



Charleston County News Release

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2012 Outlook and 2011 Highlights

By Charleston County Council Chairman, Teddie E. Pryor, Sr.

Since I was elected 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 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 2012, we have reflected upon our accomplishments in 2011, are looking for areas where we can make improvements, and are going forward with the attitude that we are a team that can make it through tough economic times. We did this in 2011, and we will do it again in 2012.

As citizens continue to feel the effects of the national recession, Charleston County Council continued to be diligent in their efforts to limit the financial impact on taxpayers by approving the Fiscal Year 2011 budget without raising the millage rate.

Financial challenges will continue into the future. 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.

As we look ahead to 2012, it's important to remember some of Charleston County Government's major highlights from 2011:

- **Officials Break Ground on Consolidated 9-1-1 Center and Emergency Operations Center:** On July 26, 2011, officials from multiple jurisdictions gathered for a groundbreaking ceremony for the future building planned to house the County's [Consolidated 9-1-1 Center](#) and Emergency Operations Center.
- **Federal Grant Helps County Install Solar Panels at Detention Center to Save Energy Costs:** In 2011 the County installed a solar power system on the roof of the Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center. The system was installed as part of the Detention Center Expansion Project, with estimated savings of \$888,372 over the 30-year life of the solar panels.
- **Hazard Mitigation Plan's High Score Contributes To \$9.8 Million Savings on Flood Insurance Premiums:** Due to the [2011-2012 Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan's](#) high score and other [National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System \(CRS\)](#) activities performed by local governments, 68,000 flood insurance policies throughout Charleston County are discounted by 30 percent.
- **Charleston County Awarded Third Triple-A Bond Rating:** The County earned the highest possible bond rating from all three major bond rating agencies when [Fitch Ratings](#) upgraded the county's credit to "AAA" in August 2011. This is great news for Charleston County residents. High bond ratings

ultimately allow Charleston County to save taxpayers money by allowing us to pay lower interest rates on borrowed funds for road construction and other capital projects.

- **Transportation Sales Tax:** Several major road projects were either started or finished during 2011, such as Bees Ferry Road, St. Andrews Road and Highway 61 Resurfacing, U.S. 17/S.C. 61/Wesley Drive, Glenn McConnell Parkway/I-526, Bee Street and Courtenay Drive, Palmetto Commerce Parkway. Also, great progress continues on the large Johnnie Dodds Boulevard project.
- **Charleston County Partners with Municipalities for Fair Housing Month:** [Charleston County Government](#) hosted fair housing focus groups for government/elected officials, housing industry professionals, community advocates and the general public during [Fair Housing Month](#) in April 2011.
- **Human Resources (HR) Director is Top in the Nation:** Charleston County's Fagan Stackhouse received the Warner Stockberger Achievement Award in 2011. This award is the highest level of recognition for an HR professional.
- **Aiding Small/Disadvantaged Business Owners:** In January of 2011, [County Council](#) hosted a recognition ceremony for 26 local business owners who completed the Turner School of Construction Management. The County supports local businesses through its [Small Business Enterprise Program in the Procurement Department](#) and its [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program in the Transportation Sales Tax Program](#).
- **East Edisto Development Agreement:** Embracing transparency, County Council's East Edisto Development Agreement Review Team meetings became part of the County's live and taped line-up available to the public.
- **Emergency Management:**
 - Charleston County's Awendaw District Fire Department (AFD) responded to the South Santee area in March 2011 and worked with the SC Forestry Commission to put out the large brush fire. The County kept the media and public informed throughout the event, including using the reverse 9-1-1 system call to alert residents of a voluntary evacuation over a six-mile area.
 - On July 30, 2011, [Charleston County Government's Emergency Management Department](#) and [Lowcountry CERT \(Community Emergency Response Team\)](#) held its Fourth Annual Ready Lowcountry, Hurricane and Emergency Preparedness Expo. The free event covered preparedness, earthquake safety, fire, evacuation, home safety and business preparedness.
- **Summer Youth Work Program:** [Charleston County Council](#) authorized \$100,000 toward a Summer Youth Work Program in June 2011. Students had the opportunity to explore the various career opportunities that exist within County departments while gaining critical workforce skills.
- **County Assists Former James Island Town Residents:** Effective immediately upon the court's ruling in August 2011, the County notified citizens that it will assume responsibility for all services previously provided to Town of James Island residents, such as building permits, planning and zoning issues, public works requests (roads, ditches, etc.), business license applications, etc.
- **Recycling Program:**
 - A successful residential single stream recycling pilot, was later expanded to include approximately 6,000 additional homes, which is another step toward achieving Council's 40% recycling goal.
 - [The County's Environmental Management Department](#) received the 2011 Outstanding Composting or Organics Recycling Program Award during the [Carolina Recycling Association's \(CRA\) 21st Annual Trade Show and Conference](#).
 - [The Environmental Management Department](#) staff the [Town of Mount Pleasant](#) teamed up to begin a new recycling effort at all Mt. Pleasant ballparks and recreational facilities to make it easy for citizens who use the Town's recreational facilities to recycle.
 - Making it easier for residents to recycle in rural areas of the County, 12 fire stations agreed to have recycling containers on site beginning on August 15, 2011.