

2018 Annual Meeting: Get the leadership message

In the three years since Jennifer Pinckney's husband, Rev. Sen. Clementa Pinckney, was killed in the shootings at the Mother Emanuel church in Charleston, she has established a foundation to continue her husband's legacy of improving the quality of life for all South Carolina residents.

As the keynote speaker at the Municipal Association of South Carolina's Annual Meeting, July 19 – 22, Pinckney will bring an inspiring message of hope and leadership to the opening general session.

Her vision will set the tone for this year's agenda of learning, public service and inspiration.

Keep the connection

Ask Dale Henry how he's doing, and his answer may very well be "oscillating between fantastic and awesome."

Besides energy, he also has tips for how others — especially public servants — can feel that good, that inspired and that motivated. The former Tennessee county councilman, humorist and author will speak at the Association's Annual Meeting delegates' luncheon on July 20 on topics from getting excited about serving the public to staying ethical.

"We just get beat down with the day-to-day activities and routines of our job," said Henry. But it doesn't have to be that way, even if feelings of invisibility sometimes overtake feelings of fulfillment for local government officials.

Part of that has to do with losing the connection to the reason elected and municipal officials entered public service to begin with. It's a challenge that also ties into ethics, according to Henry.

"I think the trap we fall into sometimes is we stop listening to our constituents, and we start responding in a way that we think is best for them. We almost become like a parent instead of a partner," Henry said.

"When we stop listening and we insert too much of ourselves into our jobs, then I think what happens is it doesn't sound like unethical behavior. But we ran on the promise that we'd represent them, not that we would make decisions for them. I know that's a subtle thing, but that's exactly what ethics is all about — It's the subtleties in life."

Annual Meeting preconference choices

Municipal officials will have three preconference workshops to choose

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from at the 2018 Annual Meeting in Hilton Head Island. All will take place the morning of Thursday, July 19. The preconference workshops are additional educational opportunities and are not included in the Annual Meeting registration fee. The three workshops are Media Training for a New Media World, Civil Discourse in the Face of Incivility, and Revolutionizing Government in the 21st Century.

Media Training for a New Media World

If you aren't telling your story quickly and accurately, someone else will, according to NP Strategy, a South Carolina marketing and communications firm. Amanda Loveday, senior project advisor, and Meaghan Norman, media relations manager with NP Strategy, will present strategies to communicate effectively when dealing with the news media. Loveday's background includes work with political candidates and elected officials, while Norman is a former television reporter and anchor.

A few messaging basics that all cities and towns should keep in mind include these:

- Identify your audience.
- Develop a clear message.
- Pick the right platforms to get that message out.

When it comes to media relations, city officials should be proactive:

- Establish relationships with media outlets as soon as possible and regularly pitch stories.
- Use social media to tell your story and leverage analytics to maximize its benefits.

If there is a crisis, stick to these guidelines:

- Never lie.
- Never say "no comment."
- Pick the right spokespersons.

(This session is limited to 35 registrants to maximize the opportunity for hands-on participation.)

Civil Discourse in the Face of Incivility

Municipal officials can face incivility from residents and others in both everyday interactions and divisive situations. Learn to develop leadership skills to navigate and resolve conflicts in a professional manner. Explore listening with the goal of understanding as an essential part of leadership, and get the opportunity to practice new skills that will inspire leadership and civility in the governing bodies of your communities. Participants will work in groups using a case study to explore the tools presented in the session.

Revolutionizing Government in the 21st Century

Residents have come to expect more from local leaders in terms of expertise, creativity and proactive problem solving. Increased scrutiny, expanding regulations, a shifting political landscape and significant workforce challenges add up to a valuable opportunity to activate change, drive innovation and successfully lead toward a better future. Learn how to maximize capabilities for the 21st century using sound strategies and a series of specific tactics designed to disrupt the status quo.

Registration

The Annual Meeting registration process will mirror what's been done in the past. All attendees must use the Association's online process for reserving hotel rooms and registering for the meeting. Each city received a May appointment time based on a drawing held in March.

The 30-minute appointments for municipal representatives to register their officials are scheduled for May 29, 30 and 31. During the city's appointment this month, Association staff will assist the municipal representative in registering all officials who will be attending from that city. The deadline for other hotel reservations is June 19, and registration is July 5. For nonmunicipal attendees, hotel and Annual Meeting reservations must be made online from June 1 – 19.

Help available for first responders



During the 2017 legislative session, the S.C. General Assembly approved funds for the second consecutive year to help first responders suffering from mental health issues caused by work-related stress.

Despite the General Assembly's action on this issue in 2017, budgetary shortfalls discovered after the session and uncertainty about gubernatorial vetoes initially left law enforcement and first responder organizations around the state wondering whether those funds would materialize in 2018. Ultimately, the funds weren't negatively affected by the shortfall or a veto, and the State Law Enforcement Division, the managing agency, received the funds in January.

"This was a win for all," said Melissa Carter, research and legislative liaison for the Municipal Association. "Public safety professionals get the resources they need to return to their passion rather than having to go on disability. At the same time, cities retain good folks."

The state fund of \$500,000 covers paid employees and volunteers who serve as law enforcement officers, firefighters or emergency medical responders. The benefit provides coverage for out-of-pocket expenses that first responders incur after suffering a psychiatric or mental stress illness resulting from a single emergency incident or active engagement in multiple emergency incidents.

To qualify for the benefit, the first responder must be receiving care by a licensed physician, counselor or clinician, and the care must be appropriate for the condition causing the

psychiatric or mental stress. The benefit also provides training and prevention opportunities to help save, protect, and retain first responders.

The funding helps cities and towns manage their budgets, too, by addressing "mental-mental" issues of public safety rather than treating it as a condition to be a covered workers' compensation injury.

"It really is a pleasingly ingenious and simple solution," said Tiger Wells, government affairs liaison for the Municipal Association.

"Rather than create a potentially problematic loophole in the state's workers' comp law that would make it easier to bring a successful claim for mental injury, this solution actually directly addresses the financial hurdles that have far too often become a barrier to first responders receiving the restorative care they need."

The funding focuses on more than psychological care after an incident, however. The benefit also provides training and prevention opportunities intended to protect first responders and to retain them in their department.

The South Carolina Law Enforcement Assistance Program provides assistance to those first responders suffering from stress related illnesses.

"The funding is essential for mental health of our first responders," said Zorrina Harmon, benefits director for the South Carolina State Firefighters' Association. "Without a mechanism for assistance, recovery is difficult and retention is practically impossible."

Funding for benefit in the 2018 - 2019 state budget is still under debate in the General Assembly.

NEWS BRIEFS

The **City of Rock Hill** earned a 2018 Governor's Cup award for the city's 2017 UCI BMX World Championships event. The award recognizes outstanding practices in tourism promotion, marketing and development.

The Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund board of trustees appointed Shaun Greenwood, city administrator of the **City of Forest Acres**, to fill an unexpired term on the board.

Southern Living magazine's "The South's Best Small Town 2018" list ranked the **City of Aiken** No. 1 and the **City of Beaufort** No. 6. In "The South's Best Cities" category, the **City of Charleston** was No. 1 and the **City of Greenville** was No. 6.

The Government Finance Officers Association awarded the **City of Aiken, City of Beaufort, City of Charleston, City of Clinton, City of Greenville, Town of Hilton Head Island, Town of Lexington** and the **Town of Mount Pleasant** with the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for each municipality's annual budget for the fiscal year beginning in 2017.

For benefit information and claim forms for law enforcement staff, contact Eric Skidmore with the South Carolina Law Enforcement Assistance Program at 803.252.2664 or eskidmore@sled.sc.gov.

To access this benefit information and claim forms for firefighters or emergency medical responders, contact Zorrina Harmon, benefits director for the South Carolina State Firefighters' Association at 803.807.1099 or zorrina@scfirefighters.org.



Aiken City Council members Ed Girardeau, Andrea Gregory, Lessie Price and Ed Woltz take the oath of office. Photo: City of Aiken.

MEO Institute: 30 years of learning and serving

Councilmember Lessie B. Price of Aiken was among the early graduates of the South Carolina Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government in July of 1989. She has since celebrated many milestones over the years with the Municipal Association of South Carolina, including cutting the ribbon at the Association's new building in January 2000 and serving as the Association's president in 1994.

"As I reflect back on being a newly elected official, the value of getting that training helped me to get a jump start on issues," she said. "As I moved forward, the networking with other elected officials was also of critical value, and the Association leaders encouraged that."

The MEO Institute began in 1986 to provide elected officials with a knowledge base for establishing good public policy

for their hometowns. Thirty years ago in 1988, the institute recognized its first class of graduates. Price graduated one year later in the second class.

With this year's recognition of 30 years of MEO Institute graduates, Price is the only elected official still in office today from the earliest classes. She credits her longevity in local government to being well-trained and well-informed.

"It gave me a head start with the initial training," said Price. "Then as I managed to get additional training over the years it was very enriching for me as I dealt with issues in many areas. I managed to not only build connections with the Association but with other elected leaders, as well."

The institute's training has changed over the years to meet the needs of South Carolina's city councilmembers and mayors. In the beginning, officials had to

attend classes in person. The membership then asked for more frequent training. To meet this request, the Association worked with the 10 regional councils of governments and South Carolina ETV in 1996 to offer the classes via satellite. The sessions were broadcast simultaneously to all 10 regional locations.

In 2014, the Association launched the first on-demand courses online. Currently, five on-demand courses are available online 24/7.

"When you look at the amount of training that is currently offered by the Association, there has been tremendous growth," said Price. "My advice to newly elected officials would be that as soon as you are elected, you need to get into training as soon as possible and build alliances. Attend as many of these sessions as you can for development."

Annual Meeting recognition

The Association's Annual Meeting, July 19 – 22 on Hilton Head Island, will feature MEO Institute graduates and the program's accomplishments over the decades. Also, the eight cities that can count all sitting councilmembers as graduates will be recognized.

"I feel that I am better at elected public service having gone through the training. I feel good about my service," said Price. "As we work in government, there are so many vast changes taking place, and if you don't have this education, if you are not getting retooled with your training, then your whole focus will be lost. So the more training you have, whether it is on the local level, state level or even going to our national meeting, the more beneficial it will be to you, the more informed you will be as you serve the people in the communities that you represent."

Price said she's glad to know the original training she received long ago is still applicable today.

"What that means is, the earlier you get started, the more beneficial it is to have the training. Then as time changes, as things advance, you are constantly getting retrained every year or every so often."

Hit the ground running

From open records law to ethics to basic municipal meeting terminology, newly elected officials have an array of basics to master. The MEO Institute's free online course "The Five Basics of Effective Governing" provides foundational information about governance that guides elected officials during their first few months in office. Access the course at www.masc.sc (keyword: five basics).

- Understand your leadership role — Examine what makes a successful



In 1996, Mayor Wayne George of Mullins (now the current executive director of the Association), Councilmember Bob Galiano of Sumter, Howard Duvall, executive director of the Municipal Association and Councilmember Lessie Price of Aiken participated in the first broadcast of Hometown Network, which was produced at SCETV. The Municipal Elected Officials Institute had been in existence for 10 years before Hometown Network was launched 1996.

leader and how to represent everyone in your city or town.

- Know your city — Look at all the different aspects of a city that each councilmember should know including staff, services, infrastructure and form of government.
- Know your budget — Look at some of the basic requirements by state law that every councilmember should know.
- Conduct effective meetings — Examine what makes an effective meeting and agenda procedures.
- Understand the Freedom of Information Act and Ethics Act — Learn about FOIA and get a look at a conflict of interest scenario that highlights the Ethics Act.

On May 2, the Association offered its first orientation session for newly elected officials.

Upcoming sessions

The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government offers in-person and online courses. Elected officials who complete 25 hours of the required coursework graduate from the institute and are eligible to participate in the Advanced Institute. The next in-person courses, held May 22 at the regional COG locations, will be "Municipal Governance and Policy" and the "Freedom of Information Act in S.C." The next Advanced MEO Institute sessions, held October 24 at the Columbia Marriott, will be "Advanced Budgeting and Finance" and "Advanced Leadership and Governance."

Honoring S.C. city councils

The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government is launching its Honor Roll that will recognize municipalities each year that can count all members of their sitting council as graduates of the MEO Institute.

Also, the Association staff will visit a council meeting in each Honor Roll city to present a plaque recognizing the honor roll designation. Additional cities may be recognized at the Annual Meeting in July.

The 2018 MEOI Honor Roll cities recognized at Hometown Legislative Action Day:

- Town of Blackville
- Town of Gray Court
- City of Greer
- Town of Hampton
- Town of Hollywood
- City of Inman
- Town of Pendleton
- City of Wellford

40 years of training clerk/treasurers

As the SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association prepares to celebrate its 40th anniversary this year, consider how the organization — and the duties of the municipal clerk — have changed over the years.

MFOCTA started out solely for finance officers and, in fact, was simply named the South Carolina Municipal Finance Officers Association. It later expanded to encompass clerk/treasurers. The training institute, Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute, has also evolved to be more inclusive.

Initially, MCTI lasted one entire week per year for three years. But in 1991, finance directors, clerks and treasurers across the state completed a survey in which they expressed interest in replacing the full week with two sessions per year lasting 2 ½ days each. The officials surveyed said more city workers would be able to attend MCTI if they only had to leave their posts at city hall for 2 ½ days at a time instead of a whole week. The three-year duration of MCTI remained the same.

Clerks, too, have seen their roles and responsibilities keep pace with changing times.

“The position has grown from a secretarial position to one that is an integral part of a city’s management team,” said Sherron Skipper, municipal clerk for the City of Hartsville. A member since 1988, she served as vice president from 1995 to 1997, president from 1997 to 1999, and immediate past president until 2000.

Technology has also played a big role in the responsibilities of today’s clerks.

“It has gone from totally paper records to mostly digital with some paper still for historic originals,” said Skipper.

That’s just one reason new municipal clerks should stay on top of the latest technology, said Skipper.

The soft skills are changing, too. And that requires being attuned to each city’s unique culture.

“Learn public servanthood in an environment where different forms of government and jurisdictions can dictate the political culture,” she added. “I also recommend new clerks develop excellent public customer service — Learn to smile, be friendly and don’t sweat the small stuff.”

Added Skipper: “I am looking forward to what changes lie ahead in our profession for the future.”

Celebrating municipal clerks

The International Institute of Municipal Clerks is recognizing May 6 – May 12 as the 49th Annual Municipal Clerks Week.

The S.C. General Assembly passed a resolution also recognizing May 6 – 12 as Municipal Clerks Week.

Get resources to recognize Municipal Clerks Week at www.masc.sc (keyword: clerks week).

Spring MCTI graduates



The spring graduates of the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute are Lenessa Hawkins, Finance/ Human Resources Director, City of Lake City; Chaconas Parson, Town Clerk, Town of Andrews; and Diane Quattlebaum, Assistant Clerk, Town of Harleyville, pictured with Bill Tomes, Fellow, Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities at the College of Charleston.

2018 Compensation Survey results ready to view



Results from the 2018 Compensation Survey are now available on the Municipal Association's website.

Since 2006, the Municipal Association has conducted an online compensation survey. The data from participating municipalities is compiled into a searchable database available on the Association's website.

This year, 62 percent of South Carolina's 271 municipalities completed the

Compensation Survey, and the final 2018 report can be downloaded in its entirety as a PDF. Users can also generate reports based on specific search criteria, including population range, specific positions or the town's annual payroll budget. The data can then be exported to an Excel spreadsheet or printed directly from the website.

Survey participation is not mandatory. However, the Association encourages all cities and towns to complete the survey so the final report is as comprehensive as possible.

For more information about the Compensation Survey, contact Sara Snell at sjohnson@masc.sc or 803.933.1240.



Test yourself monthly quiz

True or False:

“Economic development is a long-term process that happens over time.”



Answer: True

Economic development is not a short-term process or a one-time project. It is a continuous process that needs to be driven by a sound

economic development plan. The economic development plan provides a comprehensive overview of the local economy; sets policy direction for economic

growth; and identifies strategies, programs and projects to improve the local economy.

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 courses, held May 22 at the regional COG locations, will be “Municipal Governance and Policy” and “Freedom of Information Act in South Carolina.” The next Advanced MEO Institute sessions, held October 24 at the Columbia Marriott, will be “Advanced Budgeting and Finance” and “Advanced Leadership and Governance.”

The City of Walterboro accessed several funds, including an SRF loan and an RIA grant to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant, scheduled to be completed this year. Photo: AECOM.



Infrastructure

Laying the groundwork for growth

With more than 5 million people living in South Carolina — a benchmark hit three years ahead of projections — it is no surprise that water and sewer infrastructure in South Carolina will require substantial investment. After all, many of these systems were built for less populated communities and will need upgrades to better serve existing populations and allow for continued growth.

Pipes, pump stations and treatment plants are designed and permitted based on current conditions and reasonable growth. So, what happens when that growth is faster than

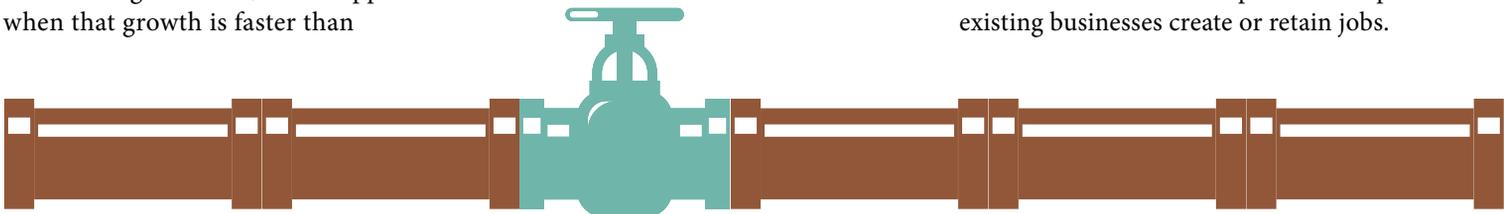
“These improvements position the city for the economic growth we are experiencing today and in the future.”

— Joe Nichols,
City of Union’s utilities director and chairman
of the Union County Development Board

anticipated or when system components exceed their useful life and serve as a barrier to new development?

The cities of Union, Aiken and Walterboro were able to implement their upgrades in a more timely manner with funds from State Revolving Fund loans and Rural Infrastructure Authority grant programs as well as other federal and state resources.

One of the factors RIA officials consider when reviewing applications for economic infrastructure grants is whether system improvements will help accommodate new development or help existing businesses create or retain jobs.



By laying the proper infrastructure foundation, cities and towns can prepare for a more sustainable future by ensuring reliable services for both existing and new customers. Such investments will help grow economies, create new jobs and boost economic opportunities.

For many utility systems, problems such as water loss and disruption, as well as outdated technology, are a direct result of the challenge of finding resources to maintain and upgrade the infrastructure. In order to continue serving the local residents and businesses sufficiently, improvements to these systems are not only necessary for them to function well but often coincide with a system's requirement to meet regulatory standards.

For an example of this, look to the City of Union. Over the last few years, Union has been at the center of economic activity for Union County, where significant industrial growth has occurred.

In March of last year, Gestamp, an automotive supplier, announced an expansion and \$129 million in capital investment that is projected to bring 130 new jobs to the area. Other nearby industries that rely heavily on wastewater treatment have also required increased wastewater flows over the past few years.

It was apparent this growth would put a strain on a nearby pump station and would cause service disruptions to its customers, including schools, businesses and residents. In the past two years, the city spent \$30,000 on emergency repairs alone. With a new hospital also slated for construction in 2019, increasing capacity in this part of the service area is critical. To prepare for the future demand, the City of Union is expanding the pump station's capacity to handle this increased volume, ensuring that all users will have access to reliable sewer infrastructure. The city awarded the design phase to an engineering firm in December of 2017.



Construction to upgrade the City of Union's Meansville Road Pump Station is expected to begin in late June or July. Photo: City of Union.





The City of Aiken's Newberry Street Phase 1A Project included improvements to stormwater infrastructure. Photo: City of Aiken.

“These improvements position the city for the economic growth we are experiencing today and in the future,” said Joe Nichols, the City of Union’s utilities director who also serves as chairman of the Union County Development Board.

In downtown Aiken, a similar situation occurred.

The Aiken Renaissance area is the historic and cultural center of the city, easily recognizable by many tourists and South Carolinians alike. To keep the momentum going, city leaders developed a plan to address the deteriorating and undersized water lines that were serving the area’s retail stores, restaurants and offices.

The City of Aiken was able to increase reliability and maximize the opportunities for new development in this highly visible area. It did this through line size upgrades — increasing the diameter of the pipe in parts of the project from a 4 inches to 6 inches — and looping portions of the system to replace dead-end lines with a continuous flow.

In the City of Walterboro, the challenge was two-fold. The existing wastewater treatment plant did not meet current environmental standards. At the same time, the city wanted to lay the groundwork for economic development. City leaders recognized the need for a major upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant’s infrastructure, increasing its capacity by nearly

70 percent to better serve existing residents and also to enhance the system’s capability to support future economic growth.

“With outside funding, cities can tackle these bigger projects all at once,” said Bonnie Ammons, executive director of the S.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority. Otherwise, a city may be unable to undertake the project at all or may only be able to proceed in a piecemeal manner, as funding becomes available on a recurring basis from the city’s annual budget.

“Concern with that approach is that growth doesn’t always wait around.”

To learn more about the RIA’s loan and grant programs targeting water and sewer infrastructure, visit www.ria.sc.gov.



Stay on top of sidewalk risks

While the benefits of well-maintained sidewalks are hard to dispute, sidewalks can also pose legal risks for cities.

The first question to ask is, “Does the city own the property in question?” said Heather Ricard, director of the Municipal Association’s Risk Management Services.

Most members of the SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund have received claims from individuals alleging they suffered some kind of damage as a result of a sidewalk condition, such as a resident who attempts to force a city to compensate him for an injury he received after tripping on a broken sidewalk.

Still, while the state of South Carolina owns most roads and sidewalks, that doesn’t mean local governments are free from risk.

“If the city has chosen to voluntarily repair or maintain the road or sidewalk, they may have assumed liability,” said Ricard.

“If a resident has reported a defect or condition in the sidewalk to the city, even if the city does not own or maintain the sidewalk, they may have a duty to inform the owner (the state or county) of the condition.”

For example, after Hurricane Matthew, several state-owned sidewalks in the City of Marion had buckled. The city wanted them repaired — not only to ensure pedestrians had a place to walk but also to protect the city from lawsuits, too.

“If you’ve got one that’s kicked up high, it’s a trip hazard,” said Marion Mayor Ashley Brady, who is an insurance agent. “I see that all day long with work.”

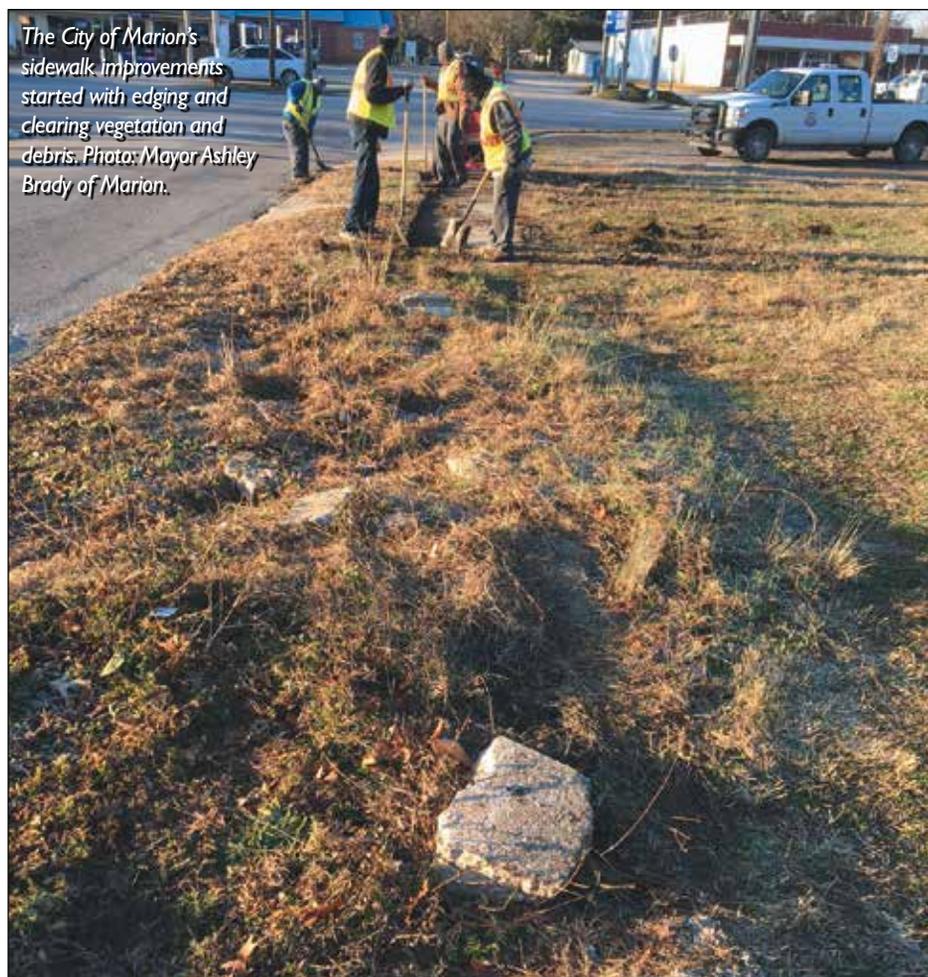
So the City of Marion keeps the S.C. Department of Transportation apprised of hazards.

“We have a good relationship with our local S.C. DOT engineer,” he said. “We talk weekly with him, and he says, ‘I’ll get to it,’ and they get to it.”

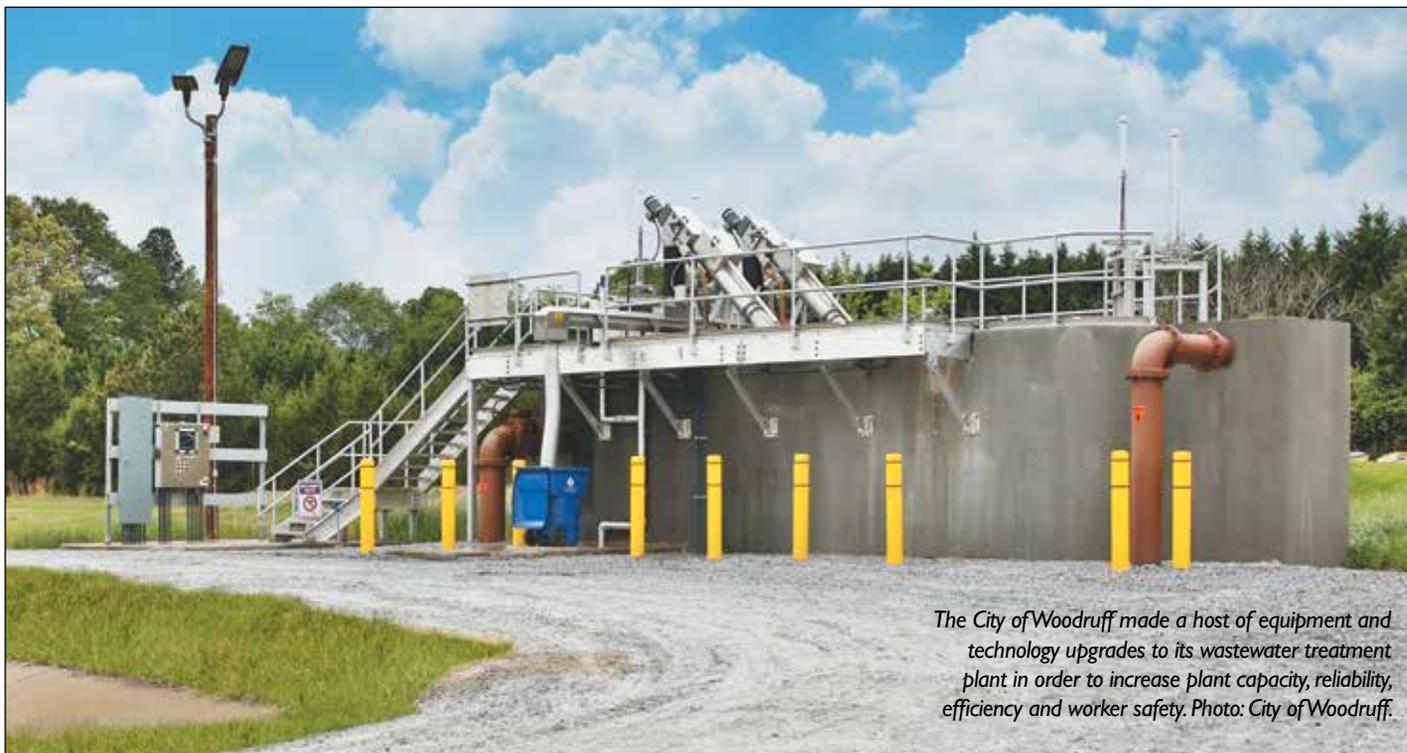
SCMIRF suggests cities keep a form letter on file to report poor conditions to the owner of the property and document that any repairs to the property do not impose liability.

The letter should include several pieces of information, including the following:

- A description of the defect or damage, such as a pothole, raised sidewalk, downed tree, overgrown tree, downed sign or whatever the case may be.
- Street names and addresses information about the location of the problem in need of attention from the property owner.
- A statement that describes the property owner’s legal responsibility for the maintenance of the problem area and any activities necessary to ensure the public’s safety.
- The purpose of the letter. For example, it could say that the purpose is to put the named property owner on notice of the poor condition of the road, sidewalk, right of way or other area.
- The city’s intention to seek reimbursement from the property owner for materials, equipment and labor costs, if the property owner asks the city to repair the damage.
- A statement that makes clear the city’s assistance was a one-time event. An example: “Please note that after repairs are made, the city does not intend to continue maintenance on this segment of (property owner’s) roadway.”
- A statement that says the city accepts no liability for the item repaired.



The City of Marion’s sidewalk improvements started with edging and clearing vegetation and debris. Photo: Mayor Ashley Brady of Marion.



The City of Woodruff made a host of equipment and technology upgrades to its wastewater treatment plant in order to increase plant capacity, reliability, efficiency and worker safety. Photo: City of Woodruff.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure helps draw business

Whether it's extending sewer lines, expanding the capacity of a wastewater treatment plant or upgrading an electrical substation, infrastructure plays a big role in cities and towns working to attract economic development prospects.

In other words, if you build it, they will come — Or at least they're more likely to stay and consider expanding.

Take the City of Newberry, which built a new electrical substation adjacent to its largest customer, a major food processing company. The city chose the location to minimize the distance that electricity must travel along distribution lines from the substation serving the company to the company's processing facility.

The proximity of the substation to the company's processing plant greatly reduces the chance of a power outage. Reliable electricity is particularly important to a food processing company, where power outages halt production. This can result in a loss of refrigeration, meaning food products must be discarded which can be costly.

"This company has U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors on site, and if they cannot prove that food is held at certain temperatures, it can force them to lose the product and would be considered a financial loss for them," said Tim Baker, utility director for the city, which is a member of the SC Association of Municipal Power Systems. "Loss of electricity also forces them to have to reprogram much of their machinery, which impacts their production time."

Baker said making the upgrade to serve one of the area's largest employers may have helped retain jobs in the area. And the city has also seen more power usage at the site as the company adds more refrigeration units and automation processes. Newberry is building another electrical substation on the other side of the city to be served by a different transmission line. The city's plan is to eventually tie the two stations together to provide back-ups for each other.

"Having the right infrastructure in place is vitally important to helping economic development in our

community," Baker said. "The advantage we have as a small city is that we are accessible to business leaders and are willing to sit down with them and see what they truly need and then help them every step of the way in meeting those needs."

City at a crossroads

In the City of Woodruff, the wastewater treatment plant was nearing the end of its life expectancy when the city decided to expand the existing plant and take advantage of new technology with upgrades.

"Our system was at a point we had to make a decision — go to a regional facility or invest and do it in-house. Council saw the vision of what we could be," City Manager Lee Bailey said.

Now the city can use the recent upgrade of the plant as a valuable tool in helping the area recruit new businesses.

"It boils down to having available capacity to offer to new businesses or development.

In the sewer world, capacity of the plant is key. We're speaking about how

much available wastewater you can treat,” Bailey said.

The new plant, which went online in September 2017, has increased capacity by 40 percent, he said. Part of the project includes renegotiating the town’s service area, with Woodruff now able to extend its lines to an area with available commercial land abutting the city limits.

“What that does is help keep our debt capacity lower. That turns into lower user rates, and that helps attract new businesses,” Bailey said. “Businesses will ask, ‘Can you treat our flow? Do you have capacity for our business?’ Now we can tell them, ‘Yes, we do.’ Our sewer has become a tool for expansion.”

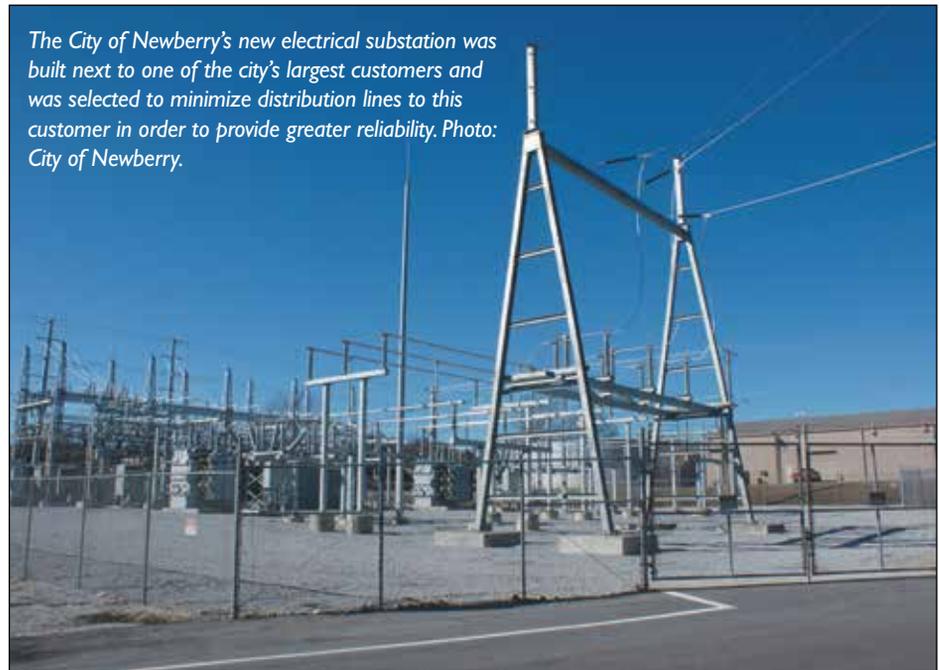
Greater capacity and cleaner water

The Town of Lexington increased its service area in February by taking over the troubled I-20 Wastewater Treatment Facility that had been owned and operated by a private for-profit utility company.

“This is a long-awaited realization of many years of effort by the town, Central Midlands Council of Governments, other regional municipal and county governments, state and federal environmental regulators and concerned residents to fully implement a regional sewer system to improve water quality and safeguard our natural waterways in accordance with the Clean Water Act of 1972,” said Lexington Mayor Steve MacDougall.

Four weeks after taking over the Carolina Water Service facility, the town diverted all flow to the Joint Wastewater Treatment Facility in the City of Cayce. That move eliminated discharge from the facility into the Lower Saluda River, a long-standing problem with Carolina Water Service. Lexington’s advanced treatment at the joint facility processes wastewater to a level where it can pass drinking water standards, MacDougall said.

Over the next five years, the town plans substantial investments for sewer infrastructure rehabilitation and improvements to meet environmental, safety and service standards, he said.



The City of Newberry’s new electrical substation was built next to one of the city’s largest customers and was selected to minimize distribution lines to this customer in order to provide greater reliability. Photo: City of Newberry.

“The Town of Lexington now has ability for future expansion of utility services. This is due to the fact we now have capacity where previously it was not available,” he said. “Finally, there can be an uptick in recreational river activity, since the Lower Saluda will become more desirable due to cleaner water.”

“It boils down to having available capacity to offer to new businesses or development.”

— Lee Bailey, City Manager of the City of Woodruff

Green infrastructure

The City of Columbia’s new LEED Gold Water and Wastewater Administration building — once a brownfield site and auto dealership — shows how putting green infrastructure in place of a once-blighted expanse of concrete

can serve as a catalyst for surrounding economic development. LEED, an internationally known green building rating, stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

“It may not have been the easiest location. It may not have been the cheapest location to do it, but it was the right location,” Assistant City Manager of Columbia Water Clint Shealy said of the new 15,300-square-foot administrative building, complete with a green roof, and low-impact landscaping and at the 10-acre site.

“There was a lot of vagrancy there, a lot of loitering and crime. But what residents were telling us, immediately after we started constructing this facility, is that just the activity that was happening there reduced that crime, reduced the loitering, and provided energy in the community that they so richly needed.”

He said the city is already seeing potential investment in the area surrounding the new facility, including some interest in a local food co-op on the adjacent property.

“And there’s talk of facade renovations and public and private investment,” Shealy said. “These communities need a catalyst. And we believe this has been a jumpstart to that.”



The City of Inman will replace old sidewalks on its Main Street as part of extensive improvements to downtown aesthetics.
Photo: City of Inman.

Infrastructure

Don't underestimate what's underfoot



The difference will be immediate. And silent.

There will be no sound of metal grazing concrete as you open the passenger-side door when parallel parked on a downtown street in Inman. The car door will not bump into the sidewalk — It will open fully and with no trouble.

This immediate difference — simple yet noticeable — is one of the goals of Inman's streetscape plan. It includes regrading an asphalt peak in the middle of a major downtown street that built up over years of repavings and now forces parked-car passenger doors to open downward toward the curb. That regrading is just one piece of the city's \$1 million

sidewalk and streetscape project to be completed this fall.

City officials can't force people to visit the downtown or instruct businesses to set up shop there, says Inman City Administrator Jeremy Caudle. But local government can do a lot of coaxing — and ensuring that residents have pleasant interactions with streets and sidewalks is part of that.

So the city is using funding from a Community Development Block Grant and the Appalachian Regional Commission to improve the sidewalks, gutters, curbs, crosswalk markings, drainage and driveways inside the city.

"We actually have a pretty good sidewalk system in Inman," said Caudle.

"But the way something looks, the aesthetic of your built environment, is going to entice people to get out and walk around and frequent a shop. And it'll make it more enticing for a business owner to say, 'Hey, city hall is taking investment in the downtown seriously. It might be worth it for me to open up a shop here.'"

In the City of Marion, curb appeal is also on the mind of city leaders. Sidewalks, though right underfoot, make up fundamental infrastructure that affects everything from economic investment to placemaking and walkability.

"If you've got an industry riding through town, they look at things like that and think that if we can't keep the town

clean, why would they want to come here?” said Marion Mayor Ashley Brady.

‘Safe connectivity’

Inman’s push to make pedestrian spaces appealing ties into a broader idea to link together a park, a school, a renovated mill and other spots around the city. The plans also include eight “conversation areas” scattered across the downtown — each spanning one or two parallel parking spots, complete with benches and trash cans.

Similarly, in the Town of Edisto Beach, a \$1.7 million sidewalk project draws together the local map. The profound impact the new sidewalks had on quality of life also netted Edisto Beach an Achievement Award from the Municipal Association in 2016.

“Sidewalks are critical in providing safe connectivity to the beach and our commercial district,” said Edisto Beach Town Manager Iris Hill. “Because the sidewalk parallels the Atlantic Ocean, this provides folks safe access to our grocery store and convenience station, promoting a healthier lifestyle and alleviating traffic congestion.”

Like in Edisto Beach, safety also drives Inman’s plans. The project includes improvements to pedestrian crosswalks, because as Caudle put it, “People want to feel safe.”

That’s true everywhere. And it applies to residents and visitors of all ability levels.

In Edisto Beach, officials knew they needed to fix the crumbling sidewalks, which were putting pedestrians in danger and weren’t compatible with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To avoid the broken sidewalk, visitors and residents were walking in the street where they risked being hit.

In the Town of Brunson, Mayor Patricia Williams said the town undertook sidewalk upgrades, in part, to make sure the surfaces were smooth enough for residents and visitors who travel by wheelchair and for the very young and the very old.

Community relations

Being sensitive to resident perceptions about work affecting public spaces is always a sound practice. And sidewalk work is no exception.

The City of Marion suffered extensive sidewalk damage from Hurricane Matthew in October 2016.

“We had big oak trees that had popped up,” said Brady, adding that the S.C. Department of Transportation fixed the sidewalks after the storm. The city also received county transportation committee funds to address sidewalks that had long-standing maintenance needs.

Regular wear and a lapse in edging had also taken its toll on the sidewalks in Marion.

Sidewalks in Marion are 3 feet wide. But they were so overgrown with grass that there was only a narrow footpath down the center of the sidewalks. Something had to be done.

“We’ve got an edger, so we just started hitting street after street and edging sidewalks and curbing,” said Brady, adding that city employees spaced the improvements

out across various city quadrants to make sure that one area didn’t see all the improvements at one time, while another quadrant sat untouched.

“We’d do work on this one and then bounce over to this other one,” he said. “We want to make sure we’re being fair to everybody. You’ve got a curb that’s overgrown, grass all in the gutter, and then the next thing you know, it’s nice and pretty. It does make a world of difference.”

In the City of Inman, Caudle said city officials were sensitive to the temporary disruption the sidewalk improvements would create for downtown businesses.

“Many of the downtown merchants with whom I’ve spoken understand it’s going to be a headache as we’re working on the sidewalks and an inconvenience for a short while,” said Caudle. “But most see the benefit it’s going to have to the city and the value it will have to their business.”



The Town of Edisto Beach sidewalk improvement project helped connect the commercial district to the beach. Photo: Town of Edisto Beach.



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Calendar

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

MAY

6 – 9 Building Officials Association of SC Annual Meeting. Ocean Drive Beach and Golf Resort, North Myrtle Beach. Topics include controlling building air leakage, wall bracing, changes to the international building and residential codes, and how to be a resource for residents following a disaster.

8 Risk Management Services Defensive Drivers Training. Pickens.

9 Risk Management Services Defensive Drivers Training. Municipal Association of SC.

10 Risk Management Services Defensive Drivers Training. Hardeeville.

16 – 18 SC Community Development Association Annual Meeting. Marriott North Charleston. Topics include heirs' properties, annexation case studies and overview, and funding options for creating parks.

22 Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government: Municipal Governance and Policy and Freedom of Information Act in South Carolina. Regional councils of governments' locations.

JUNE

5 SC Business Licensing Officials Association ABL Exam. Municipal Association of SC.

7 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Second Quarter Meeting. Columbia Conference Center. Topics include watershed plans, information on the federal 319 grant program and updates from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

7 Setoff Debt Collection Program Regional Refresher Training for Current Participants. Greenville City Hall. Refresher training for current participants who have previously attended a training session.

10 – 13 SC Association of Municipal Power Systems Annual Meeting. Hilton Head Marriott.

19 Setoff Debt Collection Program Regional Refresher Training for Current Participants. Mount Pleasant Town Hall. Refresher training for current participants who have previously attended a training session.

20 – 22 Main Street South Carolina meeting. Georgetown.

20 Setoff Debt Collection Program Regional Refresher Training for Current Participants. Municipal Association of SC. Refresher training for current participants who have previously attended a training session.