

Charleston County News Release

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Register Now for Citizens' Academy Fall Session

Learn how your tax dollars are spent -- free course offers public insight into county government!

Charleston County is inviting residents into the classroom, and the subject is local government.

For residents who want to know where their tax dollars go, the Charleston County Citizens' Academy offers a free, in-depth course that provides an understanding of county government.

Citizens' Academy is a series of 12 classes taught by Charleston County Government employees and county elected officials.

The fall 2007 Citizens' Academy will be offered from 2-5 p.m. on Monday afternoons from Sept. 10 through Dec. 3. Classes are held in county government facilities. A graduation ceremony will be held on Tuesday evening, December 4, in County Council chambers during the 7 p.m. council meeting.

"The purpose of the academy is to introduce our citizens to the services and operations provided by Charleston County Government," said Linda Slater, who facilitates the course with coworker Marie Schultz. "More importantly, it is designed to help citizens understand the issues that drive decisions related to services, and to provide participants with a forum to learn, ask questions, and make comments to those responsible for spending their tax dollars."

Charleston County has been offering Citizens' Academy courses twice a year since the program was started in 2003. 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.

Citizens' Academy graduates are eligible for Continuing Education Units from the College of Charleston. Applicants accepted into the program will be expected to attend all 12 sessions. An optional all-day "field trip" to government facilities is scheduled for Friday, November 2. For those not able to attend an afternoon class, the spring 2008 Academy will be scheduled on Monday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, and live or work in Charleston County. The fall 2007 session is limited to 35 participants.

An application may be obtained through the Charleston County Web site at www.charlestoncounty.org, or by calling (843) 958-4000. The deadline to submit an application for the fall 2006 Citizens Academy session is Wednesday, Aug. 29.