



**PROMOTE**



**PROTECT**



**PROVIDE**



**Fiscal  
Year**

# **2010**

**CHARLESTON COUNTY  
ANNUAL REPORT**

# Table of Contents

<b>Charleston County at a Glance.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>County Finances at a Glance.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Charleston County Council.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Elected and Appointed Officials.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Elected and Appointed Official Highlights.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Promoting Economic Growth.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Protecting Our Community .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Providing Services of Value.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Providing Transportation Solutions.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Protecting Our Resources.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Promoting Emergency Preparedness.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Promoting Achievement.....</b>	<b>18</b>

# Letter from the Administrator

Allen O'Neal  
County Administrator



Lonnie Hamilton, III Public Services Building  
4045 Bridge View Drive  
North Charleston, SC 29405-7464

Dear Charleston County Council and citizens,

During fiscal year (FY) 2010 (July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010), the national recession continued and so did the reduction in the County's revenues, declining close to \$12 million since FY2009. Past recessions have led to strong recoveries, but the current prolonged economic malaise significantly tested the County's ability to responsibly maintain services and infrastructure. However, the County's dedicated staff, in close coordination with County Council and elected and appointed officials, took creative and strategic measures to sustain its level of productivity with diminishing resources.

For the eleventh consecutive year, the County balanced its budget without a millage increase by carefully balancing a mix of service reductions, organizational efficiencies and revenue enhancements, while responsibly meeting staffing, capital and core services needs.

By taking these and other measures to preserve our financial foundations, the County maintained its strong AAA bond rating with Standard and Poor's and received an Aa1 bond rating, due to a re-calibration process, from Moody's Investors Service. Our rainy day funds, adopted fund balance policies and five-year financial forecasts were, and still are, all signs of solid fiscal management.

A positive turn came with Boeing's announcement to expand its 787 Dreamliner program with a new production facility in the County, which is expected to create over 3,800 jobs and boost our local economy almost \$5.9 billion a year.

To support a growing County, we continued to improve our transportation infrastructure, finishing a major Transportation Sales Tax-funded project, the Folly Road and Maybank Highway intersection on James Island, and beginning construction on two more of the large, bonded projects: Bee Street and Courtenay Drive in downtown Charleston and the Glenn McConnell Parkway and I-526 interchange in West Ashley.

Balancing the development of roads and infrastructure, the County took great strides in protecting greenspace. Sixteen rural and three urban grant projects protected 3,522 acres, for which the U.S. Forest Service commended the County's partnership efforts in being the first local government to leverage funds to preserve land for federal management and protection.

The County also made advances toward County Council's 40 percent recycling goal by expanding the recycling program to accept all paper and plastics, while continuing to analyze how best to improve the overall Environment Management Department program.

Although financial challenges are expected to continue, I will also continue to work with Council, our elected and appointed officials and County staff to do everything possible to streamline our efforts to reduce costs and ensure that Charleston County services are maintained and that our financial standings hold strong.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. O'Neal", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Allen O'Neal

# Charleston County at a Glance

## The Land

Charleston County is located along the southeastern coast of South Carolina. It encompasses approximately 919 square miles of land, marshes, rivers and wetlands with a coastline that stretches nearly 100 miles along the Atlantic Ocean.

Charleston County contains vital protected areas, including the Francis Marion National Forest, Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, and ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge.

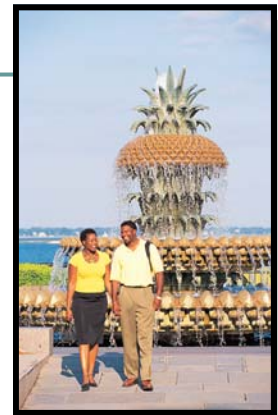


## The People

Charleston County's population has grown 1.3 percent since 2007 to an estimated 2008 population of 348,046, with a median age of 36 (most up to date information available from the federal government). The labor force consists of around 176,000 workers, with a per capita income of approximately \$28,649.

Around 87.3 percent of Charleston County residents have a high school degree or higher level of education, while 36.5 percent hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis*



## The Industry

Charleston County has a wide range of industry, including shipping, tourism and manufacturing. Total gross retail sales in the county for calendar year 2009 reached almost \$11 billion.

The top 10 major employers in the County are: the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), Charleston Air Force Base, Charleston County School District, Roper St. Francis Healthcare, Boeing, Piggly Wiggly Carolina Co Inc., Charleston County Government, City of Charleston, Trident Health System, and Force Protection Inc.

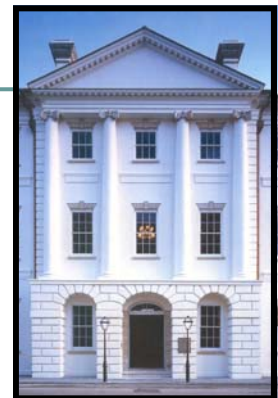
*Source: Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, Center for Business Research*



## The Government

Charleston County Government comprises 45 departments and offices. A full-time staff of approximately 2,100 serves the citizens of Charleston County.

Charleston County also includes the municipalities of the City of Charleston; City of Folly Beach; City of Isle of Palms; City of North Charleston; Town of Awendaw; Town of Hollywood; Town of James Island; Town of Kiawah Island; Town of Lincolnville; Town of McClellanville; Town of Meggett; Town of Mount Pleasant; Town of Rockville; Town of Seabrook Island; and Town of Sullivan's Island.

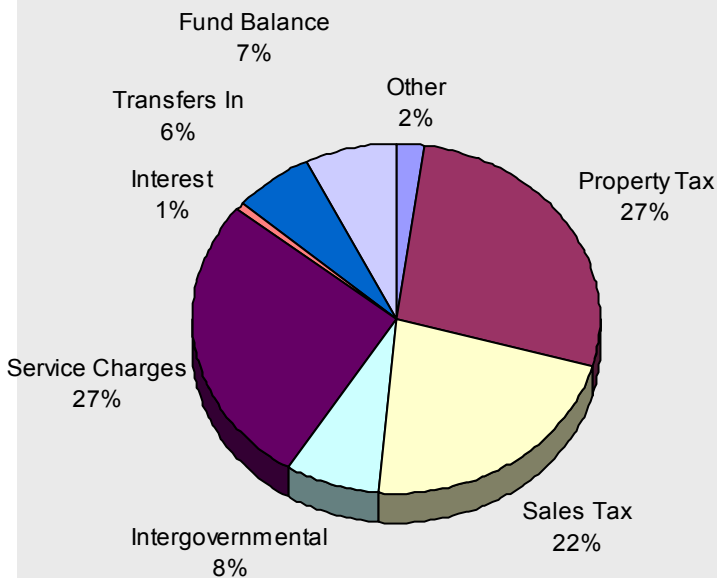


# Charleston County Finances

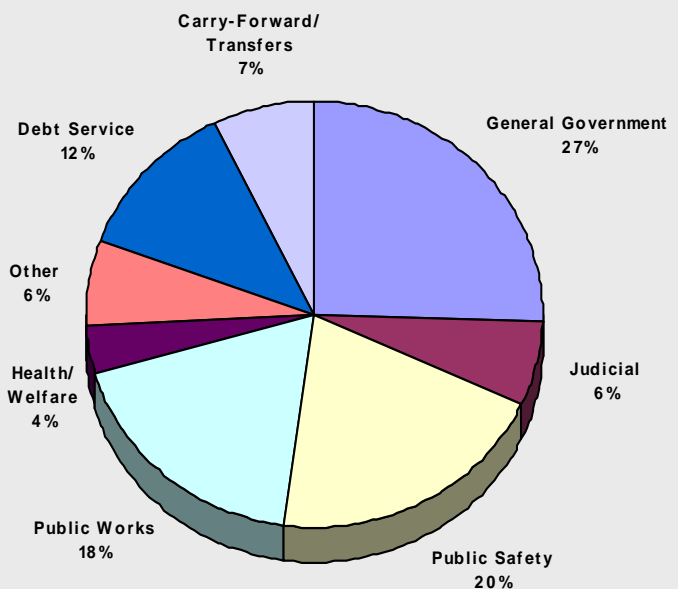
## Fiscal Year 2010 Budget

Total operating budget: \$376 million

### Where funding comes from...



### Where funding goes...



## No increase in tax millage for the homeowner

The County's tax millage and the Solid Waste User Fee for Fiscal Year 2010 remained unchanged; however, the County's Local Option Sales Tax credit decreased due to less funds being collected as a result of the slowdown in the local economy. This means that, for an owner-occupied home appraised at \$250,000 (four percent assessed value), the net tax bill to the homeowner for operating Charleston County Government (including the Solid Waste User Fee) totaled \$389.50, an increase of \$37.50 from Fiscal Year 2009, caused by the smaller credit being available to offset the gross tax due.

### The property tax and fee on a \$250,000 owner-occupied home in an unincorporated area in FY10:



Property Tax	\$468.00
Local Option Sales Tax Credit	- 177.50
Recycling/Disposal Fee	<u>+\$99.00</u>
	<b>\$389.50*</b>

\*The total does not include taxes for the school district, municipalities or public service districts.

In comparison, the property tax and fee on a \$250,000 house in FY 1991 was \$690. The Local Option Sales Tax Credit (LOST), adopted in 1991, was designated to reduce local property taxes. Charleston County applies 100 percent of the LOST revenues as credit against local property taxes.

# Charleston County Council

The image features a map of Charleston County, South Carolina, divided into nine numbered and color-coded districts. Each district is connected by a line to a portrait of its council member. The members and their roles are as follows:

- District 1 (Pink):** Joe McKeown
- District 2 (Green):** Dickie Schweers
- District 3 (Purple):** J. Elliott Summey, Vice Chairman
- District 4 (Red):** Henry Darby
- District 5 (Blue):** Teddie E. Pryor, Sr., Chairman
- District 6 (Orange):** A. Victor Rawl
- District 7 (Yellow):** Colleen T. Condon
- District 8 (Light Blue):** Curtis Inabinett
- District 9 (Light Purple):** Paul Thurmond

Charleston County Council serves as the legislative, policy-making body of county government through the adoption of ordinances and resolutions. Council members represent nine single-member districts, and each January, the members elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman to represent Council for that calendar year.

Council annually approves budgets for the County's general fund, solid waste fund and several special revenue funds. Council also has budgetary oversight of several special purpose districts that provide services within Charleston County.

Charleston County operates under the Council-Administrator form of government. The Administrator is hired by the Council to serve as the County's Chief Administrative Officer. In addition to carrying out the directives and policies of Council, the Administrator oversees the day-to-day operations of county government.

# Elected Officials



## **Auditor - Peggy Moseley**

The Auditor sets millage rates to satisfy annual budget requirements for Charleston County, including 33 municipalities and other taxing authorities. Her office also calculates and mails tax bills for all real and personal property.



## **Coroner - Rae Wooten**

The Coroner conducts independent investigations of deaths in Charleston County. An investigation's purpose is to determine the cause of death and the circumstances surrounding it.



## **Register of Mesne Conveyance - Charlie Lybrand**

The Register of Mesne Conveyance Office records deeds, mortgages, liens and other documents related to property transactions in Charleston County.



## **Solicitor - Scarlett Wilson**

The Solicitor serves the 9th Circuit Court in Charleston and Berkeley Counties by providing prosecution services to the Court of General Sessions and Family Court.



## **Clerk of Court - Julie Armstrong**

The Clerk of Court provides administrative support for civil, criminal and family court. Her office also maintains court dockets and records and receives and disburses child support fees, fines and costs.



## **Probate Court Judge - Judge Irv Condon**

The Probate Court probates estates; handles involuntary commitments for alcohol and drug abuse and/or mental illness; issues marriage licenses; appoints legal guardians; and approves minor and wrongful death settlements.



## **Sheriff - Al Cannon**

The Sheriff's Office provides public safety to the entire county through community programs, court security, law enforcement and detention.



## **Treasurer - Andy Smith**

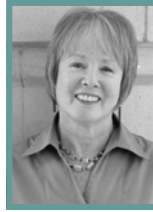
The Treasurer collects real property, personal property, motor vehicle and other taxes and oversees their disbursement to county government, municipalities, schools and special taxing districts in Charleston County.

# Appointed Officials



## **Board of Elections & Voter Registration- Executive Director Marilyn Bowers**

The Board of Elections & Voter Registration conducts elections for all elected positions representing Charleston County residents. The Executive Director is appointed by the Board.



## **Library Board of Directors - Acting Director Cynthia Bledsoe**

The Charleston County Library System maintains 16 branches throughout Charleston County to service over 300,000 library card-holders. The Director is appointed by the Library Board of Trustees.



## **Magistrate Courts - Chief Judge David W. Coker**

Magistrate Courts make traffic and criminal case rulings; issue restraining orders and arrest and search warrants; and handle landlord-tenant disputes. The Chief Magistrate is appointed by the governor.



## **Master-in-Equity - Mikell Scarborough**

The Master-in-Equity facilitates litigation resolution for foreclosure cases and a substantial number of civil, non-jury cases that are assigned by the S.C. Circuit Court. The Master-In-Equity is appointed by the governor.



## **Veterans Affairs - Director Donald Morillo**

The Veterans Affairs (VA) Office assists veterans and their dependents with filing eligibility applications for benefit entitlements from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The Director is appointed by the Charleston County Legislative Delegation.

# Elected and Appointed Official Highlights

## Lawrimore Park Dedicated



*Mrs. Marilyn Lawrimore unveils a plaque honoring her late husband and former Council Chairman, Barrett S. Lawrimore.*

Bordered by Meeting Street, the Historic Charleston County Courthouse, the O.T. Wallace Office Building and the Blake Tenement house, Lawrimore Park was named in honor of former Charleston County Council Chairman, Barrett S. Lawrimore. The park is open to the public and is free of charge.

During a ceremony on Friday, April 23, County and city officials and Lawrimore family members and friends gathered to unveil the plaque dedicating the park to Lawrimore.

“For his service and dedication to the citizens over his lifetime, Mr. Lawrimore has been honored with numerous awards,” Chairman Pryor said in his speech. “But most would tell you that Mr. Lawrimore’s first love was horticulture. So today we honor him in a different way, with a park, full of the plants he loved, where everyone can enjoy reflecting on the beauty that is Charleston County. It is fitting that this special place is named after such a man, as it is his efforts that helped make our County as beautiful as it is today.”

Lawrimore served on Charleston County Council from 1992 to 2004, and as Council Chairman from 1996 to 2001 and again in 2004.

### Facts about the Park

**Size:** The park is approximately 9,580 square feet.

**Monument:** In 1965, a monument to the late L. Mendel Rivers, United States Representative for the First Congressional District for a quarter of a century, was first erected by the North Charleston Kiwanis Club at the Cooper River Memorial Library in North Charleston. The larger than life statue was created by sculptor Arthur Bruse Hoheb.

**Quaker Memorial Plaque:** The park grounds contain the reinterred remains of over 53 Quakers who were originally buried at the Quaker Meeting House graveyard that was located on King Street.

**Grave Marker:** The marker, originally located in the Quaker Meeting House graveyard, recognizes one of the Quaker families whose remains were reinterred where the park now stands.

### History of the park

Evidence of a moat that surrounded Charleston from 1700 to 1718 was revealed in the western third of the courtyard. It appears that the city wall on the west side of colonial Charleston consisted of an earthen rampart with a wooden palisade at its crest.

The use of the site from 1718 to 1739, when the moat was filled, is not documented. A 1739 map shows the site as part of a large public square dedicated in part to market activities.

By 1753, the location had become the site of the S.C. Statehouse, and by 1768 the rear yard had been formally established as a walled courtyard containing a two-story dwelling, two single-story privies, a fire well/cistern, and a drinking water cistern.

In the early 19th century, the circular drinking water cistern was filled and replaced by a rectangular cistern adjoining the rear wall of the building. The foundations of the dwelling and privies have been reproduced to show their locations. The location of entrances to the courtyard is unknown. Two additions to the courthouse, built in 1926 and 1941, were removed to return the courthouse to its 1792 appearance.



# Promoting Economic Development

## Boeing Announcement Breaks All Previous Records for Investment and Job Creation

On October 28, 2009, Boeing announced that it had chosen North Charleston as the location for its second final assembly site for the 787 Dreamliner program. Boeing's selection of the Charleston County location was the largest economic development announcement in South Carolina history, featuring a commitment to create 3,800 direct jobs and make a minimum \$750 million capital investment.

A recent economic impact study valued Boeing's future economic impact to South Carolina's economy at \$6.1 billion each year, with an additional \$3 billion to state tax revenues over the next 30 years. The impact on just the Charleston region accounts for \$5.9 billion of the total, including more than 15,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs that will be created as a result of Boeing's presence.



*Above: Charleston County Chairman, Teddie Pryor (left), is present as Governor Sanford signs the state's Boeing incentive legislation.*



*Left: State and local officials celebrate at the ground-breaking ceremony for the new Boeing facility.*

Driven by the historic Boeing announcement, Charleston County businesses broke all previous single-year records, creating 5,057 new jobs and investing \$985.5 million. This performance earned the county a #1 ranking in both job creation and capital investment among South Carolina's 46 counties, according to the S.C. Department of Commerce.

This marked the 13th time, since the inception of the economic development program in 1993, that the County placed in the 'top ten' in one or both of these categories, and the second time the County placed first in both categories. This record-breaking year pushed Charleston County over two previous records, as its cumulative capital investment reached \$3.8 billion and the creation of over 21,500 new jobs since the inception of the County's economic development mission.

## Other Notable Announcements

- **Clemson University** announced that it will build and operate a large-scale wind turbine drive train testing facility at the Clemson University Restoration Institute by 2012 on the former Navy base. The Restoration Institute estimates the initiative will create a minimum of 113 construction-related temporary jobs, 21 full-time jobs, and 568 indirect jobs.
- **Southwest Airlines** announced that it would begin service at Charleston International Airport by early 2011, giving the airport a much needed low-cost carrier option for its passengers.
- **The Innovation Center**, a bio-tech incubator collaboration between the S.C. Research Authority, the Medical University of South Carolina, and the City of Charleston, celebrated its grand opening. The Innovation Center is equipped with 11 high-tech labs and over \$50,000 in equipment for its tenants to use.
- **SPAWAR Systems Center Atlantic** broke ground on a new 20,220 square-foot Consolidated Engineering Laboratory, showing evidence of continued success of SPAWAR.
- **Carnival Cruise Lines** launched year-round cruise service from the Port of Charleston. The cruise business is estimated to have a \$37 million impact on the Charleston region annually, along with the addition of over 400 jobs.

# Protecting Our Community



## Detention Center Expansion Complete

The Charleston County Detention Center expansion was completed in March. The approximately 332,000 square foot building increased the total size of the Detention Center to 512,251 square feet. It also increased the inmate capacity by 1,334, which increased the total inmate capacity of the Detention Center to 2,112 (does not include the Work Camp or Juvenile Detention Center).

The expansion consists of a four-story jail housing and support building. The first floor contains a new kitchen, laundry, medical clinic and infirmary, a space for processing inmates in and out of the building, administrative space, and one housing unit. The upper three stories contain 20 housing units and support office space. All new housing units are dormitory-style, with each unit housing 64 inmates supervised by one officer.

An additional 55 detention officers and staff positions were created to staff the expanded areas, which rings total number of Detention Center employees to 466. The total cost of the project was \$100 million, which is approximately 40% less expensive than a traditional detention facility.



*City of North Charleston Mayor, Keith Summey; Charleston County Council Chairman, Teddie E. Pryor, Sr.; and Sheriff Al Cannon celebrate the completion of the Detention Center expansion.*

## 9-1-1 Center Takes Major Steps Toward Full Consolidation

This year, after extensive cross training of former Sheriff's Office and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) dispatchers and technology changes, a pool of call takers began receiving law, fire and medical calls.

Prior to the change, calls for the Sheriff's Office would go to one set of dispatchers and calls for EMS and fire would go to another. These dispatchers often juggled gathering information from the caller while providing that information over the radio to responders, which created some confusion and inefficiency.

Now, a pool call taker receives a call, determines if it is a law, fire or medical event (or any combination of the three) and asks questions using a computer program designed specifically to address each type of incident. While the call taker gathers information, a computer generated incident report is sent to a dispatcher who is assigned to talk to law, fire or medical responders via radio.

This efficiency allows the call taker to remain on the line with the caller to gather more information and to provide additional scene safety and/or medical instructions while responders are being sent by the dispatcher. This change also eliminates some of the delay and potential for lost calls caused by transferring.



### The Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center currently dispatches for:

- Charleston County Sheriff's Office
- Charleston County Emergency Medical Services
- Charleston County Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Awendaw Fire Department
- City of Charleston Fire Department
- Folly Beach Police & Fire Departments
- Lincolville Police & Fire Departments
- North Charleston Police and Fire Departments
- St. Andrews Public Service District Fire Dept.
- Johns Island Fire District
- St. Pauls Fire Department

# Providing Services of Value

## County's Upgraded Rating Means 30 Percent Flood Insurance Discount to Residents

Charleston County Government has received an enhanced flood insurance rating of Class 4 under the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System. The new rating translates into significant annual flood insurance cost savings to citizens who live in the unincorporated areas of Charleston County.

Under the federal Community Rating System (CRS), a Class 4 rating means that residents who live in the unincorporated areas of Charleston County will begin receiving a 30 percent discount on their flood insurance bill. An average household will save approximately \$202 per year on their flood insurance premiums.

Charleston County is one of only four communities in the U.S. that has obtained the elite Class 4 rating, and only four communities in the nation have a better rating than Class 4. Charleston County is the only community east of the Mississippi River that has achieved this level of flood insurance premium discounts, and is the only community with a Class 4 rating or better in the coastal Atlantic hurricane region and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Southeast Region (Region IV).

The CRS is an insurance rating program that recognizes local governments for activities they perform to reduce the potential for flood losses within the community, and rewards residents and business owners within those communities with flood insurance premium discounts based on the rating of the local government's program. The lower the number of the CRS class rating, the higher



*Brad Loar, FEMA Region IV Mitigation Director, presents the Class 4 rating certificate to Carl Simmons, Charleston County Building Inspection Services Director.*

## Helping Farmers & Agricultural Businesses Understand Their Property Tax Options

The Charleston County Assessor, Zoning and Planning, and Building Inspections Services departments have been working with various agricultural groups to promote and encourage the continuation of farming and maintaining agricultural property throughout the county.

Property owners who use their property to raise, harvest or store crops; to feed, breed or manage livestock; or to produce plants, trees, fowl or animals may qualify for an agricultural special assessment that could reduce their taxes. Many landowners who could benefit from the assessment, however, are not aware of it. And, those who are, sometimes don't apply for it because they think the process may be complicated.

This year, the County Assessor's Office started an in-depth initiative to reach out to landowners to help them understand the special assessment and how to apply. An agricultural special assessment could reduce a property's assessed value (on which property taxes are based) by approximately 97.5 percent, possibly allowing landowners to maintain and farm property that they would have otherwise not been able to afford to keep.

# Providing Services of Value

## Library Services

Charleston County residents received library services worth more than \$119,889,711 last fiscal year, all part of CCPL's continuing effort to ensure residents receive the best possible service and the biggest return on their investment.

Based on a nationally approved formula that calculates the retail cost patrons would have paid for materials checked out, library programs, computer use, training classes and research, the resulting value means Charleston County residents received an 842 percent return on investment or \$8.42 for every dollar of county taxes spent on library services last year. CCPL's total was the highest of any public library system in the state and nearly 20 percent of the total value of services provided by all public libraries in the state.

During the year, CCPL continued to face record-breaking increases in service demand, all while balancing the impact of the economic crisis and the resulting cuts in local and state funding. The majority of the increased demand is from residents also suffering because of the economy and needing help with job searches, resume writing, skills training, career assessments and in need of free computer access to submit job applications. Many residents sought help at the library for the first time and were part of the nearly 40,000 new library card registrations last year.



*WWVZ radio personalities Baby J and Tessa, seated center, joined students from North Charleston United Methodist Church daycare, CCPL Board member Judy Epps and staff member Alfreda Doyle at the Cooper River Branch for this year's Read Across America program, which celebrates Dr. Seuss and promotes reading to children.*



*Two young patrons greet a traveling Lincoln impersonator after a one-act play about the life of our 16<sup>th</sup> president.*

"I have been laid off from my job since April 2008," said one patron, Susan Fox. "I use the computers at the library to do job searches and applications for employment. Every interview that I have had has come as a result of contacts made at the library. I use the services six days of the week. This is an EXTREMELY valuable resource for me and the community!!!"

Nearly 4 million items were checked out at CCPL last year, and user visits reached approximately 2.3 million. During the summer, more than 16,000 children, young adults and adults took part in Summer Reading, an 85 percent jump in just five years.

To meet the demand with a smaller budget, the library implemented multiple actions to save money, streamline services and help patrons become more self sufficient.

Faced with a 20 percent vacancy rate because of a hiring freeze and a continuing commitment to excellent service, CCPL's Board of Trustees elected to close the Regional libraries on Sundays during the school year and to close the Main Library one hour earlier Mondays-Thursdays – 8 p.m. instead of 9 p.m. This change allowed the remaining staff to be reassigned within the library's 16 locations to make sure service doesn't suffer.

Other major changes include the addition of downloadable audio books to the library's Web site, [www.ccpl.org](http://www.ccpl.org), the expansion of Wi-Fi capability at 10 of the library's 16 locations and the ability for patrons to get reference help through text messaging in addition to telephone, e-mail, instant message, live online chat and at a branch.

# Providing Transportation Solutions

## 2010: A Big Year for Transportation Sales Tax Road Projects

The Charleston County RoadWise Program has been extremely busy since voters approved 13 transportation improvement projects through Transportation Sales Tax bond referendums in 2004 and 2006. Since then, every project has gone through at least the public meeting and design phase, with several major projects rolling out for construction in 2010.

### Construction Begins on Two Bonded Projects

#### Bee Street & Courtenay Drive

The project, which is expected to be completed in less than a year, will improve traffic flow into and around downtown's medical campus and surrounding areas during peak hours, and provide drainage relief along the Bee Street area.

The Bee Street and Courtenay Drive Improvement Project was requested by the city of Charleston and approved by voters in the second Transportation Sales Tax bond referendum. The county is closely coordinating its efforts with MUSC (university and hospital) the Ralph H. Johnson V.A. Medical Center and Roper St. Francis.

A major feature of the \$4.8 million project is the conversion of Courtenay Drive from Spring Street to Cannon Street from two-way traffic to one-way southbound traffic that will increase the flow of traffic entering the medical area from U.S. 17.



*MUSC Public Safety Director, Chief Tony Dunbar; Charleston Mayor, Joseph P. Riley, Jr.; and County Council Chairman, Teddie E. Pryor, Sr. kick off the Bee Street & Courtenay Drive project.*



*Charleston City Councilmember Tim Mallard; Bon Secours St. Francis Hospital CEO Allen Carroll; County Councilmember Colleen Condon; and Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. celebrate the start of construction on the Glenn McConnell/I-526 improvements.*

#### Glenn McConnell Parkway / I-526 Interchange

The \$6.8 million project, which is expected to be completed by April 2011, consists of improvements to Glenn McConnell Parkway at its interchange with I-526 and intersection with Magwood Road in West Ashley.

The project extends along Glenn McConnell Parkway from Orleans Road west to Essex Farm Drive (just beyond Charlie Hall Boulevard) and includes adding an additional lane in each direction and intersection improvements. The county is working to minimize effects on Bon Secours St. Francis Hospital and other business impacted by the project.

Pedestrian and bicycle access is an important component of the project, with a five-foot-wide concrete sidewalk added along Magwood Drive to connect to the existing sidewalk and crossing signals installed on both sides of Glenn McConnell Parkway to allow for safe crossing.

# Providing Transportation Solutions

## First Major Bonded Project Completed

**Folly Road / Maybank Highway Intersection Improvements:** Construction is complete on improvements to the intersection of Folly Road and Maybank Highway on James Island. The project, which was finished on schedule, came in under budget at \$4.5 million. The Folly Road/Maybank Highway Intersections Improvement Project was requested by the City of Charleston and approved by voters in the first Transportation Sales Tax bond referendum.

The project improved safety by addressing the dangerous left turns from Old Folly Road onto Maybank Highway and from Folly Road onto Old Folly Road. The completed project includes mast-arm signals (stoplights) at the intersections to allow traffic to turn safely from Old Folly Road onto Maybank Highway and from Folly Road onto Old Folly Road.



New, landscaped medians with lighting and irrigation, sidewalks, and streetlights were added to Maybank Highway, Folly Road and Old Folly Road. The entire project area was repaved and has pavement markings including crosswalks and signs.

## Other Projects Improving Transportation

Many additional road improvements are also being implemented by Charleston County Government through annual funding allocated by Charleston County Council to smaller projects throughout the community. Including roads and streets which have been resurfaced, 193 projects have been completed by the program so far. Projects are funded in the following categories: bicycle and pedestrian paths; drainage improvement projects; intersection improvement projects; and local paving projects.



County Councilmember, Colleen Condon, checks out the completed Charlestowne Drive Sidewalk Project. Residents living in Charlestowne Estates II and the Lenevar subdivisions are now connected by 2,100 feet of sidewalk that will also tie them to Charles Towne Landing State Park.

## I-526 East and International Boulevard Turn Lane Now Complete

Charleston County completed a new right turn lane project at I-526 East and International Boulevard. Previously, the limited lanes caused traffic headed toward popular destinations such as the Charleston International Airport, Centre Pointe, and the North Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center area to back-up, especially at peak times. The improvement project was funded by the Charleston County Transportation Committee (CTC) and was completed in two months.

## Construction Begins on US 17 / Davison Road Intersection

Construction began on improvements to the intersection of US 17 and Davison Road, which is located in the Red Top area of West Ashley, in order to improve traffic safety. New acceleration and deceleration lanes and dedicated turn lanes will be added to US 17.

## Improvements Started for SC 61/Tobias Gadson Boulevard Intersection

Construction began for improvements to the intersection of SC 61 and Tobias Gadson Boulevard in West Ashley, including adding a new right turn lane from eastbound SC 61 (heading toward Charleston) to Tobias Gadson Boulevard. Adding a new right turn lane is expected to improve safety by relieving traffic congestion along SC 61 during peak travel times.

# Protecting Our Resources

## 16 Rural Greenbelt Projects Protect 3,516 Acres

During FY10, County Council approved rural applications that were submitted to the Greenbelt Bank Board during four funding cycles. Overall, the Greenbelt Bank Board made recommendations to Charleston County Council to fund 18 projects that resulted in: 4,262 acres protected (rural greenbelt land, Francis Marion Forest land, and rural wetlands) and \$7.3 million in rural funding. Of the rural funds awarded, \$3 million will be used to purchase 650 acres for public use. Below is a breakdown of the rural projects by area:



Portion of Millbrook Plantation located in the Ashley River Historic District along Scenic Highway 61

- Ashley River Historic District—21 acres protected with \$120,750 in grants
- Awendaw—153 acres protected with \$375,000 in grants
- Edisto Island—793 acres protected with \$1.9 million in grants
- Johns Island—301 acres protected with \$1.2 million in grants
- McClellanville—1,514 acres protected with \$1.9 million in grants
- Ravenel—394 acres protected with \$1.5 million in grants
- West County—1,086 acres protected with \$375,000

### Greenbelt System Goals

The Comprehensive Greenbelt Plan set a goal of protecting 40,000 acres. All projects approved from FY07 to FY10 have assisted in meeting these goals by providing:

- 5,968 acres of rural greenbelt lands (37% of goal)
- 3,270 acres in the Francis Marion Forest (32% of goal)
- 4,140 acres of rural and urban wetlands (74% of goal)
- 2,058 acres of Park and Recreation Commission owned land (44% of goal)
- 182 acres of urban greenbelt lands (9% of goal)
- 2 acres of greenway corridors (<1% of goal)

### Three Projects Provide Six Acres of Urban Parkland and Greenspace

During FY10, the City of North Charleston and the Community Action Group for Encouragement (CAGE) received funding from Charleston 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 \$374,000 for 3 urban greenbelt projects, which resulted in 6 acres preserved for urban parks and greenspace, including:

- \$137,500 for four acres of parks and trails in the North Charleston area
- \$236,500 for the Community Action Group for Encouragement to purchase two acres of land for a trail

# Protecting Our Resources



*Pictured left to right: Deputy County Administrator, Kurt Taylor; Charleston County Greenbelt Program Director, Cathy Ruff; Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests Supervisor, Paul Bradley; U.S. Forest Service representative, Peggy Jo Nadler; Nature Conservancy member, Ashley Demosthenes; Nature Conservancy member, Sarah Hartman; and Nature Conservancy member, Michael Prevost.*

## U.S. Forest Service Honors County for Greenbelt Conservation Partnership

The Southern Region of the U.S. Forest Service in Atlanta honored members of Charleston County Government's Greenbelt Program and staff of The Nature Conservancy of South Carolina with a Partnership Award for innovation and leadership in partnering to acquire critical landholdings within the Francis Marion National Forest.

According to the Forest Service, the granting of funds from a county government to the federal government was unprecedented. The Forest Service applied for and received greenbelt grant funds of \$200,000 for the Murrell Tract, a 96-acre total in-holding between two wilderness areas. Closing on the property occurred on September 20, 2007. The Nature

Conservancy applied for and received grant funds of \$623,700 for the Bulls Bay Tract, a 196-acre total in-holding threatened by development along the Highway 17 corridor.

The Conservancy raised \$1.1 million in additional private funds to match the County's Greenbelt funds and subsequently donated this entire tract to the Forest Service on December 8, 2008. The Conservancy also applied for and received grant funds of \$4 million toward the acquisition of the 900-acre Tibwin 2 Tract, along with a \$500,000 grant from the SC Conservation Bank, to be matched with federal funds. These undeveloped corridors are becoming increasingly important for wildlife and biological health. Additional projects are planned that will continue to leverage limited federal acquisition funds.

Charleston County Greenbelt funds of over \$4.8 million have protected more than 1,100 acres for public access in the Francis Marion. The partnership created between The Nature Conservancy, the County's Greenbelt Program, and the Forest Service will continue to achieve positive outcomes for residents of Charleston and nearby counties, as well as the visiting public.

## County Expands Curbside Recycling to Include Cardboard and All Plastics

As part of Council Council's Green Initiatives program aimed at increasing the County's recycling levels to 40%, the County expanded the type of materials it accepts. The County now accepts corrugated cardboard, under three by three feet in size, as part of its residential curbside recycling program. Corrugated cardboard is considered cardboard boxes with a middle "waffle-like" layer. In addition to cardboard, the County is now also accepting all paper items to include envelopes with plastic windows, gift wrapping paper, etc.

The County also announced that it now accepts all containers with the plastic designation #1-7. That means all plastics, except plastic wrap, plastic bags (called plastic film within the recycling industry) and Styrofoam, will be collected and marketed. Previously, only #1 and 2 plastic bottles were collected, sorted and packaged at the Charleston County Recycling Center.





# Promoting Emergency Preparedness

## Charleston County Recertified as “TsunamiReady” and “StormReady” by NOAA’S National Weather Service

Charleston County Government has successfully completed a set of rigorous warning and evacuation criteria necessary to renew the County’s distinction of being certified as TsunamiReady and StormReady. The County has been certified as being StormReady since 2001 and TsunamiReady since 2006, when the certifications were first available.

Through StormReady and TsunamiReady, Charleston County is better prepared to help protect the lives and property of its citizens and visitors during severe weather events, as well as for the rare, but potentially devastating, consequences of a tsunami. Charleston County officials are proud of the acknowledgement, as they recognize that this area is threatened by a number of potential natural disasters, including tsunamis. Although the threat of a tsunami is considered to be low, such an event would be devastating, resulting in loss of life, massive damages to homes and businesses, and a large negative impact on the economy of not only Charleston but of the entire state.

Both the StormReady and TsunamiReady community preparedness programs use a grass-roots approach to help communities develop plans to handle tsunamis, local severe weather, wave impacts and flooding threats, and help communities inform citizens of threats associated with each of these dangers.



## Awendaw Fire Department Receives Grant for Six New Firefighter Positions



The Awendaw Fire Department, a division of Charleston County’s Emergency Management Department, 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 increased staffing levels are expected to improve firefighter safety, increase operational capabilities and streamline operational cost. 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.

A study conducted in October 2002, identified the minimum number of firefighters required at a moderate-risk structure fire within the Awendaw Fire District to be 13. Currently, the department responds with an average of eight firefighters. The SAFER grant assists the Awendaw Fire Department by paying a portion of the salaries for the new positions over a four-year period. The remainder of the funding for this period, as well as subsequent years, is expected to come from funding currently used for the cost associated with part-time employees as well as an increase in the Awendaw Fire District millage rate.

The Awendaw Fire Department provides fire and life safety services including: medical first response; rural search and rescue; vehicle extrication; wild land fire suppression; fire inspection; and public fire education services to the unincorporated areas of Charleston County north of Mount Pleasant. The department serves 365 square miles of suburban and rural properties, federal forest land and coastal areas.

# Promoting Achievement

## Charleston County Awards and Recognitions

Charleston County Government's offices, departments and employees have been honored with numerous awards and recognitions in FY09. These awards reflect Charleston County employees' dedication to providing the best services to our citizens.

### Fiscal Services

- 21 consecutive years: Distinguished Budget Award for FY2010 Charleston County Budget, Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada
- 22 consecutive years: Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for FY2010 Charleston County Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada
- Award of Financial Reporting Achievement, Assistant Finance Director Carla Ritter, Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada
- AAA bond rating, Standard & Poor's Financial Rating Agency
- Aa1 bond rating, Moody's Investors Service

### Greenbelt Program

- Partnership Award, U.S. Forest Service

### Emergency Services

- First Place, EMS Paramedic Team of Amanda Reeves and Becky Smythe, Lowcountry Regional Emergency Medical Services Competition

### Employee Safety and Risk Management

- 2010 Sustained Excellence in Risk Management Award, S.C. Association of Counties
- 2010 Outstanding Safety Achievement Award, S.C. Association of Counties
- 2010 Service Award, S.C. Association of Counties



**CHARLESTON**  
**■ COUNTY ■**  
SOUTH CAROLINA

Published on September 2, 2010

By the Charleston County Public Information Office