into two categories: historical rehabilitation and special use credits.

The federal government offers a Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, which allows a federal income tax credit for developers rehabilitating buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or contribute to a National Register historic district. The federal income tax credit is equal to 20 percent of eligible rehabilitation expenses.

The State Historic Preservation Office of the S.C. Department of Archives and History reviews the rehabilitation plans to ensure they comply with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

In South Carolina, a developer approved for the federal tax credit automatically qualifies for a corresponding 10 - 25 percent credit on state income taxes. Combined federal and state credits can offset as much as 30 - 45 percent of the cost of eligible rehabilitation expenses.

To provide an incentive for the rehabilitation, renovation, and redevelopment of underused buildings, the S.C. General Assembly passed tax credits for challenging properties, including abandoned buildings, empty textile mills or sites and vacant big box stores.

While these incentives have different eligibility requirements, all of them offer an option of a 25 percent local property tax or state income tax credit, ranging from 10 to 25 percent of eligible rehabilitation expenses. The property tax option is available at both the city and county levels if each local government adopts an ordinance authorizing the credit. The developer decides which one to take, the state income or property tax credit.

The Bailey Bill

In addition to the historical and special use credits, cities and counties in South Carolina can adopt an ordinance enacting a special property tax assessment, commonly referred to as the Bailey Bill assessment.

For no more than 20 years, the local government can lock in a special tax assessment based on the property's fair market value before rehabilitation. The abated value is the difference between the fair market value of the building at the start of renovation and the fair market value of the building after renovation. The adoption of identical city and county ordinances maximizes the value of the incentive and is a recommended best practice.

To learn more about these incentives, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: incentives). The SC Municipal Attorneys Association will feature a session, "The Wonderful World of Economic Development Incentives," at its annual meeting on December 1. Visit www.masc.sc (keyword: MAA).



The Lexington Icehouse Amphitheater (above) was supported by a tax increment finance district of seven local taxing jurisdictions, including the Town of Lexington. The amphitheater has become a popular space for public events (below). Photos: Town of Lexington.



Test yourself monthly quiz

True or False: The council form of government is often called governance by committee because of shared powers.



Answer: True.

The council form of government is often called governance by committee because the mayor and council members equally share legislative and administrative authority. To exercise administrative functions, the mayor or a member of council must receive authorization from council. It is common for the mayor to preside at council meetings and serve as spokesperson for council and the city.

Want to learn more? The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

offers in-person and online courses. Elected officials who complete all of the required coursework graduate from the institute and are eligible to participate in the Advanced Institute. The next in-person sessions, held February 7, will be Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government Sessions A and B and Advanced Institute. The Advanced MEO Institute courses offered will be "Municipal Utility Policy and Administration" and "Advanced Advocacy and Intergovernmental Relations." For more information, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: MEO).

Complete the 2018 Municipal Compensation Survey



Every January, the Municipal Association asks human resources staff and city clerks to update their city's information for the Association's online compensation survey. The survey is an annual report of wages and salaries of South Carolina municipal employees and elected officials.

It's a well-known fact that to attract and retain valuable employees, cities and towns must offer competitive wages and salaries. Depending on location, a municipality may be drawing from the same applicant pool as state agencies, counties, hospitals and private

corporations. The online tool allows officials to ensure their city's compensation scale is competitive with other municipalities with comparable populations and budgets.

Participating in the survey is optional; however, the Association encourages all municipalities to complete the online survey every year. Widespread participation makes the information more useful to all. The survey also has value beyond comparing salaries among cities.

"During the 2017 legislative session, we used information from the Compensation Survey to illustrate to legislators

the impact of different proposals on cities and towns during the pension reform debate," said Melissa Carter, research and legislative liaison for the Association.

"When estimating the fiscal impact to the state, school districts and local governments from proposed legislation, it is critically important to have accurate and complete data," stated Frank Rainwater, executive director of the S.C. Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office.

The 2017 survey will be available for data entry from January 8 until February 23.

Give info — Get info

Every year around this time, municipal clerks (or their designee) are asked to review, update and verify their city's information, such as staff titles and changes in elected leadership, in the Municipal Association's database through the Municipal Information Dashboard.

How this information benefits cities and towns

Accurate information in the database allows the Association to communicate effectively with municipal elected officials and staff to ensure they receive important information from the Association throughout the year, including

- training opportunities offered by affiliate associations and Risk Management Services,

- registration information and important deadlines for the Annual Meeting, Hometown Legislative Action Day, affiliate meetings and other workshops; and
- legal updates and background on legislation important to local government.

The database also houses information to be used in the online and print versions of the 2018 *Municipal Officials and Legislative Directory*, which provides easy access to key city demographic and contact information and names of elected officials and key municipal personnel.

When is the deadline?

Municipal clerks will receive an email and letter in early November reminding them to make updates by November 22 using the Municipal Information Dashboard, which is accessible from the Association's website. While the MID can be accessed and updated throughout the



year, it is important to update the information in November in preparation for the printed edition of the 2018 *Municipal Officials and Legislative Directory*.

To protect the integrity of the data, the ability to see, certify and change the municipality's information is restricted to the city clerk or previously designated representative. For cities without a clerk, or if someone else should be designated to update the information, contact Ashleigh Hair at ahair@masc.sc or 803.933.1288.

Updates for the MID are due November 22.



Until somebody gets hurt

A parade, festival, fair, outdoor concert or other public event can build community, boost the local economy and foster residents' attachment to their city.

But cities should plan ahead to control liability associated with activities that can draw crowds and involve out-of-the-ordinary risk exposures. Consider everything from ensuring that a road is adequately blocked off, if necessary, to adhering to requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act, to screening volunteers for violent criminal histories and managing liability associated with the onsite consumption of alcohol.

It's also important to clearly establish the city's role in a public event.

Is the city managing the event by exercising primary control over staff or a hired contractor for event services? Is the city a sponsor of the event? Is an organization, such as a service/civic organization, working on behalf of the city? A city's liability associated with an event depends on where the city falls in terms of these roles.

These are just a few of the general guidelines cities should follow to keep event attendees, volunteers, vendors and

the general public safe and to protect the city from liability exposure:

- Develop a special events policy that outlines what activities are allowed, if or how the city's name will be used in promotions, what coverage and limits of insurance are required, and what services will be provided and required.
- Have an application/permit process so the city can regulate and properly manage the event. Require all event organizers to complete an application regardless of the event size.
- Have a special events committee or coordinator help the city identify risks, develop effective controls, and assess the potential impact on the city, residents and local businesses. Decide what resources, special services or manpower may be required.
- Make sure the city has proper insurance. Require third parties, contractors and vendors to provide a certificate of insurance, name the city as an additional insured, and sign a hold harmless and indemnity agreement, which are contractual documents that hold one party harmless for the actions of another party. Get the certificate of insurance directly from the insurance

- agent and verify the coverage again the day before the event. Require a \$1 million minimum for general liability insurance for businesses and organizations participating in the event.
- Get a waiver or pre-event release from individuals participating in any sporting or participatory event, such as marathons, bike races and parades.
- Conduct facility/site inspections before and after an event to mitigate premise liability claims. Prepare a site as though all events are sponsored by the city.
- Respect attendees' First Amendment rights to express their opinions on politics, religion, current events or any topic in public places. Seek legal counsel before denying a particular group's request to participate in an event.

This information reflects a portion of the Special Events Liability Toolkit provided to members of the Municipal Association's Risk Management Services programs. For more information about the SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund and the SC Municipal Insurance Trust, contact Heather Ricard, director of Risk Management Services, at hricard@masc.sc or 803.933.1258.



PUBLIC ART

What to keep in mind

Public art enriches a city's sense of place and supports the arts community. But placing sculptures, murals and other pieces in downtowns and elsewhere poses an array of questions to city officials, from how to pay for it to where to put the art.

"People connect with it," said Tracy Ramseur, the development coordinator for the City of Greenville and staff liaison to the Arts in Public Places Commission, the body appointed by City Council to evaluate art applications, recommend specific pieces of art and identify potential sites for new public art. The City of Greenville has more than 70 pieces.

Several years ago, the city conducted a public survey about the art pieces.

"For every person who loved a piece, there was at least one person who hated it," said Ramseur. "That's art."

Have a plan — Be thoughtful

Think about locations where the city can use art to enhance the streetscape and create a sense of place.

"You don't want your city to look like every other city," said Ramseur.

"We're at the point now where we're trying to take the art off of Main Street and put it into parks and commercial corridors and residential areas. ... We've gotten to the point where we've said, 'Let's look at the entire city for the opportunity for public art. It's not just about downtown — It's about getting art into parks, neighborhoods and making it accessible to the public.'"

Find the art's purpose

Some cities may use art to beautify a lackluster location or to conceal unappealing spaces and property, such as HVAC

equipment. That has not been the focus in Greenville, however." The art should be celebrated," Ramseur said. "It should be placed in locations where it's well thought out, it's integrated into the site, and where it fits that particular site."

Define 'public art'

"We've seen definitions from other cities that are a page long," said Ramseur. "We consider art public if it is located on public property or if it is located on private property, but the general public has the ability to access and view it."

To that end, for public art located on private property, the city gets an easement from the property owner in order to maintain the art and provide public access to it.

"If the city is participating (financially) in the acquisition of a piece of art, that

art needs to be accessible to the public. In most cases, the city asks the organization that is commissioning the art to donate it to the city upon installation. Once the city formally accepts the donation, we will maintain and insure the art,” said Ramseur.

This tends to benefit all parties, since the developer is typically glad to hand over liability and maintenance responsibilities.

Maintain, appraise and record

Ramseur encourages cities to keep ongoing costs in mind, such as insurance and liability expenses, when considering public art. Some pieces, such as bronze statues, will require cleaning, while other materials may have other repair and maintenance needs.

Find the right way to fund it

The city has tried a few different ways to support public art.

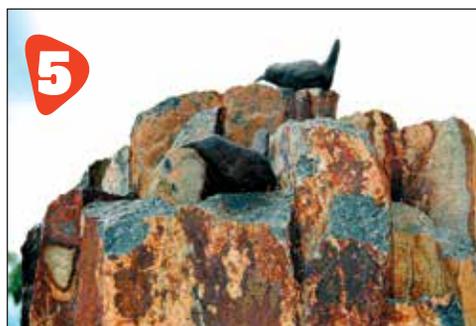
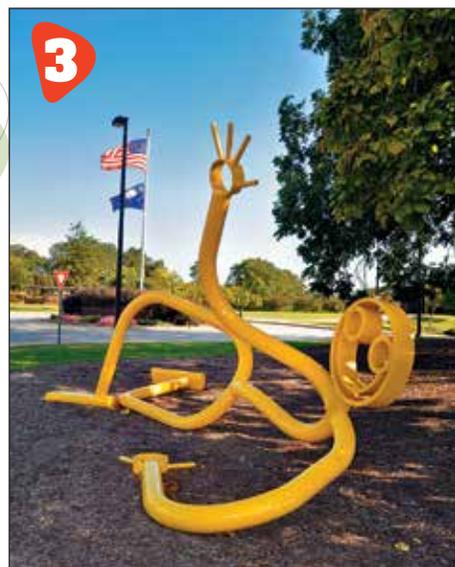
At one point, the city was setting aside 1 percent of the total cost of certain capital projects, such as buildings, bridges, streetscape and landscapes (but not underground utility projects). These funds were then either devoted to public art at the project site or kept in an account to fund a future piece of art somewhere else. This made it difficult to incorporate the art work into a project at the beginning of the site’s development, and it was also harder to predict how much money would be available. At another point, the city devoted a portion of the revenue from Sunday alcohol sales permits. Today, the city allocates accommodations tax revenues.

“We believe investing in the arts is a good use of public funds. Most of the time, the city is not paying 100 percent of the cost, said Ramseur. “Rather, a small amount from the city, typically less than \$25,000, helps leverage private funds.”

She urged cities to keep a detailed inventory of public art with a regular schedule of appraisals and maintenance requirements.

ART QUIZ

Can you name the South Carolina city that is home to each of these public art pieces? Answers on the back page.





City museums draw visitors, stir pride

The “Carolina” executive car (left) and other trains (upper right) are part of the Greenwood Historic Railroad Center collection. The restoration budget is a public-private partnership that includes grants from the S.C. National Heritage Corridor, City of Greenwood and private contributions. Photos: City of Greenwood.

Every town has a story to tell. And whether that story is one of history, science, agriculture, transportation or any other topic, there may be no better way to tell it — to both residents and tourists — than with a local museum.

Scores of museums dot South Carolina’s cities and towns, with exhibits that preserve, honor and explain local history and culture. Museums provide everything from a source of hometown pride for a community to an event venue that can provide an economic boost to a downtown. These museums can improve quality of life and support the long-term goals of cities, while local governments, in many instances, play a role in helping start, staff or fund the museums.

A ‘must stop’

One such museum is the Greenwood Museum and its nonprofit subsidiary, the

Railroad Historical Center. The museum features three floors with 20,000 square feet of hands-on exhibits.

Permanent displays include a 1900s replica of Main Street with interactive exhibits such as a cinema, general store, blacksmith shop, classrooms and railroad depot. It also displays gems, rocks and minerals and native wildlife, along with annual summer exhibits.

“The museum plays a critical role in Greenwood’s history preservation and telling Greenwood’s story,” said City Manager Charlie Barrineau. “Economic development is critical. Both museums were ‘must stops’ for the August 21 solar eclipse.”

The Greenwood Museum, like many in towns around the state, started out small.

Opening in 1970 with one room in the old armory, it eventually took over the entire building. In 1982, it moved to its own location on Main Street. In 2007,

the museum closed for renovations that were paid for with nearly \$600,000 from the city’s hospitality tax and a \$396,000 federal grant.

The city has no day-to-day role in the museum’s staffing, but it does provide operations support, Barrineau said. Greenwood County owns the building and covers the monthly utility costs, while the City of Greenwood’s hospitality tax funds help pay for the museum — including making sure the museum can provide free admission. The city also provides annual operations and maintenance support, budgeted at \$66,667 in 2017. The museum must provide copies of its expenditures to receive reimbursements from hospitality tax funds.

Nearby, the railroad center is home to a locomotive and a collection of restored train cars. It is committed to collecting, preserving and interpreting the railroad

history of Greenwood and the surrounding communities.

The city has leveraged hospitality tax dollars to receive three grants for the railroad museum, totaling \$250,000 from the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor. Greenwood also provides operations and maintenance support, with about \$35,511 spent through August of this year. The railroad center has plans for a new replica depot, modeled after the old Greenwood Main Street Union Station, to sit next to the seven historic rail cars.

Both the museum and the railroad center are rented for events.

'We have a wonderful story to tell'

In the City of Seneca, the idea for a museum celebrating African-American history was born after City Administrator Greg Dieterick learned about the often untold story of Oconee County's black history, including the story of Seneca Junior College, an African-American school from 1899 to 1939.

"He was fascinated by that. He felt that if this small black community in Oconee County could achieve that, there must be a lot more to tell," said Shelby Henderson, the manager of the Bertha Lee Strickland Cultural Museum.

The city eventually purchased land for the museum, established a preservation group and hired Henderson to coordinate the Strickland project.

"The city didn't have specific plans; they just knew they wanted to preserve the black community's history. They left it in my hands. I asked for permission to have a board of directors and the council approved that. It's an amazing board of directors — all volunteers, all grassroots," Henderson said.

The museum shares a backyard with the city's Lunney House Museum, and bears the name of the late Bertha Lee Strickland, a Seneca resident who worked for the Lunney family for 47 years, starting as a laundress at about the age of 13.

"We have a wonderful story to tell. Strickland is giving us a voice that will live well beyond any of us. And generations to come will have that piece of the



Visitors tour the Bertha Lee Strickland Cultural Museum, which preserves African-American history.

Photo: City of Seneca.

town's history," Henderson said. "For a small museum to be owned by a city that embraces it the way Seneca does is rare."

The museum is guided by the board of directors which city council appointed. The city fully funds the museum through its annual city budget and hospitality tax funds. Money from the hospitality tax was used to construct the building and supports free public museum events and programming. The city's annual budget includes items for operational expenses and staff professional development.

Henderson said the museum is committed to improving education, preservation and quality of life. But it also plays an economic development role for the city and the county.

How to draw people in

"No city in this country enjoys economic development without diversity. It's one of the things that draws people in," Henderson said. "To educate everyone about black culture and black history is to show the value and the worth. Once you understand people, you accept more."

In the Town of Williston, the town owns the former school building that houses both the museum and the library. The museum uses the building at no

cost, and the town pays for maintenance and utilities for both the museum and the library, said Kenny Cook, Williston's town administrator. The museum is run by a volunteer board. And while the town doesn't get directly involved with the day-to-day operations, it does assist with long-term plans.

"The museum is a source of pride for the community and is impressive for such a small town. It has very limited normal operation hours due to lack of funding and full-time employees. However, people can schedule it for private viewing and parties and often do," Cook said. "The board also tries to have an annual event to showcase the museum. They have done this each of the last two years, and it has been quite successful."

One of those volunteers, Julia Ravenscroft, said the museum is home to everything from collections of photographs of military veterans to a replica of a country store to old farming tools, a nod to Williston's history as one of the world's largest growers of asparagus.

"The people in this town are proud of their town, and they like to see things displayed. There's a great admiration for it," she said. "I think every town, if they can afford it, should have a museum."

Opera houses change with their towns

The Sumter Opera House attracts tourists and enriches residents' lives. Photo: City of Sumter.



Theater companies traveling between New York City and Miami used to stop at the Town of Clio's opera house to give performances, attracting crowds from neighboring South Carolina towns. But today, many decades later, the Edens Opera House now draws in the town's residents, serving as an unofficial community center.

When Jefferson D. Edens Sr. built the opera house around 1910, it contained stores, offices and an auditorium, according to its 1979 National Register of Historic Places nomination form.

While it's no longer drawing performers from both ends of the east coast, the opera house today has stayed true to its mixed-use identity. It houses an auto parts retailer, a variety market supply store, a low-power community radio station, a Medicaid services provider for children, a church and two youth organizations.

A nonprofit called Clio O.P.E.R.A. owns the building, said Clio Mayor Joe Kinney. He is the nonprofit board's immediate past chairman, and said the organization provides community service projects and special programming to

enrich the lives of the residents of Clio and surrounding areas. O.P.E.R.A. stands for Organizing, People, Empowering Resourceful Achievers.

"The history behind the ownership is significant," said Kinney, explaining that a former resident of the town, Sally Calhoun, donated the building to the organization in 2013. She took a special interest in a first grade class from Clio Elementary School and provided educational and program support for 12 years. She also sought to pay for their college education after the students completed high school, said Kinney.

Changes over the decades

Opera houses have had a presence in American cities and towns for more than 200 years.

In the 1800s, small towns began building their own opera houses as a way to attract visitors and entertainers. Over the years, cultural changes and the advent of movies led to the decline of many opera houses. A few, such as Clio's Edens Opera House, still grace small towns in South Carolina, where local leaders have

embraced their storied buildings and fit them into their downtown visions.

The Newberry Opera House was built in 1881. It hosted touring companies of New York plays, minstrel and variety shows, singers and speakers, magicians, mind readers, and boxing matches.

When it didn't offer shows, the auditorium became a community gathering space for meetings, dances or commencements. When silent movies and then traditional movies became popular, the Opera House became a movie theater in the 1920s. It closed in 1952, and a few years later, there was talk of tearing the building down. The Newberry Historical Society stepped in to preserve the Opera House, and it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970.

The Opera House was renovated in the 1990s, adding 10,000 square feet to the original building to create a modern theatrical production facility. Today, the opera house seats 426 and boasts state-of-the-art lighting and sound systems.

City Manager Matt DeWitt said the restored opera house has been a catalyst for an economic and artistic revitalization in

Newberry. The Opera House attracts private investment through sustained quality entertainment and community engagement. It also has an engaged board of directors who have a passion for the city and talk directly with investors, DeWitt said.

“The organization strives to fulfill the mission of cultural and economic development through the window of the arts,” he said. “This is done by attracting quality arts programming that includes all the community and demonstrating its commitment time and time again.”

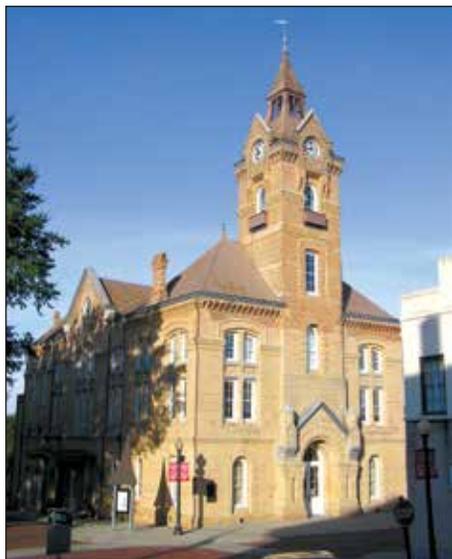
DeWitt said the Opera House brings roughly 100,000 people to downtown Newberry each year for performances, tours, educational seminars and meetings. It also supports tourism in the Midlands.

“By quality entertainment and tours, the Opera House supports the city with extra dollars to not only the city, but also local businesses through increased revenue,” DeWitt said.

These efforts pay off. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a 2009 study found that 78 percent of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural or heritage activities.

Economic contributions

With cultural and heritage travelers spending an average of \$994 per trip, they contribute more than \$192 billion



The Newberry Opera House has driven cultural and economic development for decades. Photo: City of Newberry.



The Edens Opera House in Clio houses youth development groups, a church and an auto parts store. Photo: Town of Clio.

annually to the national economy. (The study was conducted by Mandala Research for the U.S. Cultural and Heritage Tourism Marketing Council, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Commerce. Heritage Travel, Inc., a subsidiary of The National Trust for Historic Preservation, was the lead sponsor of the study.)

The Sumter Opera House is another site with a colorful history. Built in 1895, the building has served not only as an opera house, but also as a music academy, movie theater, city offices, barber shop, jail, and even a meat market. In 1982, the Opera House closed its doors after 46 years as a movie theater.

The City of Sumter purchased the building in 1984 with an eye toward gaining office space and attracting visitors downtown. Careful renovations to restore the Opera House to its former beauty, including restoration of the art deco gold leaf by French restoration artists, were completed in 1987. These renovations were the first steps in an ongoing movement toward downtown revitalization and historic preservation in the City of Sumter.

Today, the Opera House still houses Sumter City Hall and City Council’s chambers. The 550-seat theater hosts a variety of local, regional and national talent, free performances by local groups, and many graduation ceremonies.

The Sumter Opera House attracts private investment through collaboration

with educational systems, civic organizations, corporate sponsors and individual renters, said Seth Reimer, cultural manager for the City of Sumter.

“We are creating a vibrant community that assists investors with getting their message out in an engaging way,” Reimer said. “The Sumter Opera House, now presenting local, regional and national acts builds a powerful presence and allows investors another ‘stage’ in which to reach customers and entertain prospective and current clients. There is evidence that it helps increase name recognition and offer networking opportunities to develop new business.”

By presenting 14 acts in the 2016 - 2017 season, the Sumter Opera House had an economic impact of as much as \$750,000, considering its 70 total events and more than 21,000 attendees, Reimer said. Patrons at the Opera House spend money on meals, refreshments, souvenirs, gifts, transportation, lodging and other miscellaneous items.

The City of Sumter strives to be a destination worthy of travel and visitation, and the Opera House supports that goal, Reimer said.

“The Sumter Opera House is spearheading that vision by stimulating economic development and tourism growth while enriching the cultural lives of Sumter residents,” he said. “The Sumter Opera House is creating an environment that blends backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures.”



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Calendar

For a complete listing of training opportunities, visit www.masc.sc to view the calendar.

NOVEMBER

8 - 10 SC Municipal Human Resources Association Annual Meeting. North Charleston Marriott. Topics include workplace violence, new-employee background checks, and the Family and Medical Leave Act.

9 Risk Management Services Annual Members Meeting. Columbia Conference Center.

16 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Fourth Quarter Meeting. Columbia Conference Center. Topics include policy decisions affecting the long-term asset management of a stormwater program, a U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency update, and the Common Enemy rule in state drainage laws.

DECEMBER

1 Municipal Attorneys Association Annual Meeting. Embassy Suites Columbia. Topics include a legislative update, ethics session, economic development incentives, and issuing a zoning or code enforcement citation.

FEBRUARY

6 Hometown Legislative Action Day. Marriott Columbia. (See p. 2)

7 Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government Session A and B and Advanced Institute. Marriott Columbia. Advanced Institute courses are “Municipal Utility Policy and Administration” and “Advanced Advocacy and Intergovernmental Relations.” Topics for Session A and B include conducting public meetings; visioning, strategic planning

and goal setting; and ethics and public accountability. (See p. 2)

15 SC Association of Municipal Power Systems Associate Member Lunch. Seawell’s in Columbia.

21 – 23 International Institute of Municipal Clerks Region III Meeting/ SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Spring Academy. Hyatt Regency Greenville. Topics include keeping a city’s charm during rapid growth, regional cooperation and how college towns can create a hometown connection.

MARCH

1 SC Association of Stormwater Managers First Quarter Meeting. Columbia Conference Center.

PUBLIC ART QUIZ ANSWERS

(from page 10): 1. City of Columbia. 2. Town of Hilton Head Island. 3. City of Greer. 4. City of Spartanburg. 5. City of Anderson. 6. City of Greenville. 7. City of Lancaster.