



UPTOWN

a publication of the municipal association of south carolina

It was never *just* a job *vocation or avocation?*

by Howard Duvall, Executive Director,
 Municipal Association of SC



My daughters and their spouses have often remarked that they did not know anyone as excited about going to work as me. That is because I have had the very good fortune to turn my avocation for municipal government and politics into my vocation.

Every day of my 21 years with the Municipal Association I have eagerly accepted the great diversity of challenges our staff face. Now it is time to say a heartfelt “Thank you” to all of you for allowing me to serve you and this association.

The Board of Directors and staff really surprised me with the wonderful recognition at the Annual Meeting. The

Allison Farlow Award is special to me because I knew Allison and I have known all the other recipients of the award. I am honored to be in such good company.

The video was great! Thanks to all the past presidents who took the time to do the video and say such nice things about me. I am glad they did not tell all!

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For a list of current municipal job openings, visit www.masc.sc/misc/jobs.htm

VOCATION: CONT. FROM PAGE 1

The biggest surprise was bringing my daughters and the grandchildren to Charleston to share this moment. We will always cherish the memories of the morning as we watch the video. It will be a wonderful way for the grandchildren to remember Granddaddy.

I must also say a big “Thank you” to the staff of the Municipal Association, past and present! From the eight that I joined in 1987 to the fifty I leave in 2008, you have been wonderful partners in the building of MASC. I have often told you I think our staff is at the top of any comparison with other associations. We all work hard to serve our members. You have earned the respect and trust of our members through your commitment to excellence. I have enjoyed every day of my tenure working with the best of the best!

The Board of Directors showed great confidence in our staff when they took advantage of my early retirement announcement and named Miriam Hair as the next executive director. Miriam and I have worked as a team in managing the growth of the Municipal Association. This transition period has given us time to get staff in place to cover all the responsibilities of the association. It gives me great peace of mind to have Miriam and her team ready to go from day one.

Now it is time to say goodbye. But not before we have one last fun filled celebration in Columbia on Thursday, September 25. Bring your dancing shoes with you and come help me celebrate 21 wonderful years at MASC!

Road shows

revving up for 2008

The 2008 *Hometown, SC* regional road shows are back this fall. Municipal Association staff will be traveling the state sharing information and “best practices” about taking the Association’s *Hometown, SC* initiative to the next level.

Hear about the Association’s new initiatives, get insider information from the legislative staff on the upcoming two-year session of the General Assembly, learn the best way to engage key influencers in your community, get a sneak peek at the Association’s plans for interactive training, and, as usual, enjoy a chance to network with your fellow local leaders and Association staff.

Look for more information in the weekly “Uptown Update.”

Tuesday, October 7; 11:30 a.m.
Municipal Association training room, 1411 Gervais Street, Columbia

Thursday, October 9; 11:30 a.m.
Municipal Conference Center, Aiken

Thursday, October 16; 5:30 p.m.
Patriots Point aboard the USS Yorktown, Mount Pleasant

Friday, October 17; 11:30 a.m.
City Hall, Georgetown

Tuesday, October 21; 11:30 a.m.
Pavilion at Lawton Park, Hartsville

Wednesday, October 22; 11:30 a.m.
York Technical College Baxter M. Hood Center, Rock Hill

Thursday, October 23; 11:30 a.m.
Hub Bub, Spartanburg

Wednesday, October 29; 11:30 a.m.
City Hall, Port Royal

Regional ideas *for local improvement*


More than 700 local elected officials and staff discussed national politics, growth, regionalism and new communication tools at the Association's Annual Meeting in July. The agenda of the three-day meeting showcased many examples of partnerships to make schools, economic development and healthy employees a priority.

National politics took center stage when Dr. Larry Sabato, political analyst and director of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics, provided an informational and compelling look at the upcoming presidential election. Sabato used his "crystal ball" to make predictions on the results of the presidential and congressional races.

"I call them as I see them," he said. "And of course it's only July, and I realize a lot can change between now and November... American history tells us there are some fundamental factors that promote a conclusion to a presidential race. It is very difficult to overcome those fundamentals."

Regionalism was the theme throughout several breakout sessions during the Annual Meeting. "A River Runs Through It" showcased efforts among Midlands municipalities to turn a natural resource into an economic asset. The session about the Port of Charleston showed how the port impacts municipalities across the state. Attendees learned how to regionally market their city and gained insight about the Priority Investment Act from Representative Ben Hagood, author of the new law. The Act is an important first step in encouraging regional cooperation.

Peter Katz, nationally renowned author and consultant, took on the theme of regionalism during his presentation. Katz played a leading role in launching the "New Urbanism" movement, the practice of combining traditional planning and modern technology to create compelling places. Katz explained to attendees how to build a community and encouraged them to make planning relevant to the general public.

Throughout the meeting, officials got a first-hand look at several Web 2.0 tools by visiting the Association's Facebook page and participating in quick "man on the street" interviews that were posted to YouTube. The Facebook page includes many municipal "friends" along with links to a variety of city and elected officials' Facebook pages. These tools showcased the power of Web 2.0 as a new way to communicate with residents. 



Copies of session handouts and audio/video streaming of several sessions are posted on the Municipal Association's Web site (www.masc.sc/education/08ammeeting_wrap.htm).

Greer mayor selected to lead Association



Municipal Association members elected Mayor Rick Danner of Greer as their 2008–09 president. After the election, Danner addressed the membership.

“I am a real believer in this association and what we can do together to make our cities and towns the best they can be and our state the best it can be. Coming together with one voice only makes us stronger... as our outreach and advocacy efforts have shown over the past few years. I look forward to working with all of you and our staff to continue our efforts to better position our cities and towns as the hubs of economic growth.”

Three questions with Mayor Rick Danner

> **What is your vision for the next year as you take over the leadership of the Municipal Association?**

The cities and towns of South Carolina are the economic engines that power the state’s future competitiveness and prosperity. They serve as the centers of education, productivity and innovation. For our state to compete in the new knowledge economy, cities and towns must attract and retain highly-skilled workers and our elected leaders must work closely with local business leaders to cultivate relationships. I look forward to working with the leaders of our state’s 270 cities and towns and the new leadership of the Association as we continue to build collaborative relationships with business leaders, statewide organizations and legislators to move our state in the right direction.

> **What do you see as the biggest challenge cities and towns face?**

Our biggest challenge as leaders of the state’s cities and towns is making smart growth decisions to move our hometowns forward and attract business when our state’s annexation laws are outdated. Last legislative session, we made great progress moving annexation reform forward. By working with conservation groups, statewide business leaders and other partners, we were able to start the conversation and draft a working bill to reform the law. I look forward to working with Association staff, our partners and legislative leaders on reforming annexation laws to allow our cities and towns to make good local decisions that affect our state’s future economic success.

> **How can cities and towns in the state take a leadership role in the state’s competitiveness efforts?**

Cities and towns already have a leadership role in the state’s success in the knowledge economy. Municipalities nurture entrepreneurship and productivity while providing a positive quality of life that attracts and retains highly skilled workers. Local leaders must get involved at the State House to have our voices heard in decisions that affect us and our ability to govern and provide the services and amenities that our residents demand for their families. We look forward to working with the Palmetto Institute and New Carolina, the state’s competitiveness council, to move our state forward toward a more competitive and prosperous economy.



2008-09 Officers and New Board Members: Mayor Thomas Rivers, Mayor Terry Wright, Mayor Stan Shealy, Mayor Paul Miller, Mayor Kevin Johnson, Mayor Carol Burdette and Mayor Rick Danner (Not all officers and new board members appear in the picture.)

President

Mayor Rick Danner of Greer

First Vice President

Mayor Carol Burdette of Pendleton

Second Vice President

Mayor Kevin Johnson of Manning

Third Vice President

Mayor Paul Miller of Orangeburg

Immediate Past President

Mayor Fred Cavanaugh of Aiken

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

Appalachian Council of Governments

Mayor Terence Roberts of Anderson
Term expires: July 2011

Upper Savannah Council of Governments

Mayor Randy Randall of Clinton
Term expires: August 2009

Catawba Regional Planning Council

Mayor Speedy Starnes of Great Falls
Term expires: August 2009

Central Midlands Council of Governments

Mayor Stan Shealy of Chapin
Term expires: July 2011

Lower Savannah Council of Governments

Mayor Thomas Rivers of Williston
Term expires: July 2011

Santee-Lynches Council of Governments

Mayor Joe McElveen of Sumter
Term expires: July 2010

Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments

Mayor Michael Holt of Hartsville
Term expires: July 2010

Waccamaw Planning and Development Council

Mayor Marilyn Hatley of North Myrtle Beach
Term expires: August 2009

Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments

Mayor Minnie Blackwell of Hanahan
Term expires: July 2010

Lowcountry Council of Governments

Mayor John Rhoden of Hampton
Term expires: July 2010

At-large

Mayor Terry Wright of Brunson
Term expires: July 2011

At-large

Councilmember Tameika Isaac-Devine of Columbia
Term expires: July 2010

At-large

City Administrator Mark Williams of Forest Acres
Term expires: August 2009

Long-range vision

PART 2 of 2

Executive director saw changes and challenges over

34 years



Municipal Association of SC Executive Director Howard Duvall

Howard Duvall first became involved in the Municipal Association in 1974, when he attended his first meeting in Myrtle Beach. In 1981, he was appointed to the board of the Association to fill out the unexpired term of another member. He later was elected to his own term on the board.

But Duvall changed course a bit in 1986 when he resigned as mayor and from the Association board to work as an assistant to Governor Dick Riley before taking a seat on the South Carolina Tax Commission. Riley already had appointed Duvall to the South Carolina Tax Commission (now the South Carolina Department of Revenue), when the governor tapped him to join his administration. His experience during the 1980s as mayor and on the governor's staff gave Duvall a unique view of the changes happening at all levels of government.

When Duvall first began his career in local government in the 1970s, the federal government began its revenue sharing program. The policy allowed Congress to disburse an annual amount of federal tax revenue to the states and their local governments.

During the 1970s and 1980s, South Carolina was experiencing major growth, with many manufacturing plants moving down from the Rust Belt. The revenue sharing allowed the cities and towns to build the infrastructure needed to keep up with the growth.

But revenue sharing was repealed under the Reagan Administration, forcing local governments to turn to property taxes as a means to fund infrastructure. Thus began a trend in the 1990s to elect lawmakers who promised to do away with property taxes, Duvall said.

"That mentality hurt our ability to fund services needed for the quality of life our citizens demanded," he said.

Duvall also saw changes in the makeup of city councils and the state legislature. The Civil Rights Act of 1965 led to the inclusion of more minorities on city councils. Many cities moved to single-member districts that allowed for more minority involvement.

On the state side, the General Assembly moved from a body controlled in the 1970s by a small group of powerful men, to a diverse group of individuals. On the downside, many legislators today don't have a background in local government and tend to be more responsive to special interests, Duvall said.

Duvall also has seen his Association grow from a small group of seven employees to an active staff of more than 50. That growth has reflected the increased involvement by cities and their mounting desires for training and services.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Association's Annual Meeting was largely focused on social activities such as golf and tennis, Duvall recalled. These days, annual meetings feature more than a dozen training sessions, which are attended more than 500 municipal officials from across the state, he said.

"When people come to an annual meeting, they come with the intent of learning how to do their job better," Duvall said.

The Association provides staff support for 10 affiliated associations, which offer training and educational opportunities to municipal employees. The first affiliate was the S.C. Association of Municipal Power Systems. All of the state's 21 municipal electric utilities belong to the organization. It originally was created to provide support during times of disaster. Today, it has an expanded role to include legislative initiatives and training for electrical personnel. Once municipalities saw how this group could help, it led to the formation of other groups seeking support and training, Duvall said.

The Association also branched out to offer insurance services and collection programs. Municipalities can take advantage of three self-funded insurance programs providing health benefits, workers' compensation and property and casualty coverage. Also, the Association contracts with municipalities to collect brokers' taxes and insurance premium taxes, setoff debt and telecommunications taxes.

"This has allowed us to be very active in supporting cities needing administrative help," Duvall said. "It



City Manager Sam Bennett presents Howard Duvall with an honorary membership from the SC City and County Management Association for his distinguished service to local government.


has helped us to step up and defend cities in need of legal help. It also gets them on the bandwagon to understand the importance of local government."

Duvall said the Municipal Association of SC is different from other municipal associations across the country.

"We're very proactive in assisting cities," he said. "I don't think any other organization provides as many services or has as many affiliates. I'm very pleased how our association matches up with others across the country."

As Duvall prepares to retire, expect him to slow down but not quit. For now, he will hand over the reins of the Association to Miriam Hair (as executive director) and Reba Campbell (as deputy executive director), and look back fondly over a career dedicated to public service.

"The people I've met, the friends I've made ... those will be the best memories," Duvall said.

Thursday, September 25, is Duvall's retirement party at the Columbia Convention Center. The Headliners, a long-time favorite of municipal officials, will kick off the party at 7 p.m. Contact Michelle Willm at mwillm@masc.sc or 803.933.1259 to RSVP. 

Part 1 appeared in the August issue of *Uptown*.

Institute

reaches 1,000 graduates

During the summer graduation of the SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government, the Association reached the milestone of 1,000 graduates from the Institute since it started in the late 1980s. Twenty-two municipal elected officials graduated during the Association's Annual Meeting in July.

The Institute is sponsored by the Municipal Association in cooperation with USC's Institute of Public Service and Policy Research and Clemson University's Strom Thurmond Institute.

Institute topics address the varied concerns of local government, such as powers and duties of elected officials, finance and planning/zoning. The next session, "The Forms of Municipal Government" and "Benefits and Pitfalls of Economic Development" will be broadcast via satellite to the 10 regional councils of governments on September 11. For more information, visit www.masc.sc or contact Ashley Cook at 803.933.1288 or acook@masc.sc.



The summer 2008 graduates of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government are, in alphabetical order, Councilmember George Caldwell of Chester, Councilmember Josephine Castle of York, Councilmember Francis Coath of Fairfax, Councilmember Robert Cochran of Ravenel, Councilmember Francenia Ellis of Furman, Councilmember Sondra Fleming-Crosby of Lake City, Councilmember Diane Georgia of Manning, Councilmember Ricky Todd Harris of Union, Mayor Charlene Herring of Ridgeway, Councilmember William Hudson of Brunson, Councilmember Denise Jackson of Pendleton, Councilmember Tony Kennedy of Woodruff, Councilmember Bonnie Love of Denmark, Councilmember Willie Mae Muldrow of Bishopville, Mayor John Rhodes of Myrtle Beach, Councilmember Orangelow Ruff of Union, Councilmember Annette Sausser of Hollywood, Councilmember Dave Stormer of Folly Beach, Councilmember Margaret Thomas of Cottageville, Councilmember Barbara Turnburke of Greenwood, Councilmember Patricia Williams of Brunson and Councilmember Parris Williams of James Island. (Not all graduates appear in photo.)

Hagood recognized

for his support of the
Priority Investment Act and annexation reform

The Municipal Association of SC presented Representative Ben Hagood of Isle of Palms with the Distinguished Service Award at the Annual Meeting in July.

Hagood served for six years in the SC House of Representatives and quickly become one of the most respected members of legislature. He was known as a champion of responsible municipal growth and the environment.

“Unfortunately, Representative Hagood has decided not to run for re-election this year,” remarked Mayor Fred Cavanaugh, Municipal Association 2007-08 president. “He will return to his family and

law practice on the coast. While he will be absent from the legislature, he says he plans to stay present in the fight for better annexation laws.”

“In the State House, Hagood did not shy away from the tough issues,” explained Executive Director Howard Duvall. “As chair of the special laws subcommittee of the House Judiciary, he brought together the diverse groups invested in better annexation laws. He worked tirelessly to develop a consensus for dealing with many of the concerns surrounding annexation.”

“Ben has been the prime mover in getting the debate on annexation restarted,” said Duvall.

In 2007, Hagood was the lead sponsor of the successful Priority Investment Act, which many saw as the first step toward the regional planning necessary to deal with the rapid growth happening in some areas of the state.

“He will be a mediator even when he is out of office,” says Duvall, “I think he has great potential for another elective office in the future.”

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes individuals outside of municipal government who contribute to the advancement of municipal government in the state. Past winners include Senator Phil Leventis, U.S. Representative Jim Clyburn and former U.S. Senator Ernest “Fritz” Hollings.



finance corner

by Stephanie O’Cain, Chief Financial Officer

Are you paying a fee to deposit your checks with a teller? Do you have employees copying these checks? Have you found the bank cutoff time for deposits limiting? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you may want to consider a check imaging system. Many entities (including the Municipal Association) are increasing their efficiencies by moving from traditional depositing to check imaging.

A check imaging system consists of a small scanner that can sit on a desk. Because employees can build a deposit ticket and create images to send to the bank, they no longer have to manually copy checks. A later cutoff time for deposits is another advantage of check imaging. Most banks have a 5 p.m. or later cutoff for imaged transactions. Also, day-to-day costs to process an imaged file are less than processing a paper check. While employees still must deposit cash with a teller, this system can help cut down on daily trips to the bank.

The cost of scanners and associated bank fees vary greatly from bank to bank. For more information, contact your local bank or Stephanie O’Cain, Municipal Association chief financial officer, at 803.933.1234 or socain@masc.sc.

Health Fairs

Cities save money with preventive health care

For a number of years, health-care costs in the United States have been soaring. Employers know they must continue to offer insurance benefits to remain attractive to employees, but most struggle to keep up with the double-digit increases.

The healthcare crisis has led to a push by many employers for preventive health screenings and wellness programs. These programs inform employees about health care issues, including diet, exercise and smoking, and encourage them to make changes in their behavior and health. It all leads to a reduction in healthcare costs for the employers and improved health and morale for employees, said Anne Shissias, health and wellness manager for the Municipal Association of South Carolina. Shissias has advised numerous cities on starting wellness programs.

The Municipal Association also offers a Wellness Grant Program through the South Carolina Local Government Assurance Group to help cities start wellness programs. SCLGAG provides “self-funded” health benefits programs for municipal employees.

Shissias recommends that wellness programs include condition management, fitness programs and screenings. Condition management deals with issues such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer treatment, weight control, prenatal care and tobacco cessation.

To have a successful fitness program, cities need to encourage involvement and provide incentives to employees, Shissias said.



Seneca's annual employee health fair features vendors ranging from farmers to orthopedists to fitness equipment providers.



The City of Georgetown arranges a voluntary health screening for employees.

The City of Aiken did just that with its Healthy Lifestyles Club.

Aiken's program began in 2003, with city officials seeking ways to combat rising health insurance costs, stop preventable deaths and educate employees on choosing healthier lifestyles.

The City partnered with Aiken Regional Medical Centers to establish its wellness program. Aiken employees can take advantage of wellness checks; health fairs; "Lunch and Learn" sessions; preventive screenings for heart, skin cancer, vision, blood pressure; and educational seminars on issues such as colonoscopies, diabetes, eye health and women's and men's health.

Employees also have free access to an Employee Health Center. Its exercise room includes weight equipment, treadmills and stationary bikes. The city also offers gym reimbursements plus one-on-one fitness and nutrition counseling that allows six months of individual work with a registered dietician and an exercise physiologist.

The wellness program is credited with an increase in employee morale, a moderation of health insurance costs and reduced costs for workers' compensation claims. In fact, the City of Aiken saved more than \$180,000 in fiscal year 2004-2005 due to reduced health insurance costs, Shissias said.

The wellness program has been such a hit with city employees that Aiken is spreading it to the community at large. The city's Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department is working on Get Fit Aiken, a community wellness initiative aimed at raising health awareness, encouraging long-term habits of physical activity and providing fun ways to get out and enjoy Aiken while getting in shape.

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- Members of the **SC Community Development Association** selected their 2008-09 board members in May. President Valeria Jackson, Columbia; Vice President Barbara Mickens, Fairfield County; Secretary/Treasurer Joy Locke, Main Street Beaufort USA; Member-at-Large David Acker, Appalachian Council of Governments; Member-at-Large Erica Craft, Anderson; Member-at-Large Pam Davenport, Upper Savannah Council of Governments; Nora Sanders, Lower Savannah Council of Governments; Member-at-Large Virginia Stroud, Greenville and Chuck Wiegert, Historic Marion Revitalization Association

- The Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau awarded one its Golden Pineapple awards to Charleston Police Chief Greg Mullen and Sergeant Dale Wilson for innovations in making **Charleston** a safe place to live and visit.

- According to the July/August 2008 issue of "Garden & Gun Magazine," Aiken is one of 20 southern small places "where the livin' is easy." **Aiken** was noted as the "Best Equestrian Town."

- At its annual business meeting, Government Finance Officer Association members elected David Vehaun of **Rock Hill** as a member at large for the 2008-2011 GFOA Executive Board.



[1] Bruce Thompson with Creative Worksite Solutions explains the best of breed supplemental products that Municipal Insurance Services offer to municipal employees. [2] City officials provide a healthy lunch of sandwiches and fruit while Seneca employees participate in the health fair. [3] Participants in Georgetown’s health screen can win prizes such as a Nintendo Wii.

Other cities also have found it beneficial to be proactive about employees’ health.

The City of Conway hopes its healthy employee programs will promote healthier lifestyles, increase morale, enhance productivity, and make employees more safety conscious.


City officials hope to reduce insurance costs, or at least minimize increases in premiums. The City’s insurance costs total more than \$2 million.

Conway is part of SCLGAG’s year-old Health Reimbursement Account program, said Shissias. If employees and spouses participate in a comprehensive blood screening and complete a Personal Wellness Profile, SCLGAG will cover the first \$300 of their \$600 deductible.

The Health Reimbursement Accounts were created to provide early detection and treatment of health conditions, promote good health practices and reduce health insurance costs. They feature health screenings and wellness benefits. The health screening includes the personal well-

ness profile questionnaire, as well as blood pressure, height, weight and blood tests.

In Conway, 256 current and retired employees participate in Health Reimbursement Plans, according to city officials. Through the health screenings, employees have been alerted to unknown health problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and high blood sugar, officials said.

Conway’s efforts to improve employee health have led to more active employees, fewer smokers, healthier eating habits and fewer workers’ compensation claims. 

For more information about setting up an employee wellness program, contact Anne Shissias at 803.933.1272 or ashissias@masc.sc.

Representatives from Conway, Aiken and Mount Pleasant conducted the “Investing in Healthy Employees” session at the Association’s annual meeting. For a copy of the presentations, visit www.masc.sc/education/08ammmeeting_wrap.htm.

Use caution

when running credit checks

Googling the words “employee credit check” results in a slew of colorful advertisements and phony free offers. In fact, it takes nearly three full pages of search results to come to a legitimate and informative page on employee credit checks.

Needless to say, there is a lot of conflicting and intimidating information out there about an employer’s responsibilities concerning credit checks—what they entail, how to dispose of them, what the potential employee’s rights are. The truth is that credit reports are essential to the hiring process. Admittedly they are rather complex, but certainly not impossible.

As long as the employer complies with the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the credit check experience will be fairly simple. The FCRA was designed primarily to protect the privacy of consumer report information and guarantee that the information supplied by consumer reporting agencies is as accurate as possible. Congress supported the Act in 1997 because it was concerned inaccurate or incomplete consumer reports could cause applicants to be denied jobs. The Act details the employer’s responsibilities when running a credit check.

A credit check is a large part of a consumer report that contains information about personal characteristics, general reputation and lifestyle.

Before running a consumer report on potential employees, an employer must notify them in writing. The employer must also get their written permission before conducting the check.

For the report, the employer must use a consumer reporting agency—a business that assembles such reports for other businesses—to be in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

When the report comes back, employers must then make one of two choices: to hire or to not

hire. If the applicant is not hired and any information in the credit report influenced the decision (whether or not it was a major factor or even when the information wasn’t negative), the employer has two obligations to the rejected applicant.

Before rejecting the applicant, the employer must supply him with a copy of the consumer report and a copy of “A Summary of Your Rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act,” a document prescribed by the Federal Trade Commission and supplied by the reporting agency. After taking the adverse reaction, the employer must give the individual notice (oral, electronically, in writing) that the action has been taken. It must include the name of the agency that supplied the report and a notice of the individual’s right to dispute the accuracy or completeness of the report.

The employer then has one more obligation: to destroy the credit report so it is unreadable or unable to be reconstructed. For hard copies this means shredding, burning or pulverizing. Electronic files must be erased.

There are legal consequences for employers who do not comply with the Fair Credit Report Act. Both the individual and the federal government can sue the employer.

Running a consumer report is a vital part of the hiring process. Knowing a person’s past can help predict his future worthiness to an organization. And knowing the responsibilities as an employer will ensure the organization’s future as well.

For more information, see the Federal Trade Commission’s Web site (ftc.gov) or contact Stephanie O’Cain, Municipal Association’s chief financial officer, at 803.933.1234 or socain@masc.sc.



best practices for managing the workplace generation mix

Editor's note: One of the biggest challenges in the realm of human resources is managing age diversity. Resolving intergenerational issues is all about knowing what each group values and establishing relationships across generational lines based upon that knowledge.

Dr. Carolyn A. Martin and Bruce Tulgan of Rainmaker-Thinking Inc. wrote a short book called "Managing the Generation Mix: From Collision to Collaboration." The following list of best practices for managing that "mix" is from their book.

1. Define your team/project mission and clarify the team's work. Why does our team exist? What work needs to be done by this team? What are the major goals and deadlines? How will success be measured?

2. Define each team member's mission. What will each member contribute to the team effort? How will we collaborate to get the work done? Who is best suited to do what? How flexible is each team member in terms of learning new skills, implementing new strategies and changing direction when necessary?

3. Leverage uniqueness. What are the talents, skills, knowledge and experience each member brings to the team?

4. Create learn/teach plans. Facilitate two-way mentoring and coaching.

5. Seize informal timeout times. Managers and their workers can go for a walk, have coffee or go out to lunch; young workers appreciate these informal opportunities.

6. Establish formal timeout times. Have consistent one-on-one sessions, daily or weekly depending on individual needs, with a simple agenda.

7. Circulate everyone's to-do lists. Sharing commitments increases productivity.

8. Publicize weekly accomplishments. Keeps people apprised and motivates them.

9. Encourage members to ask for help. It is not a show of weakness, but the most intelligent approach to getting things done.

10. Create an experts database. List names, areas of expertise and experience, including completed projects, customers served and contact information.

11. Create a shared-notes system. A communication system that records interaction history enables a team approach to dealing with customers or clients.

12. Hit the ground running with action-packed meetings. Have meetings only when there is a compelling reason; don't waste time having a meeting to convey information that can otherwise be communicated via email, reports or memos. Issue a pre-meeting announcement with the purpose of the meeting. Save time by assigning "homework" beforehand. Only invite team members who really need to be there. Give everyone a discussion/decision form to fill out as the meeting progresses to avoid confusion between what was discussed and what actions, accountabilities and deadlines were agreed upon.

13. Evaluate team effectiveness. To become a great team, young and old alike need to learn new skills. Periodically gather the team together to evaluate how well they're working as a team. Determine what training/coaching is needed so the team can improve its collaborative efforts.

14. Evaluate the effectiveness of individual team members. Periodically ask team members to do a self-evaluation to see if the standards you've set are being met. Recognize successes and set up coaching opportunities for improvement.

15. Help teams create conflict-resolution guidelines. Staffers should not run to you every time they have a conflict with others, but should be given guidelines for resolving the problem on their own, quickly and respectfully.

16. Call an innovation summit quarterly or biannually. Focus on one pressing issue such as staffing, scheduling, benefits or an organizational area like operations or marketing that needs immediate attention.

17. Create an environment that encourages courtesy, kindness and respect. Introduce all individuals whenever they join your business or social circle – this shows people you value them. Pick up after yourself. Keep gossip or hurtful information to yourself. Ask before you take someone's time.

18. Let everyone know what's on the table. Know what your organization offers to attract the best talent, and what flexibility you have to customize work arrangements

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Frequently Asked Questions

Human Resources

We had an employee leave before turning in all of his city-issued equipment and uniforms. Can we deduct the cost from his last paycheck?

According to state law, "When an employer separates an employee from the payroll for any reason, the employer shall pay all wages due to the employee within forty-eight hours of the time of separation or the next regular payday which may not exceed thirty days." *SC Code of Laws Section 41-10-50.*

Try to minimize losses by requesting these items before terminating the employee. You can send a letter after termination requesting the items be returned or contact your attorney to pursue legal action. Make sure you have stated in your policies and when issuing any equipment that the equipment or uniforms remain company property and should be returned at termination.

How should we announce an employee's termination?


For voluntary and involuntary termination, deactivate the employee's e-mail, system access and any access cards on the day of termination or at the time of termination. With involuntary terminations, only notify those in departments with a need to know (information technology, human resources) and those who will need to handle the former employee's responsibilities. Do not discuss the reason for the termination with the exception of responding to unemployment claims, EEOC charges and similar compliance requests.

TWENTY-ONE: CONT. FROM PAGE 17

and be innovative. Avoid the fairness issue and negotiate equitably with each individual, including present employees.

19. Offer incentives that have “Three-F appeal.” Address **family** needs, e.g., child-care for Gen-xers and elder care for baby boomers. Make your organization a fun place to be by energizing the team with fun, low-cost activities, especially with food, to celebrate accomplishments; encourage individuals to express their talents outside of their area of job expertise, e.g., photography or music, which could be incorporated into the work/life balance, like a fundraising talent show. Create a **fun** budget and appoint a person to be the “fun raiser” with the responsibility to get everyone involved in how the budget should be used. Be **flexible** with time, as it is more important than money for most people. Be creative at negotiating time off and flexible scheduling as incentives. Offer seasonal flex hours when business slows down.

20. Set up career development accounts. Critical for age-diverse teams, CDAs are budgeted training dollars allocated to individuals to use according to broad guidelines. Older generations prefer classroom-style training, while Xers and Yers prefer self-paced computer-based training. Self-development to facilitate relaxation and focus and to expand the imagination and touch the spirit, e.g., yoga, art or music classes, should also be part of the mix. Customized self-development opportunities will maximize your employees’ performance.

21. Customize leadership opportunities. People with management potential should be given the opportunity to lead team meetings, head up projects, present training sessions and attend important business functions with you or as your representative. Give them as many chances to hone their interpersonal skills as you can before you promote them. Once promoted, match him or her up with a seasoned manager who can coach and guide him into being a successful manager. Great technicians do not become great managers automatically. 

Reprinted from *NLC RISC Report*, a newsletter from the National League of Cities’ Risk Information Sharing Consortium.



Hometown

OCTOBER HAPPENINGS

Each month, municipal officials have the opportunity to download materials that will help them share the value of cities and towns with the community and more specifically their key influencers. Through each suggested activity and corresponding materials, municipal leadership will form partnerships with the local business community, the media, local non-profit organizations and policy makers.

The Municipal Association posted September *Hometown Happenings* information on its Web site in early September. Let Casey Fields know if you participate in a Hometown Happening by e-mailing cfields@masc.sc or calling 803.933.1256.

Fire Prevention Week – Every year, the National Fire Protection Association declares October 5–11 as National Fire Prevention Week. This year’s theme is “Practice Your Escape Plan” and encourages everyone to designate an escape plan in for their home. Have your fire department host meetings on fire prevention and safety. Host tours of your local fire stations, and take time to say “thank you” to all firefighters in your hometown.

National Crime Prevention Month – The National Crime Prevention Council designates every October as National Crime Prevention Month and encourages everyone, especially hometown residents, to be safe and vigilant. Provide tips to residents on how to protect their families and property. Host informational meetings on crime prevention and distribute crime prevention brochures in water or electricity bills. Join the National Crime Prevention Council and its crime prevention dog, McGruff, to take a bite out of crime in your hometown.

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month – Started more than 20 years ago, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a time dedicated to raise awareness of breast cancer, encourage early detection and educate men and women on this important issue. Many organizations already have events planned to raise awareness and provide opportunities for education. Partner with those organizations, churches, hospitals and other community nonprofit groups to raise awareness and educate your residents about early prevention and detection of breast cancer.

Redevelopment

Communities need to establish vision, stay the course for redevelopment

When its naval base closed in 1996, the City of North Charleston was faced with a challenge and an opportunity: what to do with the hundreds of acres that once housed the base.

North Charleston began a major redevelopment that will change the face of the city. In all, 3,000 acres of the historic urban core of North Charleston will be redeveloped, including the central 340 acres that once housed the base. That area, which is being called the Navy Yard, will consist of six districts focusing on entertainment, residential and commercial areas. The project has garnered nationwide attention for its concept as an environmentally friendly community with shops, schools and offices.

Not every city has the opportunity for a dramatic renewal like North Charleston. However, other cities can look to North Charleston for redevelopment tips that they can use back home.

First, cities need to establish a vision for the future of their community, said North Charleston Special Assistant to the Mayor Ray Ander-

son, who discussed his city's project and offered tips on redevelopment during the Municipal Association's Annual Meeting in July.

Another key is "stick-to-itiveness," Anderson said. He pointed to the City of Greenville, which first laid the groundwork for downtown redevelopment some 30 to 35 years ago. The city stuck by its vision, and today it's paying off, he said.

"Stay the course," Anderson advised. "A thousand obstacles will get in your way, but cities should stay patient. Redevelopment takes time."

Partnership also is important, Anderson said. It's critical to have good relationships with private agencies, state legislators, county government officials, nonprofit organizations and school systems, he added.

"It's important to have that cooperation and coordination," he said.

Anderson said North Charleston was fortunate in partnering with Noisette, which also is helping the city with social aspects of the redevelopment. The partners are helping homeowners prioritize what they need to do to improve their homes, helping improve basic business skills for area workers in the construc-

tion trade, educating residents and students about local environmental issues, and restoring sensitive watershed areas around Noisette Creek.

"Private industries put an emphasis on turning a dollar. The key is finding industries that share your interest," he said.

Funding for redevelopment differs in each case, but it's important to explore all the options that are out there, Anderson said. In North Charleston's case, the state allowed a special 30-year tax increment financing district, as opposed to a standard 15-year district. That gives the city more bonding capacity, which is important as the infrastructure needs to be completely rebuilt in the redeveloped area, Anderson said. The city also has received funding through the Rural Development Act, the Housing Authority and the Economic Development Administration, among other sources.

Anderson hopes other cities can look to North Charleston's experience and find inspiration for their own renewal.

"The seeds we've sown are just starting to reap benefits," he said.

1 percent Firemen's Insurance and Inspection Fund

One of the many questions we get as field services managers is “how do we create revenue so we can better take care of our citizens, employees and volunteers?” In talking with local officials, we have discovered some are not benefiting from little-known, older funding sources such as the South Carolina Firemen's Insurance and Inspection Fund. The municipality's treasurer, fire chief or county treasurer should know whether or not the town is receiving these funds.

Established in 1907, the South Carolina Firemen's Insurance and Inspection Fund is unique. The funds must be used solely “for the betterment and maintenance of skilled and efficient fire departments within the county.” *SC Code of Laws Title 23, Chapter 9.* “It is apparent the legislature intended the 1 percent premiums collected in a particular location to benefit the firefighters risking their lives in that particular service area,” according to the SC State Court of Appeals.

Companies that issue fire coverage in South Carolina, regardless of whether the company is located in the state, finance the fund by paying 1 percent of their premiums to the state treasurer. The companies provide a report allocating the collected premiums to the county in which the insured property is located. The state treasurer forwards the allocated funds to county treasurers, who should disburse the funds to the local fire departments based on the “assessed value of improvements to real estate within the service areas of the fire department.” The departments do not receive funds for non-assessed buildings, even though they pay fire insurance premiums.

According to state law, the S.C. State Firefighters' Association administers and supervises the Fund. The State Supervisory Committee of the Firefighters' Association must approve any expenditure exceeding \$100.

There are three expenditure categories acceptable for using the 1 percent money: retirement and insurance, training and education, and recruitment and retention. The funds can be used for items such as training materials, specialty clothing, physical fitness equipment and gym memberships, and smoke detectors for the public. The funds cannot be used to offset normal operating or capital expenses such as fire trucks or equipment. Visit www.scfirefighters.org for a full description of eligible expenditures.

The local governing body must appoint either a three- or five-member board of trustees for the fund. Trustees on a three-member board are the mayor, a councilmember representing the fire department or the chairperson of the fire committee, and the fire chief. For a five-member board, the trustees are the chairperson of the fire committee, the fire chief, treasurer and two citizens. The mayor appoints one of the citizens and the fire chief appoints the other. Council must approve both appointees.

To receive funds, the local government must adopt an ordinance approved by the state fire marshal, provide quarterly reports to the state fire marshal and be a member of the state Firefighters' Association. The ordinance must establish a building and inspection code to eliminate or lessen the likelihood of the danger of fires arising from defective construction or the presence and existence of inflammable and combustible material and conditions within the fire service area. The law does not define “service area.” However, it is interpreted to mean the area where the fire department provides services. *Mathis v. Hair, The State of South Carolina Court of Appeals.*

The Firefighter's Association can provide assistance for guidelines and establishing a reporting system to manage this program. Visit www.scfirefighters.org or call 800.277.2732.

Cities look for ways to deal with rising fuel costs

With gas prices at record highs, cities are looking for ways to save fuel or make cuts to stay within budget.

Many cities are turning to vehicles with alternative fuels. Columbia is adding hybrid cars to its fleet. Fort Mill is planning to purchase hybrid or electric cars for things like building inspections and parks and recreation. The Myrtle Beach Police Department has introduced three electric-powered, three-wheel vehicles into its patrol, helping to reduce fuel costs and navigate busy tourist areas. The City of Cayce has converted its entire diesel fleet to biodiesel, and the city's newer flex-fuel vehicles are using the cheaper E-85 fuel.

"We're doing everything we possibly can, short of parking the fleet," said Cayce City Manager John Sharpe.

Cities also are thinking about creative alternatives. Cayce has purchased an electric lawn mower to cut the grass at city hall. The Town of Honea Path received a \$5,000 grant to purchase a machine that converts cooking oil to fuel for the town's diesel fleet. Honea Path also has placed a hydrogen cell on one of the police cars in an attempt to save gas money.

The City of Clemson is cutting back on fuel through the use of a GPS system on its garbage trucks. The introduction of GPS to the public works department won Clemson a 2008 Municipal Association Achievement Award. (For more information about the program, visit



www.masc.sc/misc/achievement.htm.) Clemson City Administrator Rick Cotton said the system is saving the city about 350 gallons of fuel a month.

In some cases, fuel alternatives are not enough, and cities are being forced to make cuts. Officials from the City of Pickens say higher gas costs are behind their decision to stop collecting debris from construction sites and appliances from residents.

Across the country, municipalities are seeking their own ways to cope with the soaring energy prices. According to the National League of Cities, some are going to a four-day work week, with employees working 10-hour days. Some cities are only opening government offices four days a week, while others are

staggering employees' schedules to continue the traditional work week. While most South Carolina cities have not gone this route, condensed work week programs can be found in Coconut Creek, Fla.; Birmingham, Ala.; Walworth County, Wis.; and Avondale, Ariz.

Other cities nationally are taking small steps to cut back on gasoline use, such as initiating no-idling policies for city vehicles, reducing the frequency of mowing grass on city property or installing a special Lo-mow grass, according to Amanda Straub, press assistant for the National League of Cities. The organization also reports fee increases in cities such as Hercules, Calif.; Rosehill, Kan.; and Sarasota, Fla., and a hiring freeze in Newport, Ky.

events CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

10-12 Municipal Technology Association of SC Annual Meeting, Sheraton Myrtle Beach Convention Center Hotel, Myrtle Beach. Topics: Information Technology Infrastructure Library, business continuity planning, and practical and innovative applications for GIS.

11 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Quarterly Meeting, Columbia. Conference Center, Columbia. Topics: post-construction best practices, stormwater system maintenance and long-term pond maintenance.

11 SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government "The Forms of Municipal Government" and "Benefits and Pitfalls of Economic Development," via satellite.

17-19 Municipal Court Administration Association of SC Annual Meeting, Sheraton Myrtle Beach Convention Center Hotel, Myrtle Beach. Topics: electronic dispositions, expungement updates, records retention and courtroom safety and security.

29 SC Community Development Association Fall Meeting, Clarion Townhouse, Columbia. Topics: building green, creating sustainable communities and housing rehabilitation.

30-October 3 SC Business Licensing Officials and the Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association of SC Joint Annual Meeting, Embassy Suites, North Charleston. Topics: licensing charitable organizations, GIS uses, identity theft, audit standards, council of errors and securing favorable bond rates.

OCTOBER

7 Hometown, SC Road Show, 11:30 a.m., Municipal Association of SC Office, 1411 Gervais Street, Columbia. See related story on page 2.

8 SC Utility Billing Association Fall Meeting, SC Hospital Association, Columbia. Topics: electronic deposits, fuel conservation and workforce management.

9 Hometown, SC Road Show, 11:30 a.m., Municipal Conference Center, Aiken. See related story on page 10.

16 Hometown, SC Road Show, 5:30 p.m., Patriots Point aboard the USS Yorktown, Mount Pleasant. See related story on page 2.

For more information about these meetings or other association meetings not listed, please call 803.799.9574 or visit www.masc.sc.



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