

Charleston County News Release

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*Photo of award presentation <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/jimarmstrongSCAAHC.pdf>
Inland Rice Fields Project website <http://inlandrice.ccroadwise.org/>*

“Preserving Our History” Lands County Another Honor

2013 South Carolina African American Heritage Commission Organization Award

You never know when an opportunity may arise to keep a piece of the Lowcountry’s storied history alive for generations to come. Such a chance came to life during planning for construction of the [Palmetto Commerce Parkway](#). [Charleston County Government](#) discovered the remnants of a large inland rice field that had not been used for well over a century. After determining it was impossible to completely avoid the rice fields during construction, the County went to work preserving this piece of history.

Charleston County created the [Inland Fields Rice Project](#) to offer citizens a chance to learn about the site. Included in the plan is a [website](#), lecture series, [photographs](#) from the dikes, and a historical wayside marker along Palmetto Commerce Parkway.



[Charleston County Administrator Kurt Taylor](#) saw an opportunity to do more than just meet the minimum requirements for documenting the dikes for the [South Carolina Historic Preservation Office \(SHPO\)](#).

“I saw it as a great educational vehicle for our current citizens and future generations of students in the Lowcountry,” Taylor said. “Sometimes we are intent on just meeting minimum permitting requirements, but this time it was appropriate to do more. We understand that SHPO is holding up our effort as a model for historic documentation all around the state.”

The effort has resulted in recognition from the [South Carolina African American Heritage Commission \(SCAAHC\)](#), which recently presented Charleston County Government with the 2013 Organization Award. The mission of SCAAHC is to identify and promote the preservation of historic sites, structures, buildings and culture of the African American experience in South Carolina and to assist and enhance the efforts of the South Carolina Department of Archives & History. The commission has presented this award annually since 2006.

“The Inland Rice Fields Project has allowed Charleston County Government to demonstrate our commitment to preserve the heritage of the county and state,” Taylor said.

The County didn’t stop there and, in partnership with the [Charleston County School District](#), launched the Traveling Trunk program to help educate students about the historic rice fields. The Colonial era trunk is filled with pieces of this history from rice samples to miniature versions of

mortar and pestle used by African Americans to process the rice by hand. To date, 45 area schools have participated in the Traveling Trunk program.

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SCAAHC website: <http://shpo.sc.gov/res/Pages/SCAAHC.aspx>

Last year, Charleston County received its first award for the work on this project. American City and County magazine honored the County with the 2012 Crown Community award for successfully combining economic growth and expansion with preservation and historic research.

Link to 2012 Crown Community Award:

<http://americancityandcounty.com/administration/crown-communities-awards-2012?page=2>

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