



State of the County Address

January 12, 2010
Charleston County Council

To the Citizens of Charleston County:

Since I was elected the Charleston County Council Chairman in January of 2009, I have enjoyed the opportunity to hold a leadership position on Council in order to serve the citizens of this great County.

All nine of your County Council members are elected with the responsibility of providing quality services to citizens, and we, like the rest of the country, continue to be challenged to do so with fewer and fewer available dollars.

Entering into the new year, we need to reflect on our accomplishments in 2009, look for areas where we can make improvements, and go forward with the attitude that we are a team that can make it through these extremely tough economic times. We did this in 2009, and we can do it again in 2010.

So, how did we do it last year? By the end of calendar year 2008, staff had predicted the economic downturn and its impact on funds coming to the County, and reduced budgeted expenditures by almost \$10 million.

Preparing the Fiscal Year 2010 (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010) budget in the midst of economic uncertainty presented us with a difficult challenge. In the end, Council was able to maintain existing levels of basic services to the community, not increase the County's property tax millage, budget for the opening of the Detention Center expansion, and maintain a compensation and benefits package sufficient for attracting and retaining a qualified and motivated work force.

We are proud that we approved the Fiscal Year 2010 budget without raising the millage rate for the tenth year in a row.

The County also maintained its strong triple-A bond rating in 2009. Our rainy day funds, adopted fund balance policies, and five-year financial forecasts were, and still are, all signs of solid fiscal management.

Planned expenditures for fiscal year 2010 for all funds total \$371.1 million, a \$3.8 million decrease from the previous year. Eighty-one employee positions were eliminated through attrition, and 55 positions were added in the areas of detention and consolidated dispatch. There were no mandatory furloughs or layoffs affecting our staff, which helps the overall prosperity of the Lowcountry.

The financial challenges will continue as we enter 2010 and begin working on our Fiscal Year 2011 budget. We already know we will be facing a multi-million dollar deficit next fiscal year.

But, we will continue to work with County staff and our elected and appointed officials to do everything possible to streamline our efforts and ensure that County services are maintained and our financial standings hold strong. This is the promise we make to the citizens of Charleston County.

Respectfully submitted,
Teddie E. Pryor, Charleston County Council Chairman

HIGHLIGHTS OF CALENDAR YEAR 2009

- In January, Allen O'Neal started work as the new Administrator for Charleston County Government. O'Neal had the opportunity to spend a week transitioning with the outgoing County Administrator, Mack Canterbury, who retired. O'Neal was born and raised in North Carolina, and graduated from the University of North Carolina (UNC), Chapel Hill. In total, O'Neal has over 30 years experience in local government management. Most recently, he was the City Manager for Newport, Ore. He has participated in numerous hurricane responses, having served 15 and one-half years as the County Manager for New Hanover County, N.C. Prior to working for New Hanover County, O'Neal served as the Assistant County Manager in Cumberland County, N.C.
- Boeing announced on October 28, 2009 that Charleston County was their selection for a second final assembly site for the 787 Dreamliner program. The project will include a \$750 million capital investment and the creation of 3,800 new jobs. Approximately 55 airlines have ordered 840 of the 787 airplanes since the program was launched in 2003. The 787 family of airplanes will carry 200-250 passengers on flights up to 8,200 nautical miles.
- In the fall of 2009, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada awarded its Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to Charleston County Government for its 2008 fiscal year Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting in the U.S. The report was judged by a panel of financial experts to meet the high standards of the program, including demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate the county's financial story and motivate potential users to read the report.
- After an initial analysis of how solid waste is managed by the County, as well as best practices, cost and solid waste disposal innovations, Council voted not to renew the Montenay Waste-to-Energy Facility (incinerator) contract in calendar year 2010. It also directed the County to proceed with development of programs aimed at achieving a 40 percent county-wide recycling goal; to aggressively develop public/private partnerships for recycling and disposal; and to continue to utilize Bees Ferry Landfill and explore public/private partnerships. County Council, staff, the consultant and the Green Ribbon Committee continue to work toward developing concrete strategies to handle solid waste disposal in the County.
- Charleston County Government's Solid Waste and Recycling Department (now called the Environmental Management Department) received the 2008 Most Outstanding County Waste Reduction/Recycling Program Award for a county with a population greater than 150,000 at the 14th Annual Recycle Guys Awards Program, which honors South Carolina's top recycling programs, projects and people. The award was presented by the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control for the County's wide variety of recycling and waste reduction programs targeted to widespread audiences, from residents to businesses and schools.
- Charleston County Government's Budget Office received word in December that they received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its fiscal year 2010 budget from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA). The fiscal year 2010 budget was judged and awarded by financial peers from government organizations around the country, marking the 21st consecutive year that Charleston County government's Budget Office has won the honor. According to the GFOA, the award reflects the commitment of Charleston County Government and its staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting. The award was given based not only on how well the County budgets its funds, but also on how well it communicates to the public how the money is spent.
- Charleston County Government's Solid Waste and Recycling Department (now called the Environmental Management Department) received the 2009 Most Successful Local Government Award at the Carolina Recycling Association's 19th Annual Awards Ceremony. John Foster, Charleston County's Recycling Manager, also took home the Recycler of the Year Award for the County's Neighborhood Initiative Program.
- Stimulus Funding:

I. ARRA Funds *received* in 2009 ~ \$7.5 million*

Highlights of the funds received in 2009:

- \$4.7 million: Workforce Investment Act Funds from the SC Department of Commerce. The funding is used to provide a wide range of workforce development services, most of which are provided through the Trident One Stop Career System.
- \$1 million: Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The funding provided expanded services for individuals who are without permanent residence or are in danger of losing permanent housing.
- *The 7.5 million received in 2009 does not include the \$7.4 million received for Housing and Urban Development. The \$7.4 million is divided between Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties to purchase foreclosed-upon or vacant homes, and then rehabilitate or demolish them.

II. ARRA Funds *applied for* in 2009 ~ \$48.0 million

Highlights of the funds applied for in 2009:

- \$40 million: Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Funding would be applied to Johnnie Dodds Boulevard Improvement project. The total project cost is \$70 million.
 - \$1.6 million: Assistance to Firefighter Grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Funding would be used to construct a new fire station to replace an existing facility.
 - \$1.5 million: Port Security Grant Program from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Funding would be used to hire additional FTEs and purchase replacement vehicles for the Sheriff's Office Marine Patrol for port security.
 - \$0.4 million: Energy Efficiency Grant for the SC Energy Office. Funding would be used for three energy efficiency projects: 1. Provide solar energy for the new detention center. 2. Seek compost initiatives for commercial waste. 3. Provide solar aerator for maintenance of the detention pond.
- During 2009, the Economic Development Division reached 59 businesses during face-to-face visitation meetings and an additional 250 through phone and e-mail contact as part of its Business Assistance Program. County staff troubleshoot business challenges and offered information and referrals on programs and resources designed to help position area businesses to expand. The division also published the 2009 edition of its Business Resource Guide, a comprehensive directory of business programs and services. The department is working on the 2010 Business Resource Guide that will be published at the beginning of this year.
 - The Public Information Office and the Emergency Management Department coordinated with MeadWestvaco, which made an in-kind donation of 20,000 Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide booklets. This is the first time the County's guide has ever been printed for us to widely distribute it to the public. The County used the booklets to focus its attention on the traditionally underserved areas of the Lowcountry, where there is much less access to digital communications (TV, Internet, etc.) and services. This includes the southern and northern ends of the county. In order to reach these residents, the Charleston County Emergency Management Department utilized its Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members in the rural districts to distribute the guides to churches, post offices, community centers, libraries and nonprofit organization locations.
 - The County took action in 2009 on an advertising opportunity that would normally be cost-prohibitive. The County was approached by Adams Outdoor Advertising, a major billboard company in the area. The company offered to give the County free advertising space for emergency-related information whenever their signs are not rented by other businesses. The Public Information Office and the Emergency Management Department met with Adams Outdoor Advertising staff and worked out an agreement. The cost to print the signs was \$1 per square foot. The County spent less than \$5,000 total on the project (charge for billboard space is normally \$700 to \$2,500 a month per billboard. So just one month of billboard space rental for nine billboards total would cost approximately \$6,300 to \$22,500). The signs are reusable and Adams Outdoor Advertising will continue to provide space in the future based on availability.
 - In an effort to be even more transparent in its expenditures, Charleston County began in June of 2009 posting its monthly accounts payable transactions online for the public to view. The report includes payments over \$100, and is updated monthly. It includes the vendor name; invoice date; description of the transaction; the department/office responsible for the transaction; the budgetary account used to pay for the transaction; the check amount; and the date the check was issued. The report excludes

information protected by the S.C. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

- During the second annual Electronic Recycling Day, total of 170 vehicles showed up, and their passengers turned in 950 electronic items to Charleston County's Environmental Management Department. During Electronic Recycling Day, residents dropped off their old, non-working or unused electronics to be recycled. Electronic devices often consist of valuable resources such as precious metals (gold or silver), more common metals (aluminum and copper) and engineered plastics. Electronic recycling helps to recover these valuable materials while also conserving energy and landfill space.
- Charleston County Council passed a resolution this year supporting Lowcountry Local First's 10% Shift Campaign, which is a grassroots movement that encourages individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations and government agencies to spend at least 10 percent of their purchases with local, independent businesses. Lowcountry Local First estimates that a commitment to shift 10 percent of purchases to local, independent businesses in the Tri-county area could create 1,600 jobs, reducing unemployment by .5%; generate \$50 million in new wages; and create \$140 million in new economic activity for the region.
- Charleston County Public Library was named one of the best library systems in the nation, according to a new rating system measuring library services of 7,115 systems across the country.
- Charleston County's Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program certified 228 small business enterprises in 2009, bringing the total number of certified businesses to 578. A total of 10 specialized seminars and workshops have been conducted since the program began in 2006. The SBE program is race and gender neutral, with an emphasis on growing and enhancing small companies. The SBE Program helps businesses become ready to participate in county, state and federal contracts.
- Charleston County's Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program received Honorable Mention in 2009 from the S.C. Association of Counties for its entry/presentation in the J. Mitchell Graham Award competition. The program also reports that Charleston County exceeded its DBE goal of 20%, as the total expenditures with M/WDBE firms was 23% for fiscal year 2009.
- In an effort to reduce costs and maintain countywide efficiencies, Charleston County Council voted to close the Edisto Island magistrate office located at 8070 Indigo Hill Road. The County will save \$45,000 over the remaining three years of the contract in costs for security, custodial services, utilities, taxes and insurance.
- To improve services, the County implemented a new online permitting and inspection system that allows the public to: pay for, apply for and check the status of permits; schedule and check the status of inspections; pay for, renew and inquire about Charleston County contractor licenses; and search properties for permits, inspections and plan status. The new application also allows building inspectors to complete the work in the field and issue citations/completion certificates before leaving the inspection site. As a result of the work done by the Charleston County implementation team, the application vendor awarded the County its 2009 Enterprise Technology award.
- Charleston County opened the doors of the new Charleston County Fleet Equipment Repair Facility. The repair garage staff maintains and repairs vehicles belonging to Charleston County Government departments and the Sheriff's Office. Charleston County's Technology Services' Radio Operations and the County's Procurement Department's Parts Warehouse are also housed in the facility. This is important because it means that the County's cars, trucks, ambulances, road graders and all support vehicles are efficiently maintained.
- Both the Cumberland Street and Queen and King Street Parking Garages in downtown Charleston were repaired at the same time. Parts of the garages, built in the early 1970s, received repairs to maintain the structural safety and to extend their longevity. Upcoming repairs are the first of three phases of repairs needed on the garages that will occur over the next three years. Funds for the \$5.8 million in repairs and for garage operations come from the garages' parking fees.
- In anticipation of the reduced budgets and projected increases in the cost of energy, Charleston County implemented an ambitious internal energy conservation program in 2009. The program aims to reduce

the County's electricity consumption 10 percent by the end of fiscal year 2010 (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010) compared with fiscal year 2008. The program had saved the County an estimated \$440,000 as of September 2009.

- Charleston County's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department is using a new procedure, called therapeutic hypothermia, to increase cardiac arrest (heart attack) patients' chances of survival after they've been revived, and it's already seen success.
- The process to consolidate county-wide 911 dispatch operations continues. County Council voted to authorize staff to pursue Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for the Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center. The center is part of a multi-jurisdictional plan to consolidate all 9-1-1 emergency dispatch operations within Charleston County, and is expected to be complete in 2012.
- Ready Lowcountry is a new campaign that brings together government agencies, emergency management officials, businesses and volunteers throughout the Tri-County area to help localize the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) National Ready Campaign. The County and the coalition hosted free events to provide information to families, businesses and children on how to prepare for any emergency as a part of the national "Resolve to be Ready in 2009" educational campaign.
- The Charleston County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program graduated 20 students in September, bringing the total number of CERT members in the Tri-county area to 500. Under instruction from the Charleston County Emergency Management Department, the program takes residents through eight weeks of training, which ends with a simulated disaster exercise. The goal of CERT is to better prepare the community. The students in the program learn how to identify the types of disasters and hazards that are most likely to affect their homes and communities in the Lowcountry.
- The Awendaw Fire Department, a division of Charleston County Government, received a \$556,536 grant from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant to fund six new firefighter positions. The goal of the SAFER grant is to enhance local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association and U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration by helping local fire departments to increase their staffing and deployment capabilities.
- The Charleston County Area Project Impact held its 10-year anniversary event in November. Brad Loar, Mitigation Division Director for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Region IV, traveled to Charleston to be the keynote speaker for the event. The Charleston County Area Project Impact partnership relies on revenues generated from its projects (seminars, cookbooks, etc.), grants and partner contributions to fund its many projects including the *Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan*, Lowcountry Science Fair awards, build-a-dune projects, retrofitting critical facilities for enhanced hazard resistance, storm surge signage, educational seminars for continuing education credits, mini-grants for school teachers, and educational outreach programs for the general public including the Community Action for a Renewed Environment project funded by an EPA grant.
- Transportation Sales Tax: Charleston County began construction on one of the eight major bonded projects: improvements to the intersection of Folly Road and Maybank Highway on James Island. The project addresses the dangerous left turns from Old Folly Road onto Maybank Highway and from Folly Road onto Old Folly Road, and is expected to be completed by the spring of 2010.
- Transportation Sales Tax: One of the many annual allocation projects Charleston County completed in 2009 was the addition of a new left-turn lane on Highway SC 162 at the entrance of the Stono Ferry subdivision. By widening SC 162 and creating a left-turn turn lane, motorists can now safely continue straight on SC 162 past vehicles turning left into the subdivision.
- Transportation Sales Tax – DBE Program: The TST's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program carries out Council authorized 20% DBE utilization goal, which has grown from 16.35% to a current rate of 18.04%. The number of DBE firms working on TST projects grew from 42 to 70 during 2009. Outreach efforts to DBE firms total 272 contacts while 43 have been assisted in obtaining SCDOT

certification. A DBE database, consisting of over 500 firms, was created and a registration process is currently being implemented to ensure all DBE firms are identified and included in the database.

- Transportation Sales Tax – DBE Program: DBE Program efforts are supplemented by On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Internship programs. OJT provided employment opportunities for six Charleston County residents in 2009 for a grand total of 25 since 2006. Eight of these positions led to permanent employment with the hiring firm.
- Transportation Sales Tax – DBE Program: DBE Program summer internships in various engineering and design related fields were provided to six college engineering students in 2009, for a total of 22 since 2006. Three of these internships led to permanent employment with the hiring firm.
- The Public Works Department completed the first phase of a Transportation Sales Tax drainage improvement project in Woodside Manor; Transportation Sales Tax Allocation Project on Greenwood Road in Lincolville; and two major culvert replacements (Sol Legare and Whilden Road).
- Greenbelts: During 2009, County Council approved rural applications that were submitted to the Greenbelt Bank Board during three funding cycles. Overall, the Greenbelt Bank Board received 24 project funding requests. Council approved 23 rural projects that resulted in: 6,518 acres protected (rural greenbelt land, Francis Marion Forest land, and rural wetlands) and \$23.8 million in rural funding. Of the rural funds awarded, \$12.6 million will be used to purchase 928 acres for public use.
- Greenbelts: During 2009, two municipalities and one nonprofit organization received funding from the County's Urban Greenbelt Program. The Urban Grants Review Committee reviewed the urban greenbelt applications and made recommendations to the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (CCPRC). Based on the committee's recommendations, the CCPRC reviewed the projects and made funding recommendations to Charleston County Council. County Council approved \$1 million for 8 urban greenbelt projects, which resulted in 33 acres preserved for urban parks and greenspace.
- Charleston County Government, in coordination with the towns of Mount Pleasant, Awendaw and McClellanville, held three public meetings to begin the process of creating a land use plan and overlay district for the Highway 17 North Corridor, from Porchers Bluff Road to the Charleston County/Georgetown County boundary. The process involves extensive public participation. The Charleston County Comprehensive Plan identifies the Highway 17 North Corridor as an area in need of a coordinated planning effort to ensure compatible land uses and access management. The goal of the planning process is to present the Planning Commissions and Councils of the impacted jurisdictions with coordinated recommendations regarding land uses and design and development standards for the Highway 17 North Corridor.
- In March of 2009, Tomas Breathnach, Chairman of Kilkenny County, Ireland Council, and Joseph Crockett, Kilkenny City and County Manager, joined Charleston County Council in honoring and opening an exhibit for Irish-born architect James Hoban, designer of the White House. The event, "Kilkenny to Carolina: The Emigrant Experience of a Single Area of Ireland and its Charleston Connections", included a series of lectures held at the Mills House Hotel followed by the opening of the James Hoban exhibit at Charleston County Historic Courthouse. White House architectural historians have theorized that Hoban might have worked on the redesigning the Charleston Statehouse into a Courthouse, which possibly influenced his White House design, noting that "the similarity between the Charleston statehouse and the first design of the White House is too strong to dismiss."
- For the fourth year in a row, Charleston County Government sponsored a local event, the Ninth Annual Black Expo. As a platinum sponsor, Charleston County Government contributed \$60,000 to the 2009 Black Expo. The purpose of the Black Expo is to promote economic development through increased exposure for minority-owned businesses. It is a family-oriented event that exposes the community to business opportunities and cultural resources.
- In February of 2009, Charleston County Mosquito Control employees went door-to-door to teach residents how to help get rid of mosquitoes on their own. County Mosquito Control inspectors traveled in teams to North Charleston, East Cooper, James Island and Johns Island. During the 2009 awareness campaign, the inspectors distributed educational materials to residents and take samples of mosquitoes found in containers to be brought back to the County's lab for identification.

- In 2009, Charleston County Mosquito Control employees responded to 2,016 service requests, treated 937,915 acres for adult mosquitoes, and treated 22,391 acres for larval stage mosquitoes.