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To the members of County Council and the citizens of Charleston County, South Carolina:

State law requires that all general-purpose local governments publish at the close of each fiscal year a complete set of financial statements, presented in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), and audited in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards by a firm of licensed certified public accountants. Pursuant to this requirement, we hereby issue the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for Charleston County, South Carolina, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019.

This report consists of management's representations concerning the finances of the County. Consequently, management assumes full responsibility for the completeness and fairness of presentation of all of the information presented in this report. To provide a reasonable basis for making these representations, management of the County has established a comprehensive internal control framework that is designed to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations and County policies, and safeguards the County's assets. It is designed to compile sufficient reliable information for the preparation of the County financial statements in conformity with GAAP. Because the cost of internal controls should not outweigh their benefits, the County's comprehensive framework of internal controls has been designed to provide reasonable rather than absolute assurance that the financial statements will be free from material misstatement. As management, we assert that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, this financial report is complete and accurate in all material respects, and presents fairly the financial position and results of operations of the various funds and component units of the County.

Charleston County's financial statements have been audited by Scott and Company LLC, a firm of licensed certified public accountants. The goal of the independent audit was to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements of the County for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019, are free of material misstatement. The independent audit involved performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depended on auditor's judgment, including the assessment of risk of material misstatement to the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and significant estimates made by management, and evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. The independent auditor concluded, based upon the audit, that there was sufficient and appropriate evidence for rendering an unmodified opinion that Charleston County's financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019, are fairly presented in conformity with GAAP. The independent auditor's report is presented as the first component of the financial section of this report.

The independent audit of the financial statements of Charleston County was part of a federally mandated "Single Audit" that is designed to meet the special needs of federal grantor agencies. The standards governing Single Audit engagements require the independent auditor to report not only on the fair presentation of the financial statements, but also on the audited government's internal controls and compliance with legal requirements, with special emphasis on internal controls and legal requirements involving the administration of federal awards. These reports are available in Charleston County's separately issued *Supplemental Federal Financial Assistance Reports*.

GAAP requires that management provide a narrative introduction, overview and analysis to accompany the basic financial statements in the form of Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A). This Letter of Transmittal is designed to complement, and should be read in conjunction with MD&A. Charleston County's MD&A can be found immediately following the report of the independent auditors.

## PROFILE OF THE GOVERNMENT

The County of Charleston was established by the state of South Carolina on April 9, 1948, under the provisions of Act 681 of 1942. The County operates under a Council-Administrator form of government under the S.C Home Rule Act of 1975. Policy-making and legislative authority is vested in a governing council consisting of nine Council members. The Council is elected to single member districts on a partisan basis.

Charleston County Council is responsible for, among other duties, passing ordinances and policies, approving the budget, appointing committee members, and hiring the County's Clerk of Council, County Administrator, and appointing the Internal Auditor and Attorney. The Administrator is responsible for implementing the policies and ordinances of the governing council, overseeing the day-to-day operations of government (except those services provided by countywide elected officials), and for appointing the heads of the various non-elected or appointed County departments. The County has approximately 2,600 employees.

Charleston County provides or supports a broad range of services that include, but are not limited to:

- Public safety - countywide law enforcement (Sheriff's Office), detention facilities, emergency preparedness plans to include activation of the County's Emergency Operations Center in an event of a disaster, as well as fire protection in the Awendaw McClellanville Consolidated Fire Protection District, the East Cooper Fire District, the West St. Andrew's Fire District, and the Northern Charleston County Fire District
- Veterans' assistance
- Health-related assistance - Emergency Medical Services (EMS), alcohol and other drug abuse services, indigent health care, and social services
- Voter registration
- Rural street and drainage maintenance and urban maintenance upon request of the municipalities
- Waste disposal and recycling
- Planning and zoning administration
- Criminal, civil, probate, and family court administration in county Magistrates' court and in State courts with the support of the elected Clerk of Court
- Public defender assistance funding to the Public Defender's office, run by an appointed official
- Property assessments, tax billing (Auditor's office), collection and disbursement to appropriate entities/municipalities (Treasurer's office)
- Mosquito control

Discretely presented component units are reported in a separate column in the Statement of Net Position and in the Statement of Activities in order to emphasize that they are legally separate from the primary government, and to differentiate their financial position and results of operations from those of the primary government.

The following entities are being reported as discretely presented component units:

- Charleston County Library (CCL)
- Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (CCPRC)
- Cooper River Park and Playground Commission (CRPPC)
- North Charleston District (NCD)
- St. Andrew's Parish Parks and Playground Commission (SAPPPC)
- St. John's Fire District (SJFD)
- St. Paul's Fire District (SPFD)
- Charleston County Volunteer Rescue Squad (CCVRS)

Additional information on these eight legally separate entities can be found in Note I.B. in the Notes to Financial Statements starting on page 64.

The annual budget serves as the foundation for Charleston County's financial planning and control. All agencies of the County are required to submit requests for appropriation to the County's Budget Office by February 1 each year. The County Administrator presents the proposed budget to County Council for review during May. Council is required to hold public hearings on the proposed budget, and to adopt a final budget each year no later than June 30, which is the close of Charleston County's fiscal year. The appropriated budget is prepared by fund, function (e.g., public safety), and department (e.g., Sheriff's Office).

The legal level of budgetary control is determined by County Council at the individual fund level. Expenditures by department, sub-organizational level, and major category (personnel, operating, and capital outlay) are further defined in the budget document. The County Administrator has the authority to make transfers between major expenditure categories within departments and between departments within the same fund. The Administrator has further delegated to four Deputy County Administrators the authority to transfer between departments under their authority. County Council may effect changes in fund totals through amendment to the budget ordinance or the County Administrator has the authority to change fund totals, with the exception of the general fund, if available sources (revenues, transfer in, and fund balance) differ from the budget.

Budget-to-actual comparisons are provided in this report for each individual governmental fund for which an appropriated annual budget has been adopted. For the general fund, this comparison is presented on pages 46-48 as part of the Basic Financial Statements for the governmental funds. For governmental funds, other than the general fund, with appropriated annual budgets, this comparison is presented in the nonmajor governmental fund subsection of this report, which begins on page 154.

## **SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL POLICIES**

The County's mission is to promote and protect the quality of life in Charleston County by delivering services of value to the community. As part of accomplishing this mission, the County strives to make informed choices about service provisions, while safeguarding the County's resources. The County addresses its responsibility to its citizens through the wise management of finances, which includes adequately funding County services and maintaining public facilities. The County also desires to maintain its strong financial position, while protecting the County's credit rating and preventing default on any debts. In order to do all this, the following policies had a significant impact on our current financial statements:

- A five-year forecast will be prepared for at least the County's major funds that include estimated operating revenues and costs.
- At the end of each fiscal year, the County will strive to maintain a minimum unrestricted fund balance in the General Fund of two months of the subsequent year's General Fund operating expenditures.

- The County will maintain a Rainy Day fund to provide emergency funds for use in the event of a major calamity. The County will strive to maintain this fund at no less than four percent of General Fund disbursements.
- A five-year Capital Improvement Plan shall be developed and updated annually. This plan shall contain all capital improvements from all funds and agencies of County government.
- The County shall only use long-term debt for capital projects or equipment if the following criteria are met:
  - When current revenues or one-time funds are not sufficient to use pay-as-you-go funding.
  - When the useful life of the project or equipment equals or exceeds the term of the financing.
- A five-year Debt Management Plan shall be developed annually. This plan shall contain all outstanding debt from all funds, provide for the issuance of new debt at reasonable intervals, and show the impact on the ad valorem tax rate.
- Bonds issued by the County shall not exceed a repayment period of 25 years, and the terms must be in compliance with applicable tax law requirements governing tax exempt financing.
- The County may undertake refinancing of outstanding debt:
  - When such refinancing allows the County to realize significant debt service savings (net present value savings equal to at least 2.5 percent of the refunded par amount) without lengthening the term of refinanced debt and without increasing debt service in any subsequent year.
  - When the public policy benefits outweigh the costs associated with the issuance of new debt and any increase in annual debt service.
  - When a restrictive covenant is removed to the benefit of the County.

## **LONG-TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING**

The Budget Department prepares long-term financial plans for the General Fund, Debt Management, Transportation Sales Tax, and Environmental Management that contain five years of data. Per the County's Financial Policies, the General Fund and Debt Management Plans are required to be updated annually. The County ordinance that established the Transportation Sales Taxes requires that plan to also be updated annually. Though it is not required, the Environmental Management Plan is updated annually due to its significance as a major Enterprise Fund. In addition to the plans for operating, the Budget Department, in conjunction with the Facilities Management Department, prepares a five-year Capital Improvement Plan and incorporates any operating impact into the operating funds. Together these plans capture approximately 70 percent of the County's operating funds. Some of the challenges the County faces as it prepares these forecasts are increased operating costs, population growth which will require funding to maintain or improve the quality of services, filling vacant positions with qualified employees, the undertaking of new or unplanned projects, and maintaining the desired amount of fund balance.

## **ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND OUTLOOK FOR CHARLESTON COUNTY'S GROWTH INDUSTRIES:**

**Advanced Manufacturing** – The aerospace and automotive sectors serve as the foundation for the region's advanced manufacturing industry. The Boeing Company and Mercedes-Benz Vans employ nearly 8,400 people in the region. Local operation for the two OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) has spurred the relocation and expansion of multiple tier one and tier two aerospace and automotive suppliers.

Between the years 2011 and 2019, jobs in the aerospace project and parts manufacturing industry grew nearly 60 percent. The nation experienced a decline of 2.4 percent for the same period. The ongoing story behind this growth is the prosperity of The Boeing Company's South Carolina division. Since its landing in 2011, The Boeing Company has opened six facilities and business units in Charleston County. The Boeing South Carolina site builds all three versions of the 787. The company currently employs more than 7,300 people in the region.

The automotive sector is at the beginning of a high growth phase ignited by the completion of the Mercedes-Benz Vans' 1.1 million square foot Sprinter Van manufacturing facility in Palmetto Commerce Park. Mercedes-Benz Vans celebrated the grand opening of the facility in September 2018, rolling out the first of its Next Generation Sprinter Vans. More than 1,100 people have been hired to run the expanded facility. This facility is expected to grow to 1,300 workers.

**IT & High Tech** – Solid growth in the IT and high tech industry has helped the Charleston region maintain its standing as the nation's "Silicon Harbor." The region ranked fifth for high-tech GDP growth (2016-17) in Milken's *2018 Best-Performing Large Cities* report, released in January 2019. Continued leadership of organizations such as the

Charleston Digital Corridor, Harbor Entrepreneur Center, and other entrepreneurial endeavors has helped create an economic ecosystem suitable for the birth and growth of tech startups. Technology companies, like BoomTown, PhishLabs, and Snag, are often considered “homegrown” because talent and capital investment are sourced locally. Many Charleston area tech companies have earned a place on the *Inc. 5000* list of “America’s Fastest-Growing Private Companies.” The popularity of annual events like DIG South, which draws the brightest tech minds from all over the country to the area for a time of idea generation and collaboration, represent undeniable expansion in entrepreneurial resources and interest in Charleston County’s high tech sector.

**Defense, Intelligence & Cybersecurity** – The Charleston region contains the largest military presence in South Carolina (Von Nessen, 2017), when considering military-related activity. The defense, intelligence, and cybersecurity industries represent a major part of this story. Investments from these industries have bolstered the area’s intelligence community as organizations such as the Charleston Defense Contractors Association continue to operate and add local synergy to the dynamic industry. The Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Atlantic’s (formerly called Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center or SPAWAR) Charleston operations have a total economic impact of \$2.6 billion on the state of South Carolina. NIWC directly supports 18 military staff, 3,030 federal civilian contractors and supports an estimated 100 local defense contractors.

**Warehouse, Distribution and Logistics** – Firms serving the growing aerospace and automotive clusters continue to locate in Charleston County. According to commercial real estate market analytics provided by CoStar, approximately 1 million square feet of additional industrial distribution space is under construction in the county. Over the last 12 months, more than 900,000 square feet has been added to the industrial market.

**Medical & Life Sciences Industry** – The region’s health care and social services industry accounts for nine percent of the area’s total employment. The health care industry is anchored by the state’s teaching hospital, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). MUSC attracted more than \$76 million in research funding in fiscal year 2018. The majority of the medical industry employment currently exists in Charleston’s seven area hospitals - five private regional hospitals, MUSC and the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center.

Charleston is garnering international recognition as an emerging biomedical market, and the Medical University of South Carolina’s world-class research is key to this region becoming a globally competitive location for biomedical business and talent. Charleston is home to more than 75 medical device and pharmaceutical manufacturers, research laboratories, and service companies. Furthermore, the Foundation for Research Development is paving the way for investors, industry, and entrepreneurs to collaborate. The new \$400 million MUSC Shawn Jenkins Children’s Hospital is scheduled to open in 2019.

## **ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND OUTLOOK FOR CHARLESTON COUNTY’S MATURE INDUSTRIES:**

The economic environment in Charleston County, South Carolina continues to show signs of vitality as evidenced by the labor market and population growth. During the period of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, Charleston County added more than 5,200 jobs (a 2.6 percent increase). As of June 2019, the unemployment rate for the county is 2.9 percent compared to 3.5 percent for the state of South Carolina and 3.7 percent for the nation. (State and national data are seasonally adjusted). As of January 2019, per capita income stands at \$57,281 compared to \$41,633 for the State of South Carolina. The region’s population growth also remains vibrant. As of July 1, 2018, there are now 405,905 residents living in Charleston County, a 15.9 percent increase from 2010. This compares to a 6 percent increase experienced in the United States.

**Port of Charleston** – The Port of Charleston is the fourth largest container port along the U.S. East Coast (based on container volume). Located within 500 miles of 25 percent of the US population, the South Carolina Ports Authority (SCPA) is a popular destination for outbound and inbound cargo. The SCPA is comprised of seaport facilities in multiple cities within Charleston County including the cities of Charleston, North Charleston and Mount Pleasant. The SCPA owns and operates five facilities located in Charleston harbor and these facilities employ approximately 500 people. A sixth facility, the Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr. Terminal is currently being constructed to accommodate anticipated volume growth. The new container terminal is part of a \$2.6 billion capital improvement plan which will expand capacity by 50 percent. With facilities that handle containerized, break-bulk, project cargo and roll-on/roll-off cargoes, the SCPA annually handles system-wide shipments valued at roughly \$70 billion and helps facilitate the employment of an estimated 187,200 residents of the State of South Carolina.



The Port of Charleston saw a nearly nine percent increase in cargo container volume in fiscal year 2019. The Port handled a record 2.4 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs). With the addition of the Inland Port in Greer and the inland Port in Dillon, the Port of Charleston's reach is extended 212 miles inland to the northwest and 150 miles inland to the north. The inland port additions provide shippers with access to more than 95 million consumers within a one-day drive. SCPA reports that the Inland Port Greer witnessed its busiest fiscal year since its opening six years ago.

The Port of Charleston harbor deepening project is currently underway. When complete in 2020, the harbor will suitably accommodate post-Panamax vessels that now have access to the East Coast since the completion of the Panama Canal. The plans include deepening the channel to a depth of 52 feet and the entrance channel depth to 54 feet. The turning basin is also slated to be enlarged. Federal and State funding to deepen the harbor has been approved. In March of 2019, the President of the United States' budget allocated \$138 million for the project. In addition to the harbor deepening, the SCPA's continues to execute other parts of its capital improvement program that includes both increasing capacity and efficient operations, as well as modernizing terminals.

**Hospitality and Tourism Industry** – Charleston was named the “No. 1 City in the U.S. and Canada” by Travel + Leisure World’s Best Awards for seven consecutive years’ (2013 through 2019). Charleston has received a similar designation of “No. 1 Top U.S. City” from Condé Nast Traveler Reader’s Choice Awards eight years straight (2011 through 2018). Travel + Leisure magazine readers also designated Charleston as the No. 10 City in the world. The region’s visitor industry has expanded rapidly over the past few years, experiencing 7.3 million visitors in 2017. The tourism industry contributes more than \$8 billion annually to the area’s economy.



The Charleston restaurant scene garners nationwide attention with coverage by magazines including Food & Wine, Fortune, and Southern Living. In addition, Charleston restaurants and chefs are recognized annually by the prestigious James Beard Foundation for their contribution to the America’s food culture.

Charleston offers a vast array of festivals and events that bring tourists to the region. These include cultural events such as the annual Spoleto and Piccolo Spoleto festivals, as well as sports events like the Volvo Car Open tennis tournament, and the annual Cooper River Bridge Run. These events generate national spotlight for the region and spur millions of dollars in economic activity.



The USGA 2019 U.S. Women’s Open was hosted at the Country Club of Charleston, S.C. The USGA estimates that the event drew 100,000 spectators and direct economic impact of \$25 million in the Charleston region. The region is looking forward to hosting another prestigious golf event in 2021. In April 2015, PGA officials announced that the 2021 PGA Championship will be hosted at the Ocean Course at Kiawah Island, SC. The Championship was previously held there in 2012 with great success; bringing with it a \$23.6 million economic impact felt throughout the Charleston region.

Tourists arrive in Charleston from land, sea, and air. The region sees vast numbers of tourists who drive to Charleston for its charm and hospitality. In addition, the centrally located Charleston International Airport (CHS) brings in tourists from around the world. The airport offers daily non-stop service to 27 cities and 31 airports in the United States and United Kingdom. The new nonstop transatlantic flight to London, Heathrow airport via British Airways launched in April 2019. The new service coupled with a projection for more than 5 million passengers this year has prompted multiple improvement projects. Major construction projects include the addition of a new parking structure for more than 3,000 vehicles and the potential addition for a terminal.

The last decade has seen the emergence of a new facet to Charleston’s tourism market - the cruise ship industry. In 2010, Carnival Cruise Lines chose to make Charleston a departure and arrival point. In addition, other cruise lines (i.e. Royal Caribbean, Azamara, Aida, TUI and Princess) bring their ships to Charleston as a port of call. The cruise business has an estimated \$131 million annual impact on the Charleston market according to a 2016 report by the Cruise Lines International Association. The number of passengers on Charleston cruise ships grew 18.5% between 2015 and 2017 to 224,105. Carnival Cruise offers cruises between Charleston and ports in the Bahamas, Bermuda and the Caribbean ranging from two to ten days in duration.

**Military** – The military has continued to be a significant presence in the area even after the 1995 closure of much of the Charleston Naval Complex. A 2017 statewide study conducted by the University of South Carolina and the South

Carolina Military Base Task Force estimated the annual economic impact to be nearly \$11 billion with more than 68,000 jobs supported. Joint Base Charleston remains the single largest employer in the region, employing over 22,000 uniformed, civilian, and reservist personnel located within the Naval Weapons Station, the Navy Nuclear Power Training School, and the Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC). Joint Base Charleston is home to the 437th Airlift Wing and its squadrons of C-17 transport planes, the 628th Air Base Wing and the 315th Airlift Wing (the reserve unit). These planes play a vital role of carrying supplies to active duty troops stationed all over the world. The U.S. Coast Guard operates a station in Charleston, as well.

**Higher Education** – Nearly 50,000 students pursued higher education degrees in various Charleston regional colleges, universities and technical schools. The five largest institutions include; Trident Technical College, with 12,148 students; the College of Charleston with 10,783 students; The Citadel with 3,763 students; Charleston Southern University with an enrollment of 3,414; and the Medical University of South Carolina with 2,944 students. The region has many other educational institutions that supports a thriving research ecosystem and a trained workforce:

- Trident Technical College's has constructed multiple facilities to meet the needs of a trained workforce both in the areas of nursing, science and advanced manufacturing. In 2014, the college opened a \$30 million, 90,000-square-foot Nursing and Science Building featuring nursing simulation labs. In 2019, the college opened a \$79.3 million, 218,105-square-foot S.C. Aeronautical Training Center featuring two hanger bays, and 31 specialty-labs.
- The Zucker Family Graduate Education Center opened in late 2016. The center serves as the academic anchor of the Clemson University Restoration Institute (CURI). Program offerings include graduate-level engineering courses and advanced degrees to engineers interested in new opportunities in the job market. The CURI campus is also home to the newest and most advanced wind-turbine drive train testing facility. The center is capable of full-scale highly accelerated mechanical and electrical testing of advanced drivetrain systems for wind turbines with 7.5 MW and 15 MW test bays, positioning Charleston as an energy innovation leader.
- The Lowcountry Graduate Center, a partnership of five universities across the state and located right off I-526 in North Charleston, opened the doors of their new facility to serve working professionals, enabling them “to grow their career right here in the greater Charleston area.”

**Manufacturing** – In September 2018, Mercedes-Benz Vans hosted the grand opening of its expanded Sprinter Van facility at the North Charleston location. The new facility provides an additional 1.1 million square feet necessary for full-scale production of the OEM's next generation of Sprinter vans. The \$500 million project is expected to create 1,300 new manufacturing jobs. More than 1,000 people have been hired thus far. The U.S. is the second largest market for the Sprinter van. Mercedes-Benz Vans expanded presence, coupled with the new Volvo facility in Berkeley County has sparked more interest from automotive suppliers and logistics companies in locating in Charleston. Over the past 18-months, companies including Isri (Isringhausen GmbH), Diehl Aerosystems, Innovative Vehicle Solutions, Knapheide, BLG Logistics and Kuehne + Nagel, Inc. and MAHLE Behr have opened or expanded operations in the area to support existing OEMs.



The manufacturing sector in Charleston County includes multiple growing industries. The beverage manufacturing industry, which includes breweries and distilleries, has experienced significant growth with the expansion of multiple existing companies. Recent expansion announcements in this area include Charleston Distilling and High Wire Distilling Co. Other specialty manufacturing companies are experiencing growth as well. Specialty chemical manufacturer, Ingevity Corporation, announced the establishment of new headquarters.

## **MAJOR COUNTY INITIATIVES**

**Comprehensive Greenbelt Plan Updated – Eight Projects Approved:** During FY19 County Council approved nine Greenbelt projects totaling \$10.2 million to purchase 1,855 acres. These projects provide the following:

- 1500 acres for public parks and greenspaces:
  - Additional lands for the Francis Marion National Park.
  - Two urban parks on James Island with access to water.
  - Protection of cultural land in the Phillips Community of Mount Pleasant.
  - Preservation of historic land on Edisto Island.
  - An additional public path to the beach on Sullivan’s Island.
  
- Leverage of nearly \$3 million toward the purchase of these properties and park improvements.

**Charleston County Public Libraries:** Charleston County Library staff along with elected officials and Charleston County citizens cut the ribbon on the new Wando Mt. Pleasant Library branch. The 40,000 square foot building was designed to include digital creative spaces including a teen lounge and gaming room, a digital recording studio, and two editing labs. This is the first of the five new libraries to open from the \$108.5 million referendum voters approved in 2014.

**Translation Tool now Available on County’s Website:** Translating Charleston County’s website into over 100 languages is now just a click away, thanks to Google Translate. Google Translate is a free translation service that Charleston County is now using to make our web content accessible to staff and citizens with English as their second language or limited English proficiency. The goal of this language service is to expand Charleston County’s efforts to promote a diverse and inclusive environment, by making the website more accessible.

**Construction Management:** The County anticipates funding infrastructure from bond issues, Enterprise Funds, and Special Revenue Funds in the future. The major challenges in construction involve the following projects:

- Currently, staff is working on design and construction of a building for a community services hub and a major redesign and reconfiguration of the Public Works complex. The County issued debt in October 2019 to fund both of these projects.
  
- The County is also working to construct the next lined landfill cell and a recycling center that is cost efficient and meets the needs of the growing population. The County issued debt in October 2019 to fund construction costs for the recycling center.

Other projects on the horizon for the County are:

- Corrections campus for juvenile offenders.
  
- County office building renovations at the downtown Charleston location.
  
- Sheriff shooting range.
  
- Radio replacement program including towers.

**Awards and Acknowledgements:**

Charleston County Government’s offices, departments and employees have been honored with numerous awards and recognitions in FY 2019. These awards reflect Charleston County employees’ dedication to providing the best services to our citizens.

- **County Wins J. Mitchell Graham Award at South Carolina Association of Counties** for its EMS Mobile Crisis Telehealth Project, which responds to the increasing number of psychiatric and mental health patients encountered by EMS staff. The County’s EMS Mobile crisis Telehealth Project allows mental health patients to get the appropriate level of care and avoid lengthy housing in emergency rooms or detention facilities. So far, the project has resulted in an average of 60 diversions from unnecessary emergency room transports per month and has saved patients thousands of dollars in fees for ambulance transports and emergency room visits.



- **Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1:** Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 employee, Joselyn May was awarded the Palmetto Award at the South Carolina annual Association of Public Safety-Communications Officials (APCO)/National Emergency Number Association (NENA) conference. The award is given to someone who exemplifies exceptional professionalism, and whose daily performance is an inspiration and an example to others in emergency telecommunications.
- **Emergency Management Earns Accreditation:** Charleston County Emergency Management department earned accreditation by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP). Charleston County is the first county in South Carolina to achieve EMAP Accreditation. To achieve accreditation, applicants must:
  - Demonstrate through self-assessment, documentation, and peer assessment verification that its program meets the Emergency Management Standard.
  - Use the accreditation to prove the capabilities of their disaster preparedness and response systems.
  - Maintain compliance with the Emergency Management Standard and is reassessed to maintain accredited status.



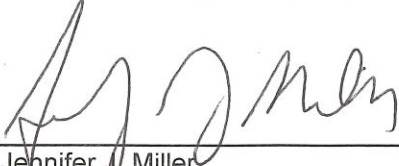
Accreditation is valid for five years.

- **Charleston County EMS receives Lifeline EMS Gold Plus Recognition Award:** Charleston County EMS has received the American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline® EMS Gold Plus Award for implementing quality improvement measures for the treatment of patients who experience severe heart attacks. Lifeline's EMS recognition program recognizes emergency medical services for their efforts in improving systems of care to rapidly identify suspected heart attack patients, promptly notify the medical center and trigger an early response from the awaiting hospital personnel.
- **Public Works Manager Receives American Public Works Association Leadership Award:** The American Public Works Association recently honored Charleston County Inspection Services Manager Ryan Peterson with the Myron Calkins Young Leader Award. This award recognizes young APWA members who demonstrate commitment to the public works profession and show potential for future growth in the association.
- The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded a **Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting** to Charleston County for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2018. This was the 31<sup>st</sup> consecutive year that the government has achieved this prestigious award. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting given to governments that demonstrate a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to communicate clearly the County's financial story. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, a government must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report. This report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements. A Certificate of Achievement is valid for a period of one year only. We believe that Charleston County's current comprehensive financial report continues to meet the Certificate of Achievement Program's requirements and we are submitting it to GFOA to determine its eligibility for another certificate.
- Charleston County also received its 30<sup>th</sup> consecutive **Distinguished Budget Presentation Award** for its Fiscal Year 2019 budget from GFOA. 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. The Fiscal Year 20 budget was submitted to the GFOA and we believe it will receive the award also.
- Charleston County maintained its AAA bond rating with Standard & Poor's Ratings Services, Moody's Investors Service, and Fitch Ratings for the 14<sup>th</sup> year in a row.

The preparation of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report was made possible by the dedicated service of the entire staff of the Charleston County Finance Department. Special thanks go to the team headed by Carla Ritter, who with the assistance of Laurie Hagberg, Chrisanne Porter, and Barbara Ford of the Finance Department produced the

Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, and coordinated the audit with the external auditors. Substantial contributions were also made by several financial staffs throughout the County: Mack Gile, Catherine Ksenzak, and Gail Marion from the Budget Office; Mary Tinkler and Julie Riley from the Treasurer's Office; Lisa Murray from the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services; Jean Sullivan from Grants Administration; Jackie Proveaux and Michelle Sueck from the Public Works Department; and Reggie Fuller of the Economic Development Office. Substantial assistance also came from the staff members of the County Administrator and Deputy Administrator for Finance. Thanks are also extended to the staff of Scott and Company LLC, the external auditors, for their efforts in assisting the County produce this Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

In addition, Charleston County staff would like to acknowledge the leadership and support of Charleston County Council in making this report possible.



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Jennifer J. Miller  
County Administrator



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Corine Altenhein  
Deputy Administrator for Finance



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Carla Ritter  
Finance Director