TEAM GREER

THE 2017 ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE CITY OF GREER

Greer
City of Greer, SC
8.21.2017

THE DAY GREER WENT DARK
GREER AT A GLANCE

Founded: 1876
Government: Council
City Administrator: Edward Driggers
Area: Total 23.81 square miles
        Land 21.85 square miles
        Water 1.96 square miles
Elevation: 1,024 ft.
Departments: Administration
              Building and Development Standards
              Fire
              Municipal Court
              Parks and Recreation
              Police
              Public Services
Website: www.cityofgreer.org
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>City’s Gross Retail Sales Again Set Record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Palmetto 800 System: Fire and Police Go Digital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hurricane Irma Triggers Emergency Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Hometown Heroes Make an Immediate Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The Great American Solar Eclipse Draws a Crowd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Renovation at Greer Station Gets Underway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Council: Downtown Hotel is a ‘Game Changer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Finance Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Building and Development Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Fire Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Municipal Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Parks and Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Public Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Greer Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Greenville County Redevelopment Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Team Greer is produced by the City of Greer Communications Office
Copyright 2018 City of Greer, SC
Short-term pain will lead to long-term gain

You’ve likely noticed utility work taking place in the downtown business district during the past year. Greer CPW and its contractors have been working diligently to replace aging water and sewer lines throughout Greer Station, helping it keep pace with the City’s rapid commercial growth.

Those crews have done their best to minimize interruptions to businesses and their customers by covering trenches and reopening streets during the evening hours. Despite best efforts, we’re very aware that the work has still been a headache for some commuters.

There is a good news/bad news setup for the Greer Station project.

First, the bad news. To quote Bachman-Turner Overdrive’s 1974 hit, you ain’t seen nothing yet. CPW will complete its portion of the project this spring, allowing the City to commence the streetscape portion of the project after mid-year 2018.

Freshening the look and feel of Greer Station will not be a quick or simple task. The work on streets and sidewalks will be considerable and will close access to vehicles where that work is taking place.

It’s a project that will be inconvenient for commuters, businesses and customers.

For the good news, let’s quote a 1972 Jim Croce song. Tomorrow’s gonna be a brighter day.

The streetscape project will be transformative for Greer Station, providing a look and feel that our central business district — and each businesses that calls it home — deserves.

Trade Street will become a shared-use avenue friendly to both cars and pedestrians. Surrounding streets will be repaved and have fresh landscaping. Greer Station will be upgraded from a destination to the destination for residents and visitors.

The other good news is that the City is making substantial efforts to lessen the pain to commuters, businesses and customers during this project.

Watch for the debut of a new website that will provide up to date information on areas in which work will be done, businesses (if any) that will be affected by current work, and parking information and directions.

You’ll have an opportunity to learn more about the project and view photos as each milestone is attained.

You can expect drawings for gift cards to Greer Station businesses as an incentive to shop during the construction project. We’ve even planning a video feed with a live stream of work as it is being done.

The message we want to share is that Greer Station will be open for business throughout the work.

The City has also increased the incentive for businesses to enhance their rear façades, providing attractive and safe alternative access to customers during the streetscape project.

Owners already have the ability to apply for a façade grant through the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority and the City has agreed to match GCRA’s grant award up to $5,000. That would provide a merchant a total of $10,000 for rear façade improvements at no cost to them.

If a merchant agreed to invest $5,000 in the improvements, the City would match both the GCRA grant and the merchant’s investment. That’s $20,000 for improvements for a $5,000 investment.

The City will work to lessen the impact of the streetscape project for all involved. I ask for your assistance by supporting these businesses during the construction.

Yes, Greer Station will remain open... and tomorrow’s gonna be a brighter day.

Greer Station saw considerable infrastructure work in 2017 and more construction will follow in 2018.
Assuring accessibility is the right thing to do

As City of Greer employees, we constantly remind ourselves that we are a “people business” serving a community. As we create programming and special events for our residents, being sure to include all residents is of paramount importance.

It isn’t just a good thing to do; it’s the right thing to do.

That’s the message of the Americans With Disabilities Act, which became law in 1990. Statistics indicate that a full 20 percent of Americans live with some type of disability.

Imagine for a moment:

• Trying to find parking and then negotiating both buildings and outdoor facilities in a wheelchair or on crutches.

• Being legally blind and trying to make sense of a website that does not provide adequate contrast.

• Trying to follow a Greer City Council discussion while suffering from hearing loss.

Tasks that seem simple or second-nature to an able-bodied individual can be challenging to a person with a disability. Whether we are walking through existing facilities or preparing to for a major downtown streetscape project, imagining such difficult tasks primarily falls to building official Ruthie Helms, who was named as the City of Greer’s ADA Coordinator in 2015.

One of Ruthie’s first responsibilities was to work with members of GreenvilleCAN and city officials to canvass all existing city facilities. A coalition of self advocates, service providers, families, caregivers, and professionals committed to making Greenville County a better place to live for individuals with disabilities.

Members of GreenvilleCAN, some on crutches and in wheelchairs, our toured buildings and park facilities to identify potential problems. From Council Chambers to public restrooms, nothing was off limits.

Ruthie does a superb job of inventorying our facilities, from sidewalk grades to accessible restrooms, to make sure the City of Greer is able to serve every member of the community. It’s a job with great responsibility and her attention to detail helps Ruthie succeed at it.

Nearly three years later, I’m proud to say that the City of Greer has made significant progress in assuring quality programming and facilities for all citizens. We have been publicly recognized and honored by multiple organizations for taking the lead among the state’s municipalities for accessibility efforts.

Those accolades are another reminder that we are a people business. We view them as a sign that we are making tangible progress as an organization toward achieving our mission of equal access for all. As more Upstate cities began hiring and appointing ADA coordinators, we knew this was a campaign that was gaining momentum.

As we prepare to begin our downtown streetscape project this summer and continue renovations at the Center for the Arts, ADA compliance will be a major consideration in such areas as sidewalk and building access.

We know it’s simply the right thing to do.

“Tasks that seem simple or second-nature to an able-bodied individual can be challenging to a person with a disability.”

Automatic doors may be taken for granted by some, but not by those who require accessibility assistance.
City earns honors for safety and being enterprise friendly

The City of Greer ranks third among the most enterprise-friendly in South Carolina according to a survey by Palmetto Promise Institute, a non-profit research organization based in Columbia.

“Central to the future health of our state is the ability of our cities and towns to attract businesses which can test the limits of their ingenuity right here in the Palmetto State,” Palmetto Promise Institute Research Assistant Adam Crain said. “In collaboration with Dr. John Hill of American Indicators, Dr. Oran Smith of PPI and I worked over the past few months to collect data in four major categories: economic vitality, business tax burden, community allure, and transportation infrastructure.”

A major contributing factor to a city’s attractiveness is safety. The City of Greer received good news on that front in December when it was selected as the ninth safest city in South Carolina by Safehome.org.

A strong citizen-to-officer ratio of 398 protects a strong quality of life for a prospective workforce. Greer’s third-place finish among enterprise-friendly cities also was, according to Crain, “buoyed by a low business tax burden and the number one rank in transportation infrastructure – a consequence, in part, of the development of the Inland Port.”

Greer scored a total of 72.52 points out of a possible 100, including 99.74 in transportation infrastructure and 91.44 in business tax.

“We are very conscious about the importance of Greer’s attractiveness to industries, businesses and entrepreneurs,” Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said. “The Greer Development Corporation works diligently to ensure that we are known as a business friendly city with an outstanding infrastructure and a first-rate workforce. This survey validates that reputation.”

PPI noted on its website that although there are numerous comparisons of South Carolina’s free enterprise friendliness to other states, the same sort of report comparing the state’s cities and towns did not exist.

“While state-level policies undoubtedly drive our state’s overall economic health and job creation potential, we cannot afford to overlook the vital role played by local communities.

“Cities and towns are the real engines that drive the statewide economy and South Carolinians should consider how they compare against each other with respect to enterprise: the economic, social, and education factors attractive to businesses.”
Gross retail sales in the City of Greer exceed $1.3 billion in fiscal year 2017

According to the South Carolina Department of Revenue, in fiscal year 2017, the City of Greer recorded a record $1,302,896,294 in gross retail sales. That total included $798,472,977 in sales in the portion of the City of Greer located in Greenville County and $504,423,316 in the portion of the City of Greer located in Spartanburg County.

This new figure represents an increase of 12% compared to fiscal year 2016 and a 47% growth in sales over the last five years.

“This growth is a result of investments in the Greer community. Retailers recognize that good things are happening and more good things are coming,” Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said. “The City of Greer leveraged about $17 million when we built the municipal complex and saw a three-fold investment coming back in the downtown area. We’re going to invest $25 million over the next three years and we absolutely anticipate that it will be an exponential reinvestment by the public sector.”

High traffic commercial areas in the City of Greer, such as Wade Hampton Boulevard, are heavily populated with big box retail and car dealerships. New retail projects near Riverside High School in Greer have created an attractive, new neighborhood commercial center. Greer’s historic downtown, branded as Greer Station, offers a combination of specialty retail and niche restaurants.

“A continued rise in gross retail sales is a great indicator of the strong economic climate in Greer, both residentially and commercially. This figure reflects the growth and vibrancy we have in the community, and serves as justification of the time and commitment that goes into not only recruiting new businesses, but also helping those already here grow,” said Katie Witherpoon, Vice President of Operations for the Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce.

New, large industrial projects in the City of Greer have created thousands of new jobs, are pushing per capita incomes higher and have led to record increases in the production of quality, new single family homes. Greer is well positioned for additional retail sales growth in the future.

“High traffic counts and Greer’s proximity to BMW, Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport, and the Inland Port is a recipe for quality retail growth in Greer,” said Reno Deaton, Executive Director of the Greer Development Corporation. “But the true credit belongs to hard working retailers and restaurant owners in Greer who have defined the Greer retail market with world class customer service and a very attractive product mix.”

Source: South Carolina Department of Revenue, Yearly Gross and Net Taxable Sales by County and City, Fiscal Year 2016 and prior data.
City’s bond rating improves to AA

When Greer City Council approved an ordinance to issue public bonds to construct a municipal parking garage, fund a downtown streetscape project and further renovate the Greer Center for the Arts, it sent a wave of excitement through the city.

A report issued in November from Standard and Poors Global Ratings should maintain that excitement at a high peak.

S&P issued an AA rating to the City of Greer, an increase from the AA- rating the city was issued a decade ago when it began construction of the Greer Municipal Complex comprised of Greer City Hall, Greer City Park and the Greer Police Department and Municipal Courts Complex.

“That means the higher the rating, the lower the interest rate. So that is certainly very good news,” consulting finance attorney Michael Kozlarek told Greer City Council.

It also means a lower cost to the city to repay those bonds. City officials have already stated that no millage increase will be required to satisfy the debt that will fund construction of the parking garage, the downtown streetscape project and renovations to the Greer Center for the Arts and adjacent park.

“We’re going to borrow money and taxes won’t be going up. That doesn’t happen in many places,” Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said. “We have the capacity, because of the growth in our community, that we can borrow money and not increase the burden to pay the debt. Taxes will not go up and not one dime of the investment that the hotel and the retail structures and the other development that will occur as a result is planned for in our debt payment on that bond. What we’ve already done is paying for that.”

The S&P report reflects the city’s financial and management strength that led to the rating improvement. It notes that “the city generated surpluses in each of the past five fiscal years…. We expect that the city will maintain very strong performance over the next two years.”

The city’s rating was also buoyed by an available fund balance of 47% of operating expenditures and total government available cash at 74% of total government fund expenditures and more than six times governmental debt service.

Also, 66% of the city’s debt is scheduled to be retired in 10 years.

“We’re going to borrow money and taxes won’t be going up. That doesn’t happen in many places.”

— Ed Driggers

The report also cited “strong management with good financial policies and practices” as a contributing factor to the AA rating – the third-highest rating awarded by Standard & Poors. The rating places the City of Greer in the agency’s “High Investment Grade” category.

The objective of the rating agency is to assign municipal bonds and issuers a credit rating to make it easier for market participants to evaluate risk based on creditworthiness.
Greer again earns international honor

Greer is the only South Carolina city or county recognized by the International City/County Management Association for performance management and reporting in 2017. It is among 19 jurisdictions honored in the United States with the ICMA Certificate of Achievement.

“Performance management is a bedrock principle of professional local government management,” ICMA Executive Director Marc Ott said. “By recognizing these leaders, ICMA hopes to encourage others to make a commitment to collect and analyze data, report it transparently, and use it to continuously engage their communities and improve their organizations.”

Recipients at all levels collect and verify data to ensure reliability, train staff in performance measurement, and report data to the public through budgets, newsletters, and/or information provided to elected officials.

Assistant City Administrator Mike Sell oversees the performance management efforts for the City of Greer.

“Financial transparency has been a priority for the City for years. We felt it was important to engage residents by posting comparative and benchmarking information online,” Sell said. “As a City, we use performance data in strategic planning and operational decision-making, comparing the effectiveness of our services to those provided by peer municipalities, surveying residents and employees, and fostering the development of a performance culture throughout the organization.”

The City of Greer’s strategic plan performance report is available to the public under the Government tab on the city’s website at www.cityofgreer.org. ICMA recognized recipients at the association’s 103rd Annual Conference held in October in San Antonio, Texas.

ICMA advances professional local government management worldwide through leadership, management, innovation, and ethics. The association is second only to the federal government in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data focused on issues related to local government management.

---

Morning Surprise

Early morning commuters on East Poinsett Street may have been surprised in July by a hot air balloon at Greer City Park. Greer CPW and Cox Utility Services brought the balloon to Greer to promote the “Call Before You Dig” initiative.
The City of Greer’s downtown district received a major lighting update in 2016 when light-emitting diode (LED) streetlights were installed in place of high-pressure sodium (HPS) fixtures from the intersection of N. Main Street and Wade Hampton Blvd. to Greer Station.

In 2017, the joint lighting partnership between Greer Commission of Public Works (CPW) and the City of Greer took aim at a much-larger task: installing new decorative light poles and LED lighting on both sides of Highway 29 in the Greer city limits, from Gap Creek Rd. to Fairview Rd.

That’s a seven-mile stretch of Wade Hampton Blvd., prompting the project foreman for Williams Electric to call it “easily the largest job I’ve ever done.”

The City of Greer budgeted $2.5 million for the project and CPW’s received a winning bid for materials and labor of $2,120,062, allowing the work to begin early in 2017.

Moving east to west, the Williams Electric crew completed nearly 2.5 miles of the project by the end of summer. That work included installing new poles and lights, burying electrical cables and removing the old poles and HPS lights.

“It’s making quite a difference as you drive down Wade Hampton Boulevard,” Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said.

Mayor Rick Danner and North Greenville University’s Dr. Randall J. Pannell were all smiles following the university’s 2017 Spring Commencement Exercises.

NGU photo by Jennifer Lynch

Mayor Rick Danner and North Greenville University’s Dr. Randall J. Pannell were all smiles following the university’s 2017 Spring Commencement Exercises.

That’s Doctor Mayor Danner, thank you very much.

Greer’s mayor delivered the 2017 spring commencement address at North Greenville University on May 5 and Dr. Randall Pannell, who was serving as NGU’s Interim President, conferred the honorary Doctor of Christian Leadership degree on him during the ceremony.

Paraphrasing Zig Ziglar, Danner told the graduates “if you are committed, you will do whatever it takes. If you are merely interested, you will do whatever is convenient.” He added that the most distinguishing characteristic of success is the perseverance of commitment.

“When I think back of all the many blessings that have come my way in my life, nothing seems to match the commitments I have made, and kept,” he said. “You must decide what is truly important to you and commit to only those things.”

He pointed to three areas — career, community and faith — as the areas of his life critical to his happiness, success, well-being and spiritual growth.
Radio system aids emergency services

It’s a scary scenario for any emergency services worker: patrolling the boundary of the city limits when the radio crackles with an emergency call. When a dispatcher’s voice should be providing information, there is only static and the police office or firefighter is left trying to find a nearby location with better reception.

That will no longer be an issue of the City of Greer Police and Fire Departments as both are now connected to the Palmetto 800 System and using digital Kenwood radios. The new system provides clear reception not only within the entire city limits, but across South Carolina.

“We were to a point where we needed to upgrade our radio system because of the City’s geographical expansion. Our old UHF system wasn’t reaching the farthest parts of the city limits so we had to do something,” Chief Matt Hamby said.

“We did extensive testing over the past year and looked at our different options. That was by far the best option and gave us the best coverage throughout the City. It’s now in place and it’s working great.”

That’s the goal of the Statewide 800 MHz Radio and Mobile Data System known simply as Palmetto 800. The system was established as a cost-shared, public/private partnership between state government, local governments, power utilities, and Motorola Solutions, Inc.

“It’s a network of towers that provide a communications network that spans across the state. It provides the best coverage across the board,” Hamby said. “It also provides interoperability with other agencies, so we’ll be able to communicate with other fire departments and law enforcement agencies that we weren’t able to in the past. We’re seeing other agencies in the area migrating to this system.”

The need for such a radio system dates back to 1989, when Hurricane Hugo ravaged parts of South Carolina. As first responders from other areas poured in to help, incompatible radio systems made it difficult to coordinate public safety efforts.

Palmetto 800 was the answer. It began operating in 1992 under the South Carolina Department of Administration’s Division of Technology Operations with the support of an elected advisory committee.

With more than 30,000 primary users, it is one of the largest shared, statewide radio networks in the United States. More than 750 agencies representing state government, federal government, local government, law enforcement agencies, fire services, EMS services, and power utilities in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia currently subscribe to the network.

The State of South Carolina contracted with Motorola Solutions, Inc. to upgrade the Palmetto 800 sites to P25 — a direct replacement for analog UHF radios that adds the ability to transfer data as well as voice. That transfer was completed by the end of 2017.

To help keep the system affordable, agencies that utilize Palmetto 800 pay a monthly subscription fee. Add the new 800 MHz radios to replace the outdated analog models and communicating is no longer an issue for police, fire and EMT workers.

No longer will different agencies need to communicate with each other through dispatch or the need for a duplicate radio in vehicles. Palmetto 800 allows them to communicate directly, saving time and eliminating the need for relayed messages.

“This was a critical need because both the fire department and the police department were relying on one repeater each,” Fire Chief Dorian Flowers said. “We’ve been using two different systems and two different technologies — the fire department on VHF and the police department on UHF. If either repeater failed, those agencies wouldn’t be able to talk to themselves or each other.”

Because each new radio can access multiple repeaters, the system provides insurance for reliable connections.

The fire department received nine mobile and 17 portable units through a $1.7 million regional grant received by the Greenville County Fire Chiefs Association.

“It was designed to put mobiles and portables in the front-line engine and ladder trucks in Greenville County,” Flowers said. “And those were units that we didn’t have to pay for, which always helps.”

The police department split the cost of its new hardware between the City operating budget and federal seized funds.
Suber plan earns City Council’s approval

Additional soccer fields and parking among unbudgeted long-range facility needs

When it came to the South Suber Road Park master plan, the plan’s steering committee dreamed big.

The committee, comprised of local business representatives, athletic officials, patrons and City staff members, worked with Alta Planning and Design over three meetings to address the need for additional soccer fields, parking, connectivity and passive space.

The resulting plan, which expands the park to include 15 full-sized soccer fields, was endorsed by Greer City Council at its July 11 meeting for inclusion into the Parks and Recreation Department’s master plan.

“We feel this is a good, solid master plan for the park. It’s a guide that shows us the overall concept” Parks and Recreation Director Ann Cunningham said. “This would certainly give us the ability to provide for tournaments.”

Newly-acquired property both north and south of the park will expand the park from its current 10.5 acres to approximately 18.3 acres.

The site currently includes three soccer fields (two regulation and one scaled), a picnic shelter with table and benches, and a concession stand, restroom and maintenance building.

Alta Planning and Design is familiar with the City of Greer from its work on the pedestrian and biking plan, part of the Greer Community Master Plan.

Alta representatives held three meetings with the South Suber Road Park steering committee between August and December, 2016 to receive direction for the design and programming of the park and to develop a final concept plan.

“After the kickoff meeting, Alta Planning and Design was on site to help the steering committee understand the realistic opportunities and constraints,” Cunningham said. “This site visit was vital to understanding existing grades, stormwater issues, ADA compliance, existing vegetation, vehicular and pedestrian circulation and overall ambiance and character.”

Alta also met with the S.C. Department of Transportation to analyze current traffic counts provided by the City of Greer Police Department.

It was decided that SCDOT would not currently support a new traffic signal at the park entrance’s intersection with Suber Rd., but would approve the implementation of a three-lane cross-section on Suber Road at the main entrance.

Once South Suber Road Park is fully developed, SCDOT agree to consider additional traffic studies to determine if a traffic signal is warranted.

Alta then presented three preliminary concept designs based on information collected at the kickoff meeting and site visit.

“These concept designs allowed the committee to visually identify the idea of having to sacrifice one item or idea for another,” Cunningham said. “This gave them an opportunity to vote on the single best design and provide ideas for improvement for the final design.”

Alta came prepared at its final meeting in December with a final illustrated design, probable cost estimates and implementation guidance.

That design includes expanded parking to accommodate as many as 255 vehicles. In addition to eight new structures, it includes the 15 total soccer fields with subterranean drainage.

“Long-term, it’s probably a five-to-ten year project,” Cunningham said. “There are some things we can begin to start moving on now in small increments – things like netting on fields and adding additional parking.

The estimated project cost is $3,843,250 before a 20% contingency fund and design and engineering fees. The estimated final cost is $4,996,225, with the largest single expense at $1.5 million for the soccer fields.

“It has not been budgeted into our long-range plans. It puts the wheels in motion for us as we begin to look at our facility needs,” Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said. “We’ll obviously have to weigh that in relation to other needs we have throughout the city. It really allows us to begin doing long-range planning — to have a vision.”
Interviews help GPD prepare for the future

When Matt Hamby assumed command of the Greer Police Department last April, the new chief set his mind firmly on the future — of both the department and its members.

One of Hamby’s early objectives was to meet one-on-one with each member of the department to discuss his or her personal career goals.

Beginning in May, Hamby set the plan in motion and spent the next six months checking off names of more than 60 employees in the City’s largest department.

“We consider our greatest resource to be our people and this profession takes a long time to get really good at. For that reason we want to hire people who will stay here for a long time and constantly learn and develop and get better,” Hamby said.

“The best way to do that is to find if they want to have a concentration in investigations, traffic collision investigations or community outreach or whatever. So we’re providing a career path and will provide the proper training to get them there. It seems like the best way to develop people over the long haul.”

Hamby’s strategic plan for employees allows senior members of the department to strategically consider future needs in the department’s various divisions.

He plans to revisit the interviews annually to determine if employees have changed their career goals.

“We have a lot of department members who are working on their education while they’re full-time employees. That helps with being eligible for promotions and certain positions,” he said. We also expend resources sending our people to advanced professional training and keeping them on the cutting edge of law enforcement trends and procedures.”

The department has sent seven members, including Hamby, through Anderson University’s Command College of South Carolina. The program is specifically designed to prepare experienced members of law enforcement to move up to middle management or senior executive positions.

Hamby knows the work and training required to advance in the department. He is a former Rookie of the Year and Officer of the Year for the department, which he joined in 1993.

He was promoted to sergeant, then spent 14 years as a lieutenant before his promotion to captain in 2014. He was named as the department’s chief in 2017.

Along the way, Hamby gained experience in uniform patrol, telecommunications, traffic investigations, detention, criminal investigations, vice and narcotics, crime analysis, crime mapping, community policing, internal affairs, policy development and administration.

“I was exposed to a lot of different aspects of the department,” he said, noting that officers today may have a more specific area of interest.

Meeting face-to-face with his employees gave Hamby a better understanding of their goals. He also gained valuable feedback about the department during the discussions.

“It was a good experience — an opportunity to see what’s on their minds. It allowed us to get some ideas for improvements as well as reaffirming some things we’re doing well,” he said.

“It was reassuring to hear that we’re doing things well and that people are supporting our mission.”

One new program that was affirmed is a recruiting team — an effort to increase diversity in the department.

“It reassured us to know our employees believe in the concept of a recruiting team and see a need for it,” Hamby said. “We’re just not seeing a lot of African-American applicants in this field right now, so it’s something we want to work on.”
Shortly after Labor Day 2017, a diverse group representing nearly every City of Greer department and Greer CPW gathered at the Police Department. Events of the recent holiday were far from their thoughts as Hurricane Irma, one of the strongest Atlantic hurricanes in history, took aim at Florida.

Of particular concern to officials were the forecasts of the storm’s potential track. Colorful lines from nearly every forecast model snaked from central Florida through Georgia and to South Carolina’s upstate.

As days passed and Irma’s path moved farther west, it became clear that Greer would not experience the worst of the storm’s fury. Because the potential remained for flooding and tornadoes, officials continued their meetings throughout the storm.

In the world of emergency preparedness, you simply plan for the worst and hope for the best.

“It’s extremely important that each area knows what others are doing in an emergency situation,” said Greer Fire Chief Dorian Flowers, who serves as the Risk Management Coordinator and leads emergency preparedness efforts in the City. “One part is efficiency because you don’t want to be duplicating efforts. The other part is that is has to be a coordinated effort because of division of responsibilities and power.

“In the case of flood waters, public services can go out and put up barricades all day long. But if there’s no enforcement of that, people are going to drive around the barricades, Then, if they get in trouble, the fire department is going to have to deal with it. So it’s extremely important that everyone be on the same sheet of music.”

“It’s a very good process for us,” Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said. “All of our teams are involved in emergency preparedness and planning. From our floodplain manager to our police, fire public services and public information. We then expand it to our partners at CPW so they are aware of what we’re looking at relative to an emergency and they’re able to communicate their emergency preparedness plans with us.”

Flowers said an important goal is expanding that communication beyond the City of Greer.

“We’ve made more of a concerted effort to work with the two counties on emergency management planning and a software product they use called WebEOC, which is operated through the state,” he said. WebEOC streamlines information requests and helps better distribute resources regionally during and after an incident.

Preparing locally for any incident still falls to individual municipalities. City of Greer officials are convinced that the local preparation procedures are among the best.

“We were extremely prepared for a worst-case scenario and were relieved that we were able to stand down a bit as the storm approached,” Driggers said. “I’m very proud of our team. All of them are very well trained and prepared for any level of emergency that we may anticipate in our community.”
The City of Greer’s Animal Control Officer, Scott Ruttgers, is a busy man. During any given month, he’ll handle as many as 200 calls about wildlife spotted by residents, as well as family pets that have gotten loose and are roaming the city. For the safety of both the animals and those who call, Ruttgers picks up the loose dogs and cats with the goal of reuniting them with their owners.

The City holds dogs for five days at its kennel facilities on Buncombe St., giving owners ample time to claim pets before Ruttgers transports them to Greenville County Animal Care Services. Those dogs’ local stay will be much nicer soon as a new kennel facility is planned.

“That current facility has reached the end of its useful life, in our opinion. There are plumbing and electrical issues, as well as structural issues with the building,” said Police Chief Matt Hamby. “We’ve been planning financially to replace the old kennel for the last couple of years.”

With a budget in place, officials consulted with an architect to estimate the price of a custom kennel. “After a cost-analysis we re-evaluated the direction we were heading,” Hamby said. “We decided the most efficient way to acquire the type of facility we need would be to purchase a prefabricated building.”

The bid request caught the attention of Horizon Structures, LLC, a Pennsylvania-based company that specializes in prefabricated horse barns. Horizon also just happens to produce dog kennels and submitted the lone bid – $51,980. “That cost is for the structure only and we’ll require some other things such as plumbing, electrical and concrete work, but the building meets all of the specifications we were looking for and will be well under our original budget for this project,” Hamby said.

Hamby credited Dan Fowler, the City’s maintenance superintendent, with helping to redirect the project toward the prefabricated structure — an option that trimmed the overall project expenses by $200,000.

Fowler, who is contracting the additional work on the kennel, said he expects the project to be completed early in the second quarter of 2018.
It’s a source of pride when new members of the Greer police and fire departments are singled out for excellence while training with future officers and firefighters from other departments in South Carolina.

When those trainees are local hires who have completed civilian programs in the respective departments, that pride is raised a few notches.

That was the case in 2017 when Sarah Anderson and Noah Sanford made it clear that the City of Greer had hired a pair of rookie all-stars.

Greer native Anderson was recognized with the J.P. Strom Award as the top graduate of her Basic Law Enforcement Class at the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy. She accepted the award March 3 during her Academy graduation ceremony. The award is presented to the member of the graduating class who achieves the highest cumulative academic score, including the successful completion of all performance tests, during the nine-week training program.

“Officer Anderson is a homegrown member of the Greer community who got involved in our Citizen’s Police Academy and our Citizens Academy Alumni Association. She decided that she wanted to pursue a career not only in law enforcement, but specifically with the Greer Police Department,” Greer Police Chief Matt Hamby said.

“She excelled at the highest level during her training at the Criminal Justice Academy. We could not be more proud of one of Greer’s own. We have high expectations of Officer Anderson in her upcoming years here at the Greer Police Department.”

Participating in the 12-week course at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy, Anderson completed six tests on legal processes and showed proficiency in defensive tactics, driving, firearms, and DUI standard field sobriety application and breath alcohol analysis.

A minimum grade average of 96% is required to qualify for the J.P. Strom Award.

Hamby said Anderson’s academic success at the Academy came as no surprise considering she earned spots on the Chancellor’s List and Dean’s List as a student at the University of South Carolina Upstate prior to graduating in 2016.

“The Academy was challenging, but I enjoy a good challenge. It was important to stay focused because there was a lot of material,” Anderson said.

With her uncle, great uncle and great grandfather having worked as police officers, continuing that lineage was in Anderson’s mind at a young age. She said she knew her career path was in criminal justice “probably since I was four. It was just a calling.”

Anderson and her mother Tina completed the Greer Citizens Police Academy in 2012 and her twin sister Emily completed the program in 2014. All three then volunteered with the department as part of the Citizens Academy’s Alumni Association.

A member of the Patrol Division, Anderson said the job has lived up to her expectations.

“I really enjoy it. I want to stay in patrol for a while because I feel like that’s where I’m called to be,” she said.
Greer native Noah Sanford brings a similar success story to the Fire Department, earning the Academic Award at last summer’s Spartanburg County Emergency Services Academy. The award is given to the rookie school candidate who completes the nine-week firefighter training with the highest written test score average.

“Noah is one of those individuals who has the drive and determination to succeed at any job,” Fire Chief Dorian Flowers said. “We couldn’t be more excited that he chose the Fire Service, particularly in his hometown.

“Having local candidates is good for both the department and the firefighter because they already know the community and it knows them. We can credit the Explorer Program for helping to inspire the next generation.”

Explorer Post 103 in Greer is open to those between the ages of 14 and 20 who are interested in pursuing careers in the emergency medicine and fire science fields. Sanford enrolled in the program as a high school freshman and learned basic firefighting skills, including equipment, basic knots for rescue, tactics and rescue skills.

That experience helped convince Sanford of his career path and he was hired as a full-time employee last July.

“Prior to joining the program, I originally wanted to pursue a career as a marine engineer for the Coast Guard. While participating in the program I had the opportunity to ride on shift with all three shifts and see the real job in action,” Sanford said.

“While riding along I had the opportunity to see how the basics that were taught to Explorers were used along with advanced operations to complete the call. Then I fell in love and realized this is what I really want to do the rest of my life.”

A graduate of Greer Middle College Charter High School and now a member of the Greer Fire Department’s B Shift, Sanford is developing the experience that will help him become a seasoned firefighter.

“Being full-time is definitely different from just being an Explorer,” he said. “The transition from learning the basics to applying them in emergency situations is much different.

“As an Explorer I would be a helping hand where I could. Now, being full time, I am no longer being a helping hand. I am fully involved and pursuing what I have waited to do. I love this job, and knowing that I am able to help others and help my community makes this the greatest job in the world.”

An avid outdoorsman, Sanford knows full well how to achieve his goals — whether bagging a deer or fully appreciating a day at work.

The header photo on his personal Facebook page spells it out: Hard Work – That’s How You Get It.

“While participating in the Explorer program, seeing everything and having the opportunity to learn, I fell in love with this career,” he said. “I love being able to come into work with a smile on my face, not knowing what is to come, and making the split-second decisions. Also, when the tones drop it is such an amazing feeling to know that I get to go help someone else in need.

“My favorite part of the job is definitely coming to work not knowing what may take place today, and then when the bell goes off, it’s our time to make a difference.”

Living the dream? Perhaps. After all, many children have dreamed of being a fireman when they grow up. Whatever the future throws at him, Sanford will be ready.

“All I can say is that I want to be the best I can be in the position I am in, and when the next challenge or opportunity arises I want to be able to apply my skills and training to the next position and build from there,” he said.
Remaining true to the Greer Police Department motto, Policing is a Partnership, members of the department are active year-round in such community activities as mentoring, reading in schools and volunteering their time to a variety of local business and charitable organizations.

Ask a local student to name a member of the department and the odds are good that you’ll receive the name of a four-legged officer: Boss or Stryker.

The German Shepherds from the Czech Republic joined the force in 2015 and have been integral in detecting illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia and tracking. During the 2017 calendar year alone, the two were responsible for 125 arrests in the City of Greer.

The year also brought a major change to the K-9 program. James Compton, Stryker’s handler since the K-9 Unit was reinstated in 2015, was promoted to corporal and surrendered his handler duties.

Enter Anna Barnette, the department’s 2015 Rookie of the Year who transferred to the K-9 Unit as Stryker’s new handler. Before arriving in Greer, both Stryker and Boss were certified for tracking and narcotic detection through the North American Police Work Dog Association (NAPWDA) after completing 160 hours of training.

By law, K-9 teams are required to complete 16 hours of monthly maintenance training. They also train weekly with the Greenville County Sheriff’s Office. On average, the officers complete 32 hours of training each month.

Veteran K-9 trainer Ron Pace said the onus is on new handlers to make the adjustment to an experienced dog.

“This is an art. Dog training is learning the dog’s language,” Pace said. “If you had someone from Japan staying with you and you didn’t know Japanese and they didn’t know English, you’d have a difficult time communicating with them.”

Recalling the challenges she faced during her training as a K-9 handler, Barnette easily relates to that analogy.

Anna Barnett
and Stryker
“Becoming a K-9 handler was hard. I knew that it would not be easy but it was still so much harder than I imagined,” she said. “You are literally learning all these new skills and behaviors. It’s like learning a new language and culture. The dog is usually right, and if the dog is wrong, it’s likely something the handler did wrong.”

Barnette did have the advantage of knowing Stryker’s personality and temperament from keeping the dogs when Compton and Williams were called away or on vacation.

“I do think that it gave me a very small insight to what it was like to have a police dog. And it did help with the transition because Stryker was familiar with me,” she said.

Combine that familiarity with the strong bond fellow K-9 handler Jordan Williams has forged with Boss and it’s easy to see why the K-9 Unit didn’t miss a beat in 2017.

The teams were deployed 188 times during the year, primarily for exterior vehicle scenting. Boss rated at 100% for reliability in scenting narcotics and Stryker scored nearly 98%.

The dogs were successful in finding and seizing cocaine, crack cocaine, MDMA (ecstasy/Molly), methamphetamine, crystal meth, marijuana and heroin.

During training for tracking, Stryker notched a perfect success rate and Boss was at 97%.

When it comes to serving as ambassadors for the Greer Police Department, both earn perfect scores.

The K-9 teams conducted 33 demonstrations in 2017 at schools, community meetings and other events.

They also were invited to Anderson after being selected to pose for the Hyco Fund calendar that honors the memory of a K-9 killed in the line of duty. Proceeds from calendar sales support K-9 teams across South Carolina.

“Demos are important because I do realize that the general public usually only meets the police in times of tragedy – theft, wrecks, speeding tickets,” Barnette said. “(Demos) are a time for them to see us and interact with us so that people remember that we are just like them.

“I’ve noticed the biggest difference in kids. It is ridiculously common that people use the police as a scare tactic for their children. They cringe away or even cry when they see us. When we get to go to schools, daycare centers and bible schools, they meet us and our dogs. I think that’s huge. We then run into these kids all over the city at the grocery store, gas station etc and they remember us... or at least the dog.”

Williams and Barnette may downplay their own exposure as part of the K-9 Unit, but there is no denying the team element.

The dogs and handlers live together, train together and work together – necessary interaction for forging the teamwork necessary for a great team.

Following his first year of working with Boss, Williams summed up the bond that had been forged,

“Like with a human partner, I can tell when he’s excited or tired or bored. He’ll often let out a long sigh when I’m working on paperwork in the car,” Williams said, “If I’m having a rough day, he is there just wanting to play and it gives me a second wind to take care of what needs to be done.”

“I can recognize Stryker’s behavior so much easier than I can put it into words ironically,” Barnette adds. “But at the same time, if you are not watching him, you can also miss it, regardless of how long you have been working the dog.

“He’s playful and puppyish, but it has to be on his terms. He can be very serious when needed. The hardest part is when people don’t understand that he can’t be treated like their Labrador.”

― Anna Barnette

The Greer Police K-9 units are ambassadors for the department anytime they appear in public. Above, Boss shows off his concentration skills with handler Jordan Williams in Anderson at the Hyco Memorial 5K Run.
Visitors from near and far gathered on August 21 to witness a once-in-a-lifetime event:

The Day the City of Greer Went Dark

Vehicles began filling the Greer City Hall parking lot at first light on August 21.

A glance at the license plates let everyone know that, on this warm summer day, Greer was a destination marked by many in the eastern United States. And rightfully so, because “once-in-a-lifetime” doesn’t roll around very often.

With Greer inside the narrow path of totality that cut across the nation from Oregon to South Carolina for the Great American Solar Eclipse, visitors flocked to the city from Michigan, Ohio, Connecticut, New York and even Amsterdam to experience the wondrous event.

After those travelers battled traffic to reach the city, the events staff presented an array of fun and educational activities to welcome them to Greer.

“How do you plan for a once-in-a-lifetime event? We didn’t really market it beyond the city and didn’t have an idea of how many guests would show up. People were obviously monitoring news sites and social media and I think they had a great time,” events supervisor Ashlyn Stone said.

As the price of paper and film eclipse viewing glasses rivaled the cost of Ray-Bans in the days leading up to the eclipse, the city’s promise of free glasses didn’t go unnoticed. By 11 a.m., a line to collect the glasses snaked 200 yards from City Hall, through the park, to Poinsett Street.

The events staff handed out nearly 2,000 complimentary pairs of glasses.

“The fact that (the city) provided eclipse glasses really helped us out,” Virginia Tech student Thomas Schluszas commented after making the trek from Blacksburg, Va.

Dr. Susan Kirk and her husband drove from Charlotte.

Outside, the crowd enjoyed a custom playlist with more than three hours of songs about the sun, moon and stars. The Area 51 Food Truck and the Desserted Isle Truck enjoyed steady business, space-themed inflatables for children helped burn off energy, and all ages enjoyed the Gravity Check Juggling Troupe’s show in the amphitheater.

For most, however, the hours of travel were weighed against 85 seconds – the length of total darkness at Greer City Park. Was it worth it?

“It was beyond amazing,” Benjamin William Walker Shamel confessed after making a late decision to drive from Winston-Salem, N.C.
Visitors from near and far gathered on August 21 to witness a once-in-a-lifetime event: traveling from Charlottesville, Va. to South Carolina on a whim after seeing a favorable weather forecast for Greer. After eight hours on the road, the couple arrived shortly after 2 p.m. The eclipse was underway.

“We then took a quick stroll through town and saw your beautiful park and city hall, and people throwing Frisbees, playing catch, and listening to the awesome soundtrack that someone had put together for your party,” Dr. Kirk said. “We stood near the train tracks to view both the town and the moment of totality, and I’m sure I don’t need to tell you how amazingly beautiful it was.”

Her words were echoed by others who witnessed the eclipse. Everyone at the park enjoyed a clear view of the moon passing in front of the sun and casting Greer in darkness. A roar rose from the crowd as the sun’s corona appeared behind the moon — a sight few of them had ever witnessed. As the sun reappeared and the crowd gathered their belongings, there was a universal feeling that they had just witnessed something special.

There was also the feeling that they had experienced the eclipse someplace special.

Dr. Kirk, an endocrinologist and Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education at the University of Virginia School of Medicine, called the eclipse a cathartic experience after seeing Charlottesville rocked by deadly violence between neo-Nazis and counter-protesters eight days earlier.

“As we left town, our impressions were about Greer, and how wonderful it was to see that no one was charging anyone to park, no one was growling for someone to get off his/her lawn, no shop owners were chasing people from their parking lots. Everywhere we looked there were people of all ages and skin colors coming together to share in the spectacular event of our earth and sky.

“Our much-too-short visit to your welcoming community not only provided a wonderful spot to view the eclipse, but helped us believe again that, while there is much work to be done around the country to bridge our divides, that welcoming others as neighbors and friends is still possible.”

Stephen Kelly of Greer was the first person in line to pick up a free pair of eclipse viewing glasses. He enjoyed chatting with a woman from Alexandria, Va. and other visitors to his city while waiting at the head of the line.
In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson began his second term and led the United States into World War I.

The world said goodbye to frontiersman William “Buffalo Bill” Cody and welcomed future entertainer Dino Paul Crocetti, who would become better known as Dean Martin.

New Mexico and Arizona were granted statehood just five years earlier.

The world literacy rate was just 23 percent and only six percent of Americans had graduated from high school.

The average hourly wage for U.S. workers was 22 cents.

In Greer, a newspaper called The Greer Citizen began publishing. A new train depot (built in 1913 by the Piedmont & Northern Railroad) was a downtown anchor. And new utility lines were being installed in areas to serve a growing downtown business environment.

Fast forward a century and it’s amazing to consider how the world has changed. Locally, The Greer Citizen and that depot are still going strong.

Time, however, does not favor buried utility lines.

Water and sewer lines beneath historic Greer Station have not kept pace with the City’s tremendous growth, especially over the last 20 years. Those cracked and deteriorating pipes finally reached the end of their life span, forcing city leaders to take action.

“This is one of those projects that we do about every 75 to 100 years and it just happens to be the time to do it,” Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said. “It is aging infrastructure and it will be a very complex project on which we are partnering with Greer CPW. We’ve been working with our downtown merchants for a couple of years now, advising and preparing them for this.”

Driggers said replacing cracked and deteriorating pipes with modern utilities will bring the central business district into the 21st Century and allow the City of Greer to meet the demand of future downtown growth.

Utility work by Greer CPW and its contractors began in June of 2017 and is expected to be completed during the second quarter of 2018 at a total cost of more than $4 million.
“Greer CPW replaced water and sewer lines along Randall Street between School and Depot, and along Victoria Street between School and E. Poinsett. Also, we completed CIPP lining of approximately 5000 feet of existing 8-inch vitrified clay pipe on Trade, East Poinsett, and South Main Streets,” said Mark Harvey, project manager for that portion of the work.

Harvey said remaining water line work is on schedule and is expected to be completed in Spring of 2018. “The overarching goal is to have all work that requires road excavation complete by that time.”

The city and its contractors will start a major streetscape project that will include milling Trade Street down to one inch below the curb line and repaving, repairing all broken curbing and gutters, ensuring ADA accessibility and installing all new landscaping.

Estimated at more than $2 million, the project will be assisted by $775,000 from the Greenville County Legislative Delegation (a 75%-25% proposal to the City of Greer).

Design firm Kimley-Horn of Charlotte, N.C., was a key consultant in the creation of the Greer Community Master Plan completed in 2015. That plan provides input toward the new look for Greer Station as well as the need for the improvements.

Greer’s location, enviable transportation infrastructure and abundance of land have made it one of the fastest growing cities in South Carolina over the past decade. These same elements have positioned the city for continued growth.

Since 2000, the Greer area has grown at more than twice the pace of the larger region. The study area has seen an increase of 22,000 people—growth that is expected to continue. Within the next 15 years, the study estimates, the community should be prepared to accommodate a population that exceeds 100,000.

Greer Station was identified in the original Greer Community Master Plan as a target for renovation. The success of that planning was seen into the second decade of the 21st Century. The new plan, released in 2015, builds on that work and identifies Greer Station as a key site critical to the City of Greer's continued growth.

Trade Street will be the first road in Greer Station to see work when the city begins the streetscape portion of the downtown project in 2018. Milling the street down to one inch below the curb line and repaving will result in a pedestrian friendly street ideal for dining and commerce, as well as improving accessibility.
The economic development project code named “Ka-boom” appropriately sent a shockwave through the Greater Greer Community when details of the project were made public on Oct. 10.

The City of Greer and Sycamore Greer, LLC, intend to cooperate to redevelop multiple parcels of approximately 2.6 acres in downtown Greer to create a privately-owned 100-room minimum Hampton Inn hotel, privately-owned commercial and retail facilities, a publicly-owned pedestrian walkway and a publicly-owned parking facility.

Greer City Council passed second reading of Ordinance 38-2017 approving the project agreement at its Oct. 10 meeting.

Yatish Patel is head of Greenville-based Sycamore Investment Group that built the Holiday Inn Express and Home 2 Suites on North Main Street in Greenville. The project agreement requires Sycamore Greer to invest at least $10 million in a hotel not more than five stories tall in addition to retail space. Both the hotel and commercial properties will have a brick facade to match buildings in the historic district.

“We were put in touch with some folks who have a good track record for developing urban space,” Greer Mayor Rick Danner said. “We had some preliminary meetings with them and talked about our vision for downtown Greer and theirs and what it would take to get them to Greer. Out of those meetings, we forged the relationship and then a partnership to make the hotel possible.”

Danner said city representatives spent a great deal of time in negotiations to come up with a deal “mutually beneficial to both of us.”

The development will be located on the northwestern portion of land bounded by East Poinsett Street to the south-west, North Main Street to the northwest, Jason Street to the northeast and Cannon Street to the southeast, and consists mostly of abandoned buildings.

The City of Greer will acquire property on Jason St. to develop a 300-space (approximate) parking garage, with 90 spaces allocated to the hotel. Sycamore Greer, LLC, intends to donate a portion of its acquired property to ensure the city is able to complete its construction obligations.

The city will also construct and furnish a pedestrian alley for use on or before the hotel occupancy date.

The City of Greer will reimburse Sycamore Greer, LLC, $1.8 million for infrastructure in six payments contingent on:

- Conveyance of property donated by Sycamore Greer, LLC, to the City of Greer ($325,000)
- Completion of the demolition of the buildings currently located on the project property: the city-acquired property, the developer-donated property, the hotel property and the retail property) ($325,000)
- Completion of the footers for the hotel facilities ($325,000)
- Issuance of the certificate of occupancy for the Hotel Facilities ($325,000)
- Issuance of the certificate of occupancy for the first building constructed on one of the outparcels in the retail property ($250,000)
- Issuance of the certificate of occupancy for the last building constructed on the outparcel in the retail property ($250,000)

The timing of the project allows it to be tied into the Greer Station streetscape work to maintain a consistent look...
throughout the central business district. To cover multiple projects, including the parking garage and downtown streetscape work, City Council approved an ordinance in October issuing public bonds of $13.5 million to be repaid over a 25-30 year period with the current revenue structure. No allocation of tax millage for debt payment will be required.

The hotel’s proposed North Main Street location places it 100 yards from the city’s best known hotel, The Wayside Inn which was built in 1929 at a cost of $100,000.

“It was called the ‘best little hotel in the South’ and advertised that some rooms had baths. It was also the bus depot for more than 50 years,” local historian Joada Hiatt said.

Hiatt recalled an early option for travelers. The Greer Hotel was located across from the Depot where Citizens Banking and Loan now stands.

“It had a balcony across the front facing Trade Street and it is listed in the 1915 City Directory,” Hiatt said. “Since the P&N depot was finished late in 1913, I suspect it was new to pick up travelers from both railroad lines.”

The Elmore Hotel once stood on East Poinsett Street at the current location of Rivera’s Restaurant. A restaurant downstairs was convenient for guests who occupied rooms upstairs.

Other lodging options in the city included a boarding house near the tracks on E. Poinsett that was run by a Mrs. Smith and her daughter, Bertie. Farther down East Poinsett was a gas station and tourist camp with log cabins.

“Building hotels along Poinsett made sense as that was a national highway until Wade Hampton Boulevard was built,” Hiatt said.
The City of Greer continued to strengthen it’s financial standing during the 2016-17 fiscal year according to Ken Meadows, partner with the accounting firm Greene, Finney & Horton. Meadows summarized the City’s financial statements in a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) to Greer City Council following an independent audit.

“This was our first year auditing the City of Greer. There are a lot of things we do, particularly for a first-year audit, and I think it went very well,” Meadows said. “We ask a lot of questions and request a lot of information. The unmodified opinion is the best that you can get and it’s the one the City of Greer has received in previous years.”

Meadows pointed out that the City has a very healthy fund balance that has grown well over the last year.

“Because property taxes and business licenses are cyclical, the City has received the bulk of its income by the end of the fiscal year on June 30. It needs an adequate fund balance for cash flow to carry through another six months or so until that revenue begins to come in again,” he said.

“Just as you’d need a savings account at home, the City needs the same for unplanned expenditures, emergencies and other things that may arise. You also get better interest rates on your debt with a strong fund balance. The other unknown is the economy. The City of Greer worked (in the early 2000s) to build up its fund balance and then, when the economy downturned, the City dipped into the fund balance to keep from having to make drastic cuts immediately.”

Being good stewards of public money has also helped the City’s financial position. The auditors also noted that council’s and management’s commitment to improving the financial stability is reflected in the city finishing the fiscal year approximately $280,000 under budget for expenditures in the General Fund. Every department completed the fiscal year under budget.

Revenue outpaced expenditures for the fifth consecutive fiscal year — by more than $5.6 million during 2016-17.

“The City showed nice fiscal conduct in remaining under budget,” Meadows said. “As auditors, that’s something we always like to see.”

Meadows said the bottom line shows the City in a strong financial position.

“The City has a net position, or equity, if this were a business, of about $31 million – most of that would be net investments and capital assets of $22 million. There is also a restricted net position of $5.7 million and unrestricted total of $3.3 million. That’s actually very good. If you look at most government-wide statements, because of pension liability, a lot of cities are in a negative position on unrestricted net position. So Greer is the exception statewide and probably nationally to have a positive unrestricted net position.”

The Finance Office has been recognized for 20 consecutive years with the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The honor, given by the non-profit Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada, is designed to encourage state and local governments to go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles to prepare comprehensive annual financial reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure.

Current and past audit results are made available for public examination at www.cityofgreer.org or in person at Greer City Hall.
Board member David Seifert was honored with the 2017 Professional Achievement Award from the S.C. Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association.

City of Greer Revenue vs. Expenses (2013-2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>$17,620,910</td>
<td>$18,289,478</td>
<td>$19,688,358</td>
<td>$21,138,233</td>
<td>$24,016,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures</td>
<td>$15,909,364</td>
<td>$16,423,549</td>
<td>$17,591,037</td>
<td>$18,900,258</td>
<td>$18,330,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures</td>
<td>$1,711,546</td>
<td>$1,865,929</td>
<td>$2,097,321</td>
<td>$2,237,975</td>
<td>$5,685,521</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fund Balance</td>
<td>$5,474,037</td>
<td>$7,340,130</td>
<td>$8,530,456</td>
<td>$10,051,101</td>
<td>$13,874,387</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The late J. Verne Smith frequently referred to the City of Greer as “the center of the universe” and contractors seem to have adopted the former senator’s description when it comes to commercial and residential construction.

On the heels of a record-setting year in 2016, construction activity in the City was particularly robust in 2017. The Building and Code Enforcement division issued 7,625 total permits in 2017, a 44% increase. Those fees amounted to $1,788,471 (a 16.6% increase) and marked the second consecutive year that permit fees surpassed $1 million.

Total cost of 2017 construction in the City was $348,948,323 (a 22.5% increase over 2016 and a 2,497% increase over a recession low in 2009). A rare decrease from 2016 was in housing starts. However, the 429 starts fell just six short of the pre-recession high in 2003 – a record that fell in 2016.

Continued growth required additional staff members to keep up with the demand, particularly in the inspections area. The expanded roster of inspectors kept pace and finished the year with 27,866 inspections. That nearly equaled the total number of inspections conducted from 2007 through 2012.

Growth in the City also challenged the division’s code enforcement officers, although public education efforts and strict enforcement resulted in fewer violations and fines in 2017. Officers conducted 5,225 inspections to maintaining the health, safety and well being of residents, as well as preserving property values and the community’s image. Officers continued to work with the Greer Police Department to identify and condemn unsafe structures.

The Residences at Brushy Creek are among the new living options in the City of Greer. Located adjacent to Century Park, the community features 298 apartments ranging from 629 to 1,347 square feet.
Planning and Zoning Division

The Planning and Zoning Division promotes the City’s growth by providing comprehensive planning, land development, and historic preservation coordination and services.

Annexations allowed the City to grow by 430 acres in 2017. That includes 12 new residential communities, four more than in 2016.

The division reorganized under Planning Manager Kelli McCormick, adding Zoning Coordinator Brandon McMahan and Development Coordinator Brandy Blake.

Staff completed improvements to procedures and forms, completed work on the Historic Preservation Grant, and continued to control illegal bandit signs through increased enforcement.

The division oversees the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Planning Advisory Committee, Annexation Planning Committee, and Board of Architectural Review.

Those boards and commissions considered 109 cases in 2017, a 49% increase from the previous year. The division also expanded training opportunities for members of those boards and commissions.

City Engineering Division

The Engineering Division of Building & Development Standards is responsible for the City’s stormwater program, infrastructure projects and the municipal paving program.

City engineer and department head Steve Grant oversees the annual street paving program in Greenville and Spartanburg Counties in conjunction with the Spartanburg County Transportation Committee and the Greenville Legislative Delegation Transportation Committee’s Municipal Match Resurfacing Program.

Taking advantage of the matching fun programs, the City was able to pave 11 streets (approximately 2.4 miles) in 2017. The City also adopted 1.33 miles of roads into its inventory in 2017.

The Engineering Division is working closely with the Downtown Streetscape Project that will begin in 2018. It is also working in advance of that project to improve public parking lots and alleys in Greer Station.

It also played a key role in the Brushy Creek Road Sidewalk Project completed in 2017.

The City Stormwater team exists to protect waterways from stormwater pollutants generated by construction sites or illicit discharges by commercial or industrial sites.

The regulation of stormwater discharges was required by the Environmental Protection Agency through the Clean Water Act of 1972.

The program experienced change in 2017 when Stormwater Engineer Lillian Hanley retired. Stormwater Inspector Anthony Copeland has worked with other city departments and government agencies to carry on this important work.

The City relies on strong stormwater ordinances and public education to keep its water clean. By managing construction sites and inspecting industrial facilities, the city’s stormwater team is working to protect the quality of the city’s water for generations to come.

Much preventive work is done during the plan review process to ensure that adequate sediment and erosion control measures are included on all development plans. The City also works to ensure that stormwater runoff from newly developed sites does not negatively impact downstream properties or water bodies.

The department’s GIS Division updated the user interface to the online GIS Suite and performed a local update of Census addresses.

GIS planner Justin Kirtz also integrating the City’s GIS database with TRAKiT project management software.
More than 60% of the Greer Fire Department’s calls were for rescue and emergency medical service during 2017, but the department still responded to more than 400 fire calls last year.

That reinforced the need for highly-trained firefighters and EMTs who are prepared to respond and deal with those emergencies. City residents can rest easy knowing that members of the department invested more than 16,000 hours in professional team and individual training.

That training started at the top. Chief Dorian Flowers was among seven department leaders to complete Fire Officer III and IV programs at the Taylors Fire Department. Flowers also graduated from the state Risk Management Institute, while battalion chiefs Jody Norris and Dwayne Brown graduated from the S.C. State Firefighters Association Leadership Institute and Leadership Greer Class XXXVII, respectively.

Participating in community service activities is an important part of the department’s mission. It fielded a team in the Law Enforcement Memorial Benefit Softball Tournament hosted by the Greer Police Department. Another team of GFD personnel won the Relay for Life Truck Pull.

The department shares its work and mission with the public through its Citizens Fire Academy, which graduated its second class in 2017. The training division also holds CPR Saturdays to teach the public CPR techniques. Other public outreach programs include free infant and child car seat inspections as part of the Safe Kids Upstate program. Members inspected 137 seats in 2017.

Deputy Chief Scott Keeley oversaw the department’s smoke detector installation program through the Fire Marshal’s office. That program made free detectors available to homes that had insufficient or no detection and installed 174 smoke detectors in 2017. The department also holds fire prevention programs in the community and reached more than 7,100 children and adults in 2017.

The Fire Marshal’s office is proactive in preventing fires, conducting fire inspections and participating in plan reviews for new construction in the City. The past year saw 1,501 inspections that found 1,207 violations to be corrected.
MUNICIPAL COURT

Greer Municipal Court annually ranks at the top among city departments when it comes to customer service. That isn’t by accident, as Court Administrator Kirsten Pressley and her staff place a high value on exceeding customers’ expectations.

Court is in session every Wednesday to hear traffic and misdemeanor criminal cases carrying a maximum fine and sentence of $500 plus court costs or 30 days in jail, plus certain other cases as authorized by the legislature. Chief Municipal Judge Henry Mims presides over the court.

In addition to arraignments being held three times daily (every day), the facility is also the site of General Sessions preliminary hearings for Greenville County charges, jury trials, and pretrial conferences. Greenville County Magistrate Judge Robert F. Simms uses the courtroom or hearing room an average of 6.5 days per month.

The court is used for police training and graduation of the Police Citizens Youth Academies. Civic groups such as Leadership Greer also use the facility.

Domestic Violence Court, held once monthly, is a coordinated effort between the Greer Police Department, Greer Municipal Court and the S.C. Attorney General’s office. Along with partners Safe Homes, Safe Harbor, Compass of Carolina and The Forrester Center, the goal is to stop the cycle of violence through victim services and batterer treatment. South Carolina ranks fifth in the nation in domestic violence and experienced 47 domestic-related murders (35 women and 12 men) in 2015.

In addition to use by other regional agencies, the Department of Motor Vehicles uses the hearing room one to two days per month to conduct regional administrative hearings for those who have lost their licenses to DUI charges.

2017 Municipal Court Activity

Expungements: .............................. 376
Cases Filed:..................................6,449
Cases processed:............................7,276
Bench Warrants issued:...................... 602
Bench Warrants served:..................... 446
Arrest Warrants issued:......................1,503
Arraignments Conducted:...................1,497
Revenue: .....................................$226,726.14
Total money collected:.....................$750,749.41
With five divisions spanning ground maintenance to youth and adult athletics, the Parks and Recreation Department is one of the most visible City departments. Its motto, creating community through people, parks and programs, was on full display in 2017 as the department staged 267 programs that drew 19,618 visitors.

In addition to its own programs, the department supported other community events, such as Greer Family Fest, National Night Out, the Friends of Lake Robinson Day of Celebration, and the Greer Christmas Parade.

Long-term planning is important to ensuring prosperous and adequate growth to meet the need of a growing community. Greer City Council adopted the South Suber Road Park Master Plan (see page 10) and approved moving forward with the Phase II renovation of the Center for the Arts and surrounding park. Staff completed the groundwork to move forward with the Kids Planet Master Plan and renovation/rebuild.

Other highlights during 2017 were:

• Completion of the restroom, picnic shelter and concessions stand and press box facility construction at Century Park.
• Completion of a subterranean drainage system at South Suber Road Park.
• Renovation of the restrooms at the Cannon Centre.
• Overseeding multi-purpose athletic fields.
• Installation of additional Tube Dudes public art sculptures.
• Installation of an automated gate opener at the City Operations Center, which the Parks and Recreation Department shares with the Public Service Department.
• Completing an A/V upgrade of the Operations Center conference room.
• Securing: $19,500 in grants from such organizations as the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority, South Carolina Ports Authority, and the Metropolitan Arts Council; $33,500 in sponsorships; and $16,650 in in-kind donations to support programming.

PARKS & RECREATION

Athletics Division

Participation in the department’s athletic leagues continued on an upward swing in 2017, drawing more than 2,400 children and adults. Youth baseball, soccer and tournament play continue to draw the most participants, while youth wrestling and youth basketball are the fastest growing programs.

A popular new program was the adult baseball league at Stevens Field. Ninety players made up four teams participating in the league.

For the first time, the department hosted Dixie Girls Softball District Tournaments in every available age group at Victor and Century Parks. More than 1,200 spectators visited those facilities for tournament play.

City facilities are also sought for use by charter and home school teams, a trend that continued to rise in 2017.
Recreation Division

There is a recreation program for all ages, ranging from youth summer camps to senior computer classes.

New programs in 2017 included Walk With Your Local Elected Official, HAM radio classes, fitness classes and nutritional/spiritual classes.

Overall, 52 total programs drew 6,700 participants during the year.

The Seniors Out and Around (SOAR) program remains popular and meets several times each month. New events for seniors included a sold out show featuring the Bristol, Va., Senior Show Choir, and a bus trip to Helen, Ga.

Participation at line dancing events doubled in 2017. It tripled for bingo days.

Events Division

In addition to planning special events, the Events Division facilitates rentals at the Events Center at Greer City Hall, Greer City Park and the Cannon Centre. This generates income to help offset facility maintenance and other programming expenses.

During 2017, that amounted to 313 internal events, 226 rentals, 115 weddings and 65 special events. Total attendance at those events exceeded 128,000.

New events included the Bridal Showcase, the Artisan Makers Market, and the Great American Eclipse Celebration (see pages 18-19). The latter drew visitors from the Eastern Seaboard and west to Ohio.

Popular annual events hosted by the division include Freedom Blast, Railfest, the International Festival, the Christmas Tree Lighting, Breakfast with Santa, Moonlight Movies, and quarterly Food Truck Rollouts.

For more information on available facilities, contact Events Supervisor Ashlyn Stone at 968-7004.

Cultural Arts

When it comes to entertaining and educating both young people and adults about the arts, the Greer Cultural Arts Council is unsurpassed in the upstate.

Greer Children’s Theatre, a program of Greer Cultural Arts, enjoyed another strong season with three productions: Madagascar, the Magic Tree House, and Elf the Musical, Jr.

Cultural Arts again took the lead in hosting annual favorites Tunes in the Park and Tall Tale Tuesdays. It also operated the summer Camp ARK (Arts Reaching Kids) program that offers with beginner, intermediate and advanced theatre training.

The division focuses on the visual arts by programming exhibits at the Wall Gallery at City Hall. It also sponsors juried art shows throughout the year.

Cultural Arts moved its offices to the Center for the Arts in 2017 and began assisting with the master plan for that facility.

Four of the artists-in-residence at the Center for the Arts renewed their studio leases for 2017. They were rewarded with a series of Open Studios events, inviting the public to view and purchase their work.

Cultural Arts supplemented its operating budget by bringing in $25,650 in grants, sponsorships, donations and gifts-in-kind.

Grounds Maintenance

With approximately 150 acres of facilities, the City of Greer relies on this division to keep parks looking their best 365 days a year.

Grounds maintenance staff are responsible for field preparation, tree and shrub care, stage setups, playground safety, pond and fountain maintenance, banner installation, and plumbing repairs, among many other tasks.

Several pieces of equipment at Kids Planet were updated and repaired in 2017. New mulch was also installed.

Staff overseeded fields at City Stadium and South Suber Road Park with rye grass to protect the Bermuda grass in its dormancy. A slot drain capable of moving more than 55,000 gallons of water per hour was installed at the latter facility.

New basketball goals were installed at B.P. Edwards neighborhood park.
The names may not have changed, but ranks certainly did in the Greer Police Department during 2017.

The department completed 12 promotion processes spanning all ranks — including Matt Hamby assuming command of the department as chief. Eric Pressley was promoted from lieutenant to captain to fill the void left by Hamby. Patrick Fortenberry and Chad Richardson were both promoted from sergeant to lieutenant and joined the department’s command staff.

The department includes four divisions overseen by lieutenants: patrol, criminal investigations, operational support and administrative. Among their highlights during the 2017 calendar year:

- Evaluated multiple radio communications systems before deciding on the Kenwood system and connecting to the Palmetto 800. *Story on page 9.*
- Completed design of a new dog kennel and began site work. The kennel project is expected to be completed $120,000 under budget. *Story on page 13.*
- The department upgraded its training room was upgraded to include state-of-the-art audio and visual equipment.
- The expanded telecommunications office personnel was fully staffed with 77% of telecommunicators fully trained.
- A Crisis Intervention Team policy was written and the team was assembled from members of all patrol teams. The team is under the coordination of Sgt. Kara Blackwell and approximately 70% of team members were trained.
- All trainees will be now trained in the Police Training Officer (PTO) Program, a format encouraging new officers to think using a proactive mindset, enabling the identification of and solution to problems within the community.
- Chief Hamby met with all members of the department as part of a Career Development Plan. *Story on page 11.*
- The department’s body worn camera system was upgraded following an eight-month comprehensive evaluation.

**Patrol Division**

As the Greer Police Department’s largest division, the Patrol Division is the most visible within the community and has extensive contact with residents and visitors. Members are integral in developing and maintaining the philosophy in
the community that Policing is a Partnership.

The City of Greer is divided into four “areas” with a dedicated patrol team assigned to each. The Patrol Division also includes the Traffic team, Emergency Response Team and K-9 unit. Patrol teams make up the “first responders” when a request for service is made. Patrol officers are dedicated to conducting thorough investigations into criminal activity.

In addition to the responsibility of running the Police Department’s largest division, Lt. Fortenberry also serves as the Public Information Officer, regularly communicating with the news media.

**Criminal Investigation Division**

The Criminal Investigation Division is a professional investigative unit, responsible for the investigation of crimes committed in the city.

The primary function of the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) is to accomplish extended follow up investigations of criminal offenses occurring within the city, and to identify, apprehend and assist in the successful prosecution of the criminal offender.

The detectives perform a critical role in determining what has occurred and in identifying the responsible person(s). This is accomplished by carefully documenting all conditions of a crime scene, recognizing all relevant physical evidence, conducting interviews and additional research. The ability to recognize and properly collect evidence is critical to both solving crimes and prosecuting violent criminals.

All investigators are trained in interviewing and advanced investigations, forensics, crime scene processing, and crime scene preservation, and are always on call for any serious or violent crime.

**Operational Support Division**

The Operational Support Division consists of Communications, Detention, Animal Control, Judicial Services, Property and Evidence, and Court Security. Other responsibilities include the regulation of tow companies, the issuance of taxi licenses, and the maintenance of the department’s computer systems. These computer systems include Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Mobile Data Terminals (MDT).

The Judicial Services Officer provides courthouse security during both traffic court and jury trials. The Judicial Services Officer also is responsible for Property and Evidence.

The Detention area is used to house prisoners for the first 48 hours. It also processes all prisoners before arraignment.

**Administrative Division**

The Greer Police Department’s Administrative Division is responsible for the hiring and onboarding of new employees, the management and maintenance of fleet vehicles, the Social Media Team, the Recruiting Team, acts as Citizens Academy Coordinator, the Records Team, and oversees both the Community Outreach Team and the Training Team.

The Community Outreach Team works with local business, schools, neighborhoods and citizens to promote and educate on the benefits of crime prevention. Within the Community Outreach Team, there are four School Resource Officers (SRO’s) that work in the Middle and High Schools within the City. The function of the Training Team is to ensure that officer certifications are kept up to date and to provide professional development for all departmental employees.

Community Outreach efforts during 2017 included:

- Partnering with codes enforcement to identify and improve neglected properties.
- Partnering with businesses along the Hwy. 29 corridor to reduce trespassing and malicious damage.
- Continued to identify and remove graffiti in commercial residential areas.
- Collected 372 pounds of expired and unwanted prescription drugs through the Take Back Program.

The Training Team held 80 classes with 1,465 students in 2017. Those sessions had an economic impact of $14,595.

The Greer Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association volunteered 1,776 hours.
As the City of Greer’s population continues to increase, more residents are utilizing recycling to remove items from the solid waste stream.

Curbside recycling, in particular, has nearly doubled over the past two years — from 246 tons in 2015 to 469 tons in 2017. Despite a lack of market for glass, which is no longer accepted in City recycling, the City of Greer Recycling Center operated by ACE Environmental has also seen a steady increase over that period, jumping from 219 tons to 280 tons.

Nearly 18 tons of e-waste (electronics that are no longer permitted in county landfills) was collected at the center in 2017.

Those recycling efforts have helped slow the amount of solid waste collected from residents. The City collected 10,779 tons in 2017 compared to 10,518 in 2016.

Residents have also embraced the City’s Spring Clean Up Day. Held the last Saturday in April, the event allows residents to drop off materials not collected curbside. The 2017 event drew a record 320 residents with aerosols, pesticides, batteries, furniture, lawnmowers and other items. Paint again was the leading ma-

---

**Public Services by the Numbers**

- **Sidewalk and Curb Repair**: More than 340 feet
- **Pot Holes**: 237 filled
- **Street Sweeper**: 3,200 miles swept, 392 miles curb sprayed
- **Snow Event (January)**: 1,215 miles treated
- **Maintenance Shop**: 209 vehicles serviced, 411 repaired, 217 tires replaced, 579 miscellaneous jobs
- **Solid Waste**: 10,779 tons collected
- **Street Name Signs Replaced**: 86 signs
- **Storm Drain Pipe**: 4,450 feet inspected, 1,900 feet cleaned
Brine works fine when snow covers streets

For the City of Greer Public Services Department, waging war against Mother Nature is a never-ending task during the winter months.

The department armed itself with a new weapon against the elements in 2017 when it began spraying brine on city roads in advance of winter storms.

City trucks previously spread tons of sand on roads prior to a snow or ice event. When used in proper conditions, brine (sodium chloride) is widely regarded as the most effective means of anti-icing and de-icing roads.

The department sprayed 2,000 gallons of brine prior to and during a January, 2018 winter storm. Along with plowing after snow and ice fell, the measures prevented accidents.

According to a recent Marquette University study, effective de-icing reduces crash frequency by 88.3 percent and cuts the average cost of each crash by 10 percent.

Liquid can be a viable alternative to sand and salt in winter weather

For the City of Greer Public Services Department, waging war against Mother Nature is a never-ending task during the winter months.

The department armed itself with a new weapon against the elements in 2017 when it began spraying brine on city roads in advance of winter storms.

City trucks previously spread tons of sand on roads prior to a snow or ice event. When used in proper conditions, brine (sodium chloride) is widely regarded as the most effective means of anti-icing and de-icing roads.

The department sprayed 2,000 gallons of brine prior to and during a January, 2018 winter storm. Along with plowing after snow and ice fell, the measures prevented accidents.

According to a recent Marquette University study, effective de-icing reduces crash frequency by 88.3 percent and cuts the average cost of each crash by 10 percent.

For the City of Greer Public Services Department, waging war against Mother Nature is a never-ending task during the winter months.

The department armed itself with a new weapon against the elements in 2017 when it began spraying brine on city roads in advance of winter storms.

City trucks previously spread tons of sand on roads prior to a snow or ice event. When used in proper conditions, brine (sodium chloride) is widely regarded as the most effective means of anti-icing and de-icing roads.

The department sprayed 2,000 gallons of brine prior to and during a January, 2018 winter storm. Along with plowing after snow and ice fell, the measures prevented accidents.

According to a recent Marquette University study, effective de-icing reduces crash frequency by 88.3 percent and cuts the average cost of each crash by 10 percent.

For the City of Greer Public Services Department, waging war against Mother Nature is a never-ending task during the winter months.

The department armed itself with a new weapon against the elements in 2017 when it began spraying brine on city roads in advance of winter storms.

City trucks previously spread tons of sand on roads prior to a snow or ice event. When used in proper conditions, brine (sodium chloride) is widely regarded as the most effective means of anti-icing and de-icing roads.

The department sprayed 2,000 gallons of brine prior to and during a January, 2018 winter storm. Along with plowing after snow and ice fell, the measures prevented accidents.

According to a recent Marquette University study, effective de-icing reduces crash frequency by 88.3 percent and cuts the average cost of each crash by 10 percent.

For the City of Greer Public Services Department, waging war against Mother Nature is a never-ending task during the winter months.

The department armed itself with a new weapon against the elements in 2017 when it began spraying brine on city roads in advance of winter storms.

City trucks previously spread tons of sand on roads prior to a snow or ice event. When used in proper conditions, brine (sodium chloride) is widely regarded as the most effective means of anti-icing and de-icing roads.

The department sprayed 2,000 gallons of brine prior to and during a January, 2018 winter storm. Along with plowing after snow and ice fell, the measures prevented accidents.

According to a recent Marquette University study, effective de-icing reduces crash frequency by 88.3 percent and cuts the average cost of each crash by 10 percent.

For the City of Greer Public Services Department, waging war against Mother Nature is a never-ending task during the winter months.

The department armed itself with a new weapon against the elements in 2017 when it began spraying brine on city roads in advance of winter storms.

City trucks previously spread tons of sand on roads prior to a snow or ice event. When used in proper conditions, brine (sodium chloride) is widely regarded as the most effective means of anti-icing and de-icing roads.

The department sprayed 2,000 gallons of brine prior to and during a January, 2018 winter storm. Along with plowing after snow and ice fell, the measures prevented accidents.

According to a recent Marquette University study, effective de-icing reduces crash frequency by 88.3 percent and cuts the average cost of each crash by 10 percent.
Economic development plays a critical role in the City of Greer. To attract new capital investments, create jobs, and revitalize the community, the City of Greer partners with the Greer Commission of Public Works, the Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce, the Partnership for Tomorrow, and private sector businesses to support the Greer Development Corporation (GDC).

The mission of this public/private partnership is to promote and to enhance economic growth and development in Greer by increasing the wealth creating opportunities in the community while preserving the high quality of life of one of South Carolina’s fastest growing communities.

GDC’s strategic efforts focus on recruitment and retention of commercial and industrial businesses, targeted marketing of the community, and development of properties for future economic opportunities.

GDC provides prospective businesses and industries with data on available real estate; information on taxes, incentives, financing and business assistance programs; statistical data on Greer’s marketplace and workforce; introductions to community resources; and site selection and community tours.

Noteworthy accomplishments in 2017 included:

- Fifteen successful economic development projects representing more than $165 million in new capital investment and 749 jobs.
- Announcement of a new Hilton-branded hotel project in downtown Greer of at least 100 rooms and a parking structure of approximately 300 spaces.
- A 13% increase in gross retail sales to eclipse $1.3 billion in the City of Greer.
- Growth of the GSP Logistics Park with expansion of the Semi-Knockdown operation adjacent to the Inland Port by more than 300,000 square feet and announcement of ProTrans.
- Completion of more than 250,000 square feet of speculative Class A industrial space at Caliber Ridge Industrial Park and the launch of a 297,000 square foot Class A speculative industrial building at Velocity Park Site 3.
Notable economic development projects from 2017 included the Rudolph Logistics Group locating at Velocity Park; Ulta Beauty, Ross Dress for Less and Five Below committing to retail spaces at Piedmont Marketplace on Highway 29; and the Peterbilt Store opening across I-85 from BMW.
The Greenville County Redevelopment Authority (GCRA) provides the opportunity for residents of Greenville County to achieve the American Dream through affordable housing opportunities and community revitalization.

Established in 1974, GCRA works to improve the living conditions of the county’s low and moderate income residents by building new homes, rehabilitating existing homes and improving the infrastructures within communities, as well as providing credit and homeownership education.

By developing community partnerships and administering funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), GCRA works to build a better quality of life for everyone.

First-time homeowners have the opportunity to purchase one of GCRA’s new homes, while current homeowners can repair or improve their homes through GCRA’s Rehabilitation Program. GCRA completed four new housing projects in the City of Greer in 2017, two in the Needmore community and two in the Creekside Development. One owner-occupied rehab project was started in 2017.

Strong partnerships make it possible for GCRA to conduct beautification and public works projects such as improving streets, sidewalks, lighting, drainage, sewers, parks, and installing handicap ramps to maintain a safe and beautiful environment for all residents to enjoy.

GCRA completed demolition of three properties in the City in 2017 and another three are in progress.

GCRA offers a facade improvement grant program to encourage improvement and investment to retain and attract businesses, strengthen the central business district, increase utilization of downtown buildings, restore economic vitality and enhance property values. One facade project on E. Poinsett St. was completed in 2017.

A portion of the city’s annual CDBG allocation is made available through a competitive application process to sub-recipients for public service activities. Sub-recipient funding was $41,000 for six local organizations in 2016.
Abandoned Vehicles ........................................ (864) 801-2040
Accounts Payable ........................................ (864) 848-5388
Accounts Receivable .................................... (864) 848-5399
Adult Sports Programs .................................. (864) 416-0105
Advertising .................................................. (864) 416-0121
Alarm Permit .................................................. (864) 848-2150
Animal Control .............................................. (864) 848-5363
Annexation .................................................... (864) 848-5396
Arraignment ................................................... (864) 416-0118
Athletics Programs ......................................... (864) 416-0105
Auctions (city items) ....................................... (864) 801-2027
Audit ............................................................. (864) 416-0090
Budget .......................................................... (864) 416-0090
Building Inspections ..................................... (864) 848-2175
Building Permits ............................................ (864) 848-2150
Business Licenses ........................................... (864) 848-2186
Cable TV Channel .......................................... (864) 416-0121
Car Seat Inspections ...................................... (864) 416-6601
Cemetery (city-owned) .................................... (864) 416-0090
Children's Theater ......................................... (864) 848-5383
City Administrator ........................................ (864) 848-5387
City Council .................................................. (864) 801-2027
City Hall Rental Space ................................... (864) 968-7005
City Park Rental Space ................................... (864) 968-7005
CDBG Compliance ......................................... (864) 416-0090
CDBG Grant .................................................. (864) 416-0090
Code Enforcement ......................................... (864) 848-5397
Comprehensive Plan ....................................... (864) 416-0118
CPW ............................................................. (864) 848-5500
Criminal Investigation .................................... (864) 848-2188
Cultural Arts .................................................. (864) 848-5383
Design Standards .......................................... (864) 848-5396
Detention Center ............................................ (864) 848-5358
Dog License .................................................... (864) 848-2150
Drainage Problems ....................................... (864) 801-2026
Drug Activity .................................................. (864) 416-6615
Easements ...................................................... (864) 848-5397
Elections (City) .............................................. (864) 801-2027
Emergencies ............................................... Dial 911
Employment .................................................. (864) 848-2174
Engineering Services .................................... (864) 848-2181
Event Permits ................................................. (864) 848-5387
Events Center ............................................... (864) 968-7005
Facilities (Parks) ............................................ (864) 416-6607
Finance .......................................................... (864) 848-2185
Fire Department Tours ................................ (864) 416-6601
Fire Safety Education .................................... (864) 416-6602
Fire Inspections ............................................. (864) 848-2169
Gang Information .......................................... (864) 848-2188
Garbage Collection ........................................ (864) 848-2182
GIS .............................................................. (864) 879-4307
Graffiti .......................................................... (864) 848-2182
Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce ............. (864) 877-3131
Greer Development Corp ................................ (864) 416-0125
Greer Heritage Museum ................................ (864) 877-3377
Hazardous Materials .................................... Dial 911
Human Resources .......................................... (864) 848-2174
Illegal Dumping ............................................. (864) 801-2040
Immigration .................................................. (864) 801-0510
Information Technology .................................. (864) 416-0123
Jail (Detention Center) .................................. (864) 848-5358
Jean Smith Library ......................................... (864) 877-8272
Job Openings ............................................... (864) 848-2174
Kids Planet .................................................... (864) 416-6606
Library ........................................................... (864) 877-8272
Litter ............................................................. (864) 801-2040
Maps .............................................................. (864) 879-4307
Mayor ............................................................ (864) 848-5387
Municipal Court ............................................ (864) 848-5374
Mapping ........................................................ (864) 879-4307
Missing Person ............................................... (864) 848-2188
Neighborhood Safety ..................................... (864) 968-7002
News & Media ............................................... (864) 416-0121
Noise / Nuisance .......................................... (864) 801-2040
Ordinances (City) .......................................... (864) 801-2027
Overgrown Lots ............................................ (864) 801-2040
Parks ............................................................ (864) 416-6607
Planning ........................................................ (864) 848-5396
Police ............................................................. (864) 416-6615
Police Reports ............................................... (864) 848-2194
Public Services .............................................. (864) 848-2182
Recreation Programs .................................... (864) 416-6606
Recycling (curbside) ...................................... (864) 848-2182
Recycling Center .......................................... (864) 934-0268
Road Maintenance ........................................ (864) 416-6611
SAFE Kids ..................................................... (864) 416-6601
Seniors Activities ......................................... (864) 416-6606
Sidewalks ...................................................... (864) 416-6611
Sign Standards .............................................. (864) 848-5396
Special Events Permits ................................... (864) 848-5387
Sports Programs ............................................ (864) 416-0105
Streetlights .................................................... (864) 848-5500
Street Repair .................................................. (864) 416-6611
Storm Water Issues ....................................... (864) 801-2026
Taxi Code Enforcement .................................. (864) 877-7906
Television Channel ....................................... (864) 416-0121
Traffic Lights ................................................ (864) 848-2188
Trash (collection) ......................................... (864) 848-2182
Trash (litter) .................................................. (864) 801-2040
Tree Maintenance ......................................... (864) 848-2182
Vacant House Disrepair ................................ (864) 801-2040
Victim Advocacy .......................................... (864) 877-7985
Voter Registration .........................................
  Greenville County ....................................... (864) 467-7250
  Spartanburg County .................................. (864) 596-2549
Wanted Persons ............................................ (864) 848-2188
Website ........................................................ (864) 416-0121
Yard Waste .................................................... (864) 848-2182
Youth Activities ............................................ (864) 416-6606
Youth Sports ................................................ (864) 416-0105
Zoning .......................................................... (864) 848-5396
The City of Greer values and shall provide:

- Open and honest government representative of all its citizens;
- Fiscal responsibility of the public's money through cost effective services;
- Environmentally sound and prudent management of growth and development to ensure employment opportunity, provide available housing, offer abundant recreation, and preserve the historic charm of the city;
- Promotion of artistic, athletic, academic, and social values through actions and words.

— City of Greer Mission Statement