

Charleston County News Release

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Register Now for Citizens' Academy Spring Session

Free course allows citizens to learn about county government and where tax dollars go.

Thomas Jefferson once said, "That government is the strongest of which every man feels himself a part."

Charleston County wants to make citizens feel part of local government by offering its eighth Citizens' Academy beginning Monday, March 5. The academy is a free, in-depth, 12-week course that provides participants with a deeper understanding of county government.

"This course is for those who want to know what their tax dollars are spent on, how decisions on revenue and spending are made, and what services and functions are provided by Charleston County Government," said Linda Slater, who facilitates the course with coworker Marie Schultz, "and the best part is that the course is free!"

The spring 2007 academy will be offered on Monday evenings from March 5 through May 21, with graduation on the evening of June 5. Classes will run from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., and will be held in county facilities, primarily the Public Services Building off Leeds Avenue in North Charleston. Applicants accepted into the program will be expected to attend all sessions. An optional all-day tour of county facilities is scheduled for Friday, May 11.

Charleston County has been offering the Citizens' Academy course twice a year since the program was started in 2003. The academy is taught by county staff and elected officials, and topics include the county budgeting process, garbage and recycling, law enforcement, the court system, emergency services, planning and zoning, and much more.

"The course would be of value to neighborhood association leaders, business people, teachers, members of the media, and anyone who is a concerned and interested citizen," Slater said.

The course is designed to provide participants with a forum to learn, question and comment. Graduates are also eligible for continuing education units from the College of Charleston.

Participants must be 18 or older and live or work in Charleston County. The spring 2007 session is limited to 35 participants. For those not able to attend an evening class, the fall 2007 session will be scheduled on Monday afternoons from 2 to 5 p.m.

An application may be obtained through the Charleston County Web site at www.charlestoncounty.org or by calling (843) 958-4006. The deadline to submit an application for the spring 2007 Citizens Academy session is Wednesday, Feb. 21.