TEAM GREER

SEASONS: The 2012 Annual Report for the City of Greer
The City of Greer, South Carolina

Founded: 1876
Population: 25,515 (2010 Census)
Government: Council
City Administrator: Edward Driggers
Mayor: Rick Danner
City Council: Jay Arrowood
Wayne Griffin*
Kimberly Bookert
Lee Dumas
Wryley Bettis
Judy Albert

* - Mayor pro tempore

Area: Total 21.76 square miles
      Land 19.99 square miles
      Water 1.77 square mile
Elevation 1,024 ft.

Departments: Administration
             Building and Development Standards
             Fire
             Municipal Court
             Parks and Recreation
             Police
             Public Services

Fiscal Year 2012 Budget: $17,588,375

Greer City Council District Representatives

DISTRICT 1  DISTRICT 2  DISTRICT 3  DISTRICT 4  DISTRICT 5  DISTRICT 6

Jay Arrowood  Wayne Griffin  Kimberly Bookert  Lee Dumas  Wryley Bettis  Judy Albert
6 New Map Caps Redistricting Process
After seven months of work and public discussion about the redistricting process, Greer City Council successfully completed the arduous task with the Department of Justice’s approval.

7 Transit Oriented Development 101
A national planner helped Upstate elected officials, planners, and residents consider the future of the Highway 29 corridor.

8 Students Connect with Upstate Soldiers
Soldiers in Kosovo received a special Thanksgiving greeting from a group of young artists and wordsmiths in Greer.

9 Concussion Training for Coaches
Injuries are nothing new to NFL players and concussions are at the top of the list. What happens when youth league players emulate their heroes when it comes to taking hits?

10 City Website Among ‘Best of the Best’
A new design and creative features helped the City of Greer website earn honors from the Horizon Interactive Awards.

11 The Prescription for a Problem
City residents are eliminating drugs with the assistance of Sgt. Chad Richardson and the Greer Police Department.

12 Cannon Centre Debuts . . . Again
A “makeover” is deemed a success as hundreds celebrate the opening and dedication of the Cannon Centre.

14 Police Programs Land MASC Award
Safe driving initiatives – SIDNE and Alive at 25 – earn the City of Greer a top achievement award for municipalities.

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How can the City of Greer communicate with residents in the event of an emergency? Greer Connect is the answer.

20 Ports Authority Sails Inland to Greer
The City of Greer may be more than 200 miles inland, but the S.C. Ports Authority considers it to be the perfect “port.”
You can define Greer’s greatness

I was recently asked to sit on a panel at a national conference to discuss sustainable communities representing the viewpoint of a “small town.” The other mayors on the panel represented a mid-sized city of 400,000 and a large city of 1.2 million.

As the discussion evolved it quickly became apparent that despite the extreme differences in our populations, our goal of improving the quality of life for our citizens was the same. In fact, despite the difference in the size, scope and cost of the projects we were all three working on the same types of issues: parks, walkable communities, public safety, recreational amenities, economic development, workforce housing, downtown revitalization, sustainable growth practices, etc.

I suppose the size of our city becomes irrelevant at some point because even as the smallest city in the mentioned instance, as the 16th largest city in our state we are not categorically a small city in South Carolina.

Nor would Houston, Texas, with 1.2 million residents, be considered a large city in China where even small cities often contain in excess of 3 million people – which brings me to my point. Many of the guiding principles and practices of creating great places are the same regardless of the population.

In his book, Great By Choice, Jim Collins explores why some companies thrive in uncertainty, even chaos, and others don’t. He even attempts to define and quantify the role of luck in achieving greatness.

I often hear the phrase, “Greer is just lucky because….” But like Collins’s analysis of successful companies, I don’t think we are any luckier than other cities. We were just better prepared to take advantage of the opportunities presented to us. It’s no accident I mention Collins’s book because our staff has used his worldwide best seller Good To Great as a model for staff development and customer service improvements for several years and is now implementing many of the concepts from his latest offering, Great By Choice in a similar fashion.

Like Collins, who identifies some universal distinguishing characteristics that cause a company to go from good to great, I want to share some characteristics that I think can help Greer to continue to grow by choice, not chance, and how you can assist in the process.

ENGAGE

Greer is fortunate to have citizens and organizations that are both innovative and visionary, but often that is not enough. We need leaders who are transformative and can blend creativity with discipline. Creating great places is a marathon not a sprint, so look for opportunities to engage in the civic process.

EMBRACE

Transportation has shaped how and where we have lived for the last two centuries, but technology will be the driver in the future. By utilizing smart growth design we can address our current needs while insuring a sustainable future, but it will require a new mindset on some issues. Creating great places will challenge us on many fronts, so look for opportunities to embrace positive change.

ENVISION

The change we have seen in Greer in the last 20 years should eliminate the word mediocrity from any conversation about the future of our community. We have set the bar high and you have every right to expect that a commitment to continued excellence is now a part of our DNA. Creating great places presents challenges that require multiple perspectives to solve, so look for opportunities to help envision a community equipped to meet the needs of future generations.

Population will never define how “great” a place is to live, but you can. Join me in making Greer a great place to live, work and play.
What makes a city a community?

In late November, we cut short a meeting of department heads and administrative staff at Greer City Hall in order to take a short walk to Main Street.

It’s a stroll most of us have made countless times – to lunch at a Greer Station restaurant or to conduct business at the Police and Court Complex.

On that day, however, the trip was anything but routine.

Hundreds of people lined Main and Poinsett Streets to honor U.S. Army Sgt. Channing “Bo” Hicks as his body was returned to his hometown following a fatal attack in Afghanistan.

Sadly, it was the third time in two years that large crowds watched a hearse drive beneath a giant U.S. flag on West Poinsett Street. Pvt. Geoff Whitsitt of Travelers Rest and Pvt. Adam Ross of Lyman previously paid the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan while protecting our freedoms.

Amid the salutes, tears, hands over hearts, and blessings offered to all three heroes, I found that heartache was tempered by a sense of pride – not only that our country has such brave and patriotic young people willing to serve, but also that so many residents young and old alike would set their schedules aside to honor these young men whom they may have never met and support their families.

Too often, we become fixated with the size of cities in the United States. People rank status based on population and square mileage and fixate on the word city when compared to a town or village.

Population and area can make a difference when it comes to recruiting new businesses and industries or improving a municipality’s amenities and quality of life, but perhaps the real keyword of interest should be community.

Does it mean simply a group of people? Certainly to some, but Mr. Webster’s primary definition includes a key word: a unified body of individuals.

The crowd that lined streets to simply say “thank you” to our soldiers transcended social, racial, and gender barriers. We were neighbors unified by grief, empathy, and yes, even patriotism.

In the City of Greer, events that bring us together are the norm.

The City’s annual Freedom Blast draws overflow crowds to Greer City Park and Greer Station to celebrate our nation’s independence and support our Armed Forces.

Visit one of our Thursday night Moonlight Movies at the Greer City Park Amphitheater and you’ll find grandparents in lawn chairs enjoying the evening beside teenagers stretched out on a blanket.

Each December when the Christmas season arrives, we have the privilege of welcoming the community to events ranging from the Christmas tree lighting to the popular Breakfast with Santa. The atmosphere at those events is like a very large family Christmas.

A New York Times article asked the question last year: What makes a house a home? The writer answered her question in the next sentence: The lives lived in it, of course.

What makes a city a community? I think a very good argument can be made for the same answer. I also think it would be difficult to find a community better than ours.

From far left: Sgt. Randle Ballenger, a member of both the City of Greer Police force and Army National Guard, presented flags at the 2012 Freedom Blast celebration prior to deploying to Kosovo; Hundreds of city residents honored slain soldiers upon their return to the Upstate.
City of Greer residents and elected officials may have had their fill of the mandatory redistricting process by the close of 2011.

Greer City Council covered the process in depth for seven months in 2011, beginning with a crash course presented by Bobby Bowers, director of the Office of Research and Statistics for the South Carolina Budget and Control Board, and closing with public hearings and the unanimous decision on a new map that corrected an imbalance in five of the city’s six voting districts.

Following council’s final meeting of 2011, the process was handed over to the Department of Justice, which in February approved the selection. That made it possible for the City to reschedule its municipal election that was originally planned for Nov. 6 but postponed until the close of the redistricting process.

With the mayor’s office, three seats on Greer City Council, and a Commissioner of Public Works post at stake under the new districts, the election was set for the first possible date under South Carolina law – July 24, 2012.

Perry Williams won re-election to his CPW seat in the only challenged race.

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City of Greer Redistricting Timeline

### 2011

- **March 23**: 2010 U.S. Census population data for Redistricting released to South Carolina.
- **April 1**: Work starts with SC Budget and Control Board’s Office of Research and Statistics to develop benchmark data.
- **May 31**: Special Called Meeting to receive benchmark plan, map, and data from SC Budget and Control Board.
- **June 14**: Resolution passed by City Council adopting criteria for use in Redistricting.
- **June 28**: Ordinance passed by City Council delaying the November 8, 2011 City Council Election.
- **July 8**: Pre-clearance request filed with U.S. Department of Justice to delay the November 8, 2011 City Council Election.
- **July 26**: Redistricting item on City Council Regular Meeting Agenda to discuss next steps and schedule a public hearing.
- **Aug. 1**: Pre-clearance received from U.S. Department of Justice to delay the November 8, 2011 City Council Election.
- **Sept. 13**: Public Hearing on Redistricting.
- **Oct. 25**: Ad hoc Committee presents four proposed maps.
- **Nov. 29**: First reading of selected map
- **Dec. 13**: Second and final reading of selected map

### 2012

- **Feb. 23**: Department of Justice approves Redistricting map, clearing the way for the Municipal Election.
The Road to Economic Prosperity

TOD study reveals . . .

The Upstate community received a crash course in Transit Oriented Development in May, opening discussion among elected officials, planners, and the public about the future of the Highway 29 corridor.

Two days of meetings at Greer City Hall coordinated by assistant city administrator Mike Sell were made possible by a Smart Growth America grant awarded to the City of Greer in 2011. The grant also funded a visit by Dena Belzer, president of Strategic Economics, a consulting and research firm specializing in urban and regional economics and planning.

With limited expansion capacity of the I-85 corridor, an enhanced transportation corridor along Highway 29 would create the potential for new business development and a transit system connecting employment clusters along the corridor.

Belzer defined Transit Oriented Development as new development or significant reinvestment in existing properties located within ¼ to ½-mile of a transit station that: generates ridership for the transit system; lowers people’s cost to live and work; and increases opportunities/choices for accessing housing and jobs.

The project has been forwarded to Upstate Forever for additional study.

WHAT TRANSIT AND TOD CAN DO FOR GREER, GREENVILLE, AND SPARTANBURG

1. Save money for families and businesses
2. Give people more choices about where they live and how they get around
3. Help attract and retain young skilled workers
4. Provide options for aging empty nesters
5. Help attract new businesses and create incentives for existing businesses to stay in the region
6. Help improve air quality
7. Help keep rural places “rural”

Dena Belzer
Imagine waking up on Thanksgiving Day halfway around the world from family and friends and you’ll realize the emotional tug that more than 700 Upstate soldiers in Kosovo felt in November.

Those soldiers, part of a peacekeeping force that was processed through the Greer National Guard Armory before heading overseas in July, did have a tangible touch of home for the holiday, however.

The Creative Advancement Afterschool Program at Victor Gym partnered with the City of Greer Parks and Recreation Department to create custom Thanksgiving cards for the soldiers.

“I thought it was pretty amazing that the kids took the time to do this for our soldiers deployed overseas and that children of this age are thinking about what the men and women of the uniform are doing for this country,” said Sgt. Martin Bowen, who is in charge of the Greer National Guard Armory.

Special is an apt description of the cards the students produced. The afterschoolers were divided into two groups: one to draw pictures for the front and inside of each card and another to write the sentiments. Eagles and U.S. Flags dominated the drawings.

“I was excited when I found out the picture I drew was used because the soldiers are going to see it,” said Cameron Martin, one of six students whose artwork was selected for the three cards produced.

The finished cards were unveiled to the students two days before Thanksgiving. After meeting with the media, the kids enjoyed a pizza party to celebrate their hard work and good deed.

They also spent a few minutes chatting Sgt. Bowen about life in the Army and how important their cards would be to the soldiers in Kosovo.

“It means a lot to get cards and care packages like this. Soldiers get a lot of mail from family members, but something like this is pretty special,” Sgt. Bowen said.
City’s youth league coaches undergo concussion awareness training in an effort to

HEAD OFF DAMAGE

Ask a young athlete about his or her favorite sports star and there’s a good chance you’ll see the young person attempting to emulate that star on the playing field or court.

While aspiring to reach a higher skill level is admirable, young athletes already have something in common with their heroes – the risk of concussions while playing sports.

It’s become a common story in the National Football League, where the number of concussions – and lawsuits due to the brain injuries – have been on the rise.

But blows to the head and hits that make the head rock back and forth are not limited solely to the football field or adult athletes. According to the Brain Trauma Research Center at the University of Pittsburgh, more than 300,000 sports-related concussions occur annually in the United States, including more than 62,000 each year in high-school contact sports.

Concussions often cause significant and sustained impairments in information-processing speed, problem solving, planning, and memory, and these impairments are worse with multiple concussions.

The average youth coach or parent may not realize that most concussions occur without losing consciousness; that those who have suffered a concussion have an increased risk for another concussion; and that children and teens take longer to heal after being concussed.

That knowledge made it important to educate youth coaches in the City of Greer athletics program about ways to prevent concussions and to recognize the signs of the injury should one occur.

The opportunity arose when the city’s Parks and Recreation Department partnered with Sports Spine & Industrial (SSI), a local physical therapy and performance training center, and Riddell Sports to offer a program for youth coaches and department staff.

“We are always open to educating our coaches about safety, and we felt this would be a great addition to the National Association of Youth Sports (NAYS) certification that we require of all head coaches”, said Ann Cunningham, director of the department.

Soccer, baseball, football and cheerleading coaches attended the free clinic that included a PowerPoint presentation, a representative from Riddell Sports who spoke about properly fitting youth equipment, and an open Q&A session. The department now plans to make the clinic part of its mandatory coaches meeting at the beginning of every sports season.

“This is obviously a dangerous condition that often goes unnoticed because of mild or delayed symptoms. If we can catch just one concussion, then it’s a step in the right direction,” Cunningham said.

Ensuring safety is nothing new to the department, which recently added a budget item to provide first aid kits to all camp counselors, head coaches, and volunteers. The department also has two staff members who are certified to train coaches for on-site initial level certification.

The result is a safer athletics program for young people, invaluable knowledge for coaches, and peace of mind for parents.

“If we can catch just one concussion, then it’s a step in the right direction.”

— Ann Cunningham
Director
Parks & Rec Department
City website earns spot among ‘best of the best’

The City of Greer launched its new website early in 2011 with the goal of improving engagement and interactivity with residents and visitors. That goal was validated in 2012 when the Horizon Interactive Awards, a leading international interactive media awards competition, honored the city with a 2011 Bronze Award in the government agency websites category.

It was the City of Greer’s first entry in the awards competition, which celebrated its tenth year of recognizing developers of interactive media.

The 2011 competition attracted more than 1,000 entries from more than 20 countries and nearly every state in the U.S. An international panel of judges, consisting of industry professionals with diverse backgrounds, as well as an end user panel, evaluated the entries and selected winners in each area of interactive media solutions including websites, CDs and DVDs, online ads, video, and mobile applications.

“The city was obviously proud to be a part of this prestigious international competition. Our communications and information technology offices devoted months to designing the new site to make it informative and engaging to online visitors,” City Administrator Ed Driggers said. “Contracting with the Revize Company of Michigan to capture our vision and design was the final piece of the project.”

The city’s website was the lone Revize project to capture an award in the 2011 competition. The site, accessible at www.cityofgreer.org, was designed by city communications manager Steve Owens, who said emerging technology was the centerpiece of the design.

“Websites are important for any business or organization, but having an interactive website is the ultimate goal. We knew including elements such as social media, video, a calendar application, easily accessible news, and online service requests would be a key to the site’s success,” Owens said. “Refining the site after receiving feedback from the public was also important. The final design, itself, was based on interactivity.”

The Horizon Awards are unique in that they offer a level playing field to all participants regardless of the size of the company or organization.

“Often, smaller firms and individual developers produce outstanding work that never receives the recognition it deserves. Our mission is to shed the spotlight on that work and the people who made it happen,” Horizon Interactive Awards founder Mike Sauce said. “Each year, I am truly amazed at the talent, creativity, artistry, and technical expertise that is on display in our international competition. It is simply fascinating to see how the internet and other creative media are influencing people’s lives from all corners of the globe. All of this year’s winners should be proud to be among the best of the best from around the world.”
Prescription drugs play an important role in controlling pain and helping to cure various ills. Once they have served their purpose, however, any remaining drugs have the potential to damage to the environment or healthy bodies if they are not properly disposed of.

“Flushing prescription drugs down the toilet has become a problem because the drugs dissolve and may not be filtered by water treatment sites. And it’s becoming an increasing problem that young people have access to these drugs,” said Sgt. Chad Richardson, who oversees the Greer Police Department’s Public Outreach Division. “The goal of law enforcement is to make sure they are not a problem for the environment or our young people.”

Recognizing the family medicine cabinet as a key problem to prescription drug abuse and the lack of a federal solution to dispose of prescription drugs, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration began its national Take-Back initiative in 2010. By partnering with state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners, the DEA could ask residents to take expired or unneeded prescription drugs to one of more than 4,000 collection sites.

“More than 70 percent of people who abuse prescription drugs get them from friends or family – often from the home medicine cabinet,” said Office of National Drug Control Policy Director R. Gil Kerlikowske. “Expanding take-back efforts nationwide is a key strategy in preventing prescription drug diversion and abuse, while safeguarding the environment.”

The American public turned in more than 242,000 pounds of prescription drugs for safe and proper disposal during that first event. By September of 2012, more than 5,200 collection sites brought in 488,395 pounds of drugs.

The City of Greer Police Department has partnered with the DEA for all of its five national Take-Back events — and the local collection numbers have been as encouraging as the national statistics.

The first event in 2010 brought in more than 80 pounds of prescription drugs, making it one of the most successful sites in the Upstate. At the September 2012 collection event, local residents delivered more than 220 pounds.

“Our local numbers have mirrored the national success of the program. In fact, we’ve been running ahead of the national numbers, which speaks volumes about the responsibility of our residents,” Sgt. Richardson said. “Education is an important part of the program and our local residents have embraced the program as a way to keep the environment and loved ones safe.”

At the City of Greer’s Amnesty Day, Sgt. Richardson collected 350 pounds of medications – more than he collected at two events combined in 2010.

For more information on the Take-Back program, contact Sgt. Richardson at 968-7002.

Sgt. Chad Richardson
SOMETHING OLD...

To those with their eyes closed, the banjo pickin’ by the Wooden Nickel Band could have been right out of the 1940s and the aroma of smoked pork transcended decades of Carolina pig pickin’.

It would have been difficult to select a more appropriate opening event for the Cannon Centre, which debuted a new name to honor the Cannon Family, which once owned the land that the Armory and Greer City Park now occupy, and a dramatic new look at July’s ‘Que Ball.

After nearly a year of renovation, the former Horace McKown Jr. Center hosted a soiree the likes of which hadn’t been seen in the facility since it was the Greer National Guard Armory.

Constructed in 1936-37 to house the local National Guard Howitzer battalion and the occasional dance for city residents, the building served the community well for seven decades, most recently as a gym and classroom space for the city’s Parks and Recreation Department.

Shortly after serving as a haunted house attraction in 1996, however, the state of the building was such that it was closed and recreational activities moved to other city facilities.

Discarded jerseys littered the floor, paint peeled, and rodents claimed the building as their own. But the clutter and disrepair proved to be largely cosmetic, prompting discussion to turn from demolition to renovation and a new life for the historic center.

“The workmanship in the Armory is, I think, equal to anything we could have rebuilt. It brought to mind the saying ‘They don’t build them like that any more.’ That made the decision to renovate the center a relatively easy one,” City Administrator Ed Driggers said.

At approximately $1.1 million, the renovation and new roof projects were funded by the city’s Hampton Road Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. Block grants totaling $50,000 were also secured from the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority.

A concrete floor, ample sandblasting, carpentry and drywall work, new windows and fixtures, paint and

Denim was the fabric of choice at The ‘Que Ball, as modeled by Greer Mayor Rick Danner.
appliances, and miles of wires transformed the building’s shell into a state-of-the-art hall with high-definition audio/visual capability.

The renovation included office space for Greer Cultural Arts Council, which will have use of the hall two weeks each year to stage productions. GCAC wasted no time bringing the hall to life with “Schoolhouse Rock Live! Jr.” in September.

A capacity crowd filled the Cannon Centre on July 22 for a ceremony when the building was officially dedicated “to the people of the City of Greer.” It was a fitting dedication considering the facility’s long history and the memories that many in the community

“This is a landmark building that has undergone a transformation. There are people here who played basketball in this building, who came to dances in this building. People are here who remember what this building has been,” said Driggers, who recognized the McKown Family and presented them with a photo of the facility.

CANNON CENTRE OPENS

RENAMED FOR HORACE McKOWN JR.

PURCHASED BY THE CITY OF GREER

1984

2000

2012

CLICK TO VIEW A VIDEO OF THE CANNON CENTRE OPENING
SIDNE and Alive at 25 program honored with statewide award

Working to educate young people about the dangers of impaired and distracted driving comes with its own set of rewards when those young people buckle up, choose to drive responsibly, and return home safely.

The methods the City of Greer Police Department uses to educate young drivers earned their own reward when the Alive at 25 program and SIDNE go-kart trainer won the 2012 Municipal Association of South Carolina Achievement Award for Public Safety.

“The MASC Achievement Awards annually highlight the most innovative programs in South Carolina. It’s highly competitive and we’re thrilled that the judges honored the City of Greer’s program to curtail distracted and impaired driving,” City Administrator Ed Driggers said.

Judging criteria for the MASC Achievement Awards include: innovation; efficient use of resources; effective use of partnerships; quantifiable results; role in the city’s overall vision; and adaptability to other municipalities. Member cities and towns may submit one entry annually in one of four population divisions or a specific category for communications, economic development, public service, or public safety.

In addition to a written submission, entrants in the category divisions must give an oral presentation about their entry.

The City of Greer implemented Alive at 25, a one-day interactive driver education program, in 1999 to target drivers in the 15-24 age group. Led by Cpl. Brenda Veach, the class bluntly addresses the consequences of making bad decisions while driving. Any student who desires to purchase a parking pass at Riverside High School must attend an Alive at 25 class.

To complement that program, the City of Greer partnered in 2011 with the City of Duncan and the Town of Lyman to purchase the Simulated Impaired Driving Experience (SIDNE) package that puts young people behind the wheel of a specially-designed go-kart. With the aid of trained instructor Sgt. Chad Richardson who is able to remotely interrupt the controls, SIDNE gives the driver a safe-but-effective experience of the potential dangers of driving impaired or distracted.

Alive at 25 and SIDNE combine to deliver an interactive classroom and field experience.

Riverside High School students must attend an Alive at 25 class to obtain a parking pass at the school.
Public safety is not only the number one goal of our police department, but it is a key element of the City of Greer’s strategic plan," police chief Dan Reynolds said. "Preserving the lives of young people with teaching tools that ideally will instill safe driving skills for a lifetime promotes a higher quality of life for all in the community.”

The City of Greer’s education efforts drew the attention of Michael J. Aguilar President & CEO Innocorp, Ltd., which manufactures the SIDNE vehicle.

“I wish to extend my congratulations to the City of Greer for your hard work to stop the senseless injuries and fatalities that result from impaired and distracted driving. We are honored to be a part of your prevention and awareness initiatives with your use of SIDNE,” Aguilar said.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, accounting for 36% of all deaths in this age group.

Roughly 35,000 American teens have died in automobile crashes in the past five years. That’s 6,000 per year, 18 per day.

Texting while driving makes you four times more likely to cause a crash.

Almost 65% of all teen passenger deaths occurred when another teen was driving.

Teens have the lowest seat belt use among all drivers.

More than 90% of teens admit they have done multiple tasks while driving, such as talking on the cell phone, eating, playing loud music, channel surfing, using mp3 players, and interacting with friends in the car – even when they admit they find it distracting.

An overwhelming 75% of teens even admit to text messaging while driving.

About 54% of teenage motor vehicle crash deaths occur on Friday, Saturday or Sunday – with Saturday being the deadliest day of the week for teens.

Facts About Teen Driving

1. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, accounting for 36% of all deaths in this age group.
2. Roughly 35,000 American teens have died in automobile crashes in the past five years. That’s 6,000 per year, 18 per day.
3. Texting while driving makes you four times more likely to cause a crash.
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7. An overwhelming 75% of teens even admit to text messaging while driving.
8. About 54% of teenage motor vehicle crash deaths occur on Friday, Saturday or Sunday – with Saturday being the deadliest day of the week for teens.

"NO MATTER how prepared you may think you are when you get behind the wheel, SIDNE shows that anything can happen if you’re distracted for even a few seconds.”

– Tiffany Fishburne, Furman University Senior
City Residents Get Connected

Advances in technology over the past two decades have drastically changed the way people communicate. Around-the-clock news networks bombard cable and satellite viewers with information. The rise of the Internet and social media such as Facebook and Twitter allow the average citizen to report news. Smart phones and tablets give owners an opportunity to stay connected anywhere they go. But there remains a segment of the population that hasn’t made the jump, instead relying on landline phones and the U.S. Postal Service to communicate.

The “plugged” and “unplugged” are moving farther apart every year, presenting a challenge for the City of Greer: How can the city communicate quickly and effectively with all residents, particularly in the event of an emergency?

Hoping to overcome that obstacle, the city began testing Greer Connect, a mass notification system that permits messages to be sent at one time to landline telephones, mobile phones, e-mail addresses, and text-enabled devices.

Powered by Blackboard Connect, which has been used for years in education, the system was loaded with directory information for nearly 9,000 City of Greer residents and businesses. Those who have a specific way they would like to receive the messages may log into a web portal and register to receive emergency notifications and opt-in to receive additional news.

“It’s a system we hope we never have to use for an emergency,” City of Greer Communications Manager Steve Owens said. “But those who would like to be informed about city events, changes to city services such as trash collection dates that are affected by holidays, and new programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department can subscribe to those lists quickly through the web portal. City of Greer residents can now be as informed as they choose to be.”

Anyone registered in the web portal can manage contact information and subscriptions simply by logging in.

Greer Connect allows the city to target messages to be sent only to residents within that target range. In the event of a police emergency, for example, messages may be limited to the affected neighborhood.

“Greer Connect accomplishes two goals in an emergency situation like that. It helps keep neighbors

An explosion in an Indianapolis neighborhood (above) and Hurricane Sandy’s wrath are examples of when a system like Greer Connect can be crucial for residents. Both events occurred within days of the city testing Greer Connect.
inside and away from any potential danger. It also keeps them informed about what’s going on. It can be frustrating to not know what’s happening in a situation like that,” Owens said.

The city sent a test message just one week after Hurricane Sandy plowed onshore in New Jersey and flooded homes and businesses. New York City officials utilized a system similar to Greer Connect, warning residents to stay inside as the storm approached.

Many other cities in the storm’s path had no way to contact residents, prompting Julius Genachowski, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission to praise mass notification systems. “This new technology could make a tremendous difference during disasters. Minutes – or even seconds – of extra warning could make the difference between life and death,” Genachowski said. “We saw the difference alerting systems can make in Japan, where an earthquake early warning system that issued alerts that saved lives.”

The systems are particularly effective because recipients who use social media often share emergency messages with friends and followers, expanding the reach.

Messages to residents will be identified on Caller ID systems as coming from the City of Greer. Should a resident not be able to make it to the phone, a return call to the number listed will connect with the message.

All messages must be approved by the City Administrator, be 45 seconds or less in length, and be sent only between the hours of 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.

“Our promise to city residents is that we will use this communications tool with discretion. It is first and foremost an emergency notification system, but it is also a valuable information tool for those who choose to use it that way,” Owens said.

“Through the web portal... City of Greer residents can now be as informed as they choose to be.”

— Steve Owens
Communications Manager
A lifeless body lay beneath a row of lockers as investigators photographed the crime scene and combed the room for clues to the murder. One detective slips a piece of wood into a plastic bag while another carefully collects several hairs near the body.

That evidence may help authorities piece together the last minutes of the victim’s life, determine whether the search for a murderer will begin, and will be retained as evidence for the court in the event of a trial.

Fortunately, the “victim” in the above scenario was a CPR mannequin and all evidence was carefully placed for a mock scenario in a CSI Camp hosted by the Greer Police Department.

The investigators? They were high school students spending a week of their summer break learning more about criminal justice work from GPD’s Lt. Jim Holcombe and Angie Childers, vice president of the department’s Citizens Academy Alumni Association.

Television shows like “CSI” would like viewers to believe that crime scene investigative work is a quick means to justice, but a 60-minute race to nail the murderer before the final commercial is strictly for actors.

Real police work, Lt. Holcombe said, isn’t scripted.

“We stressed during the camps the fact that crimes are not solved overnight – that forensic evidence takes time to process,” he said “I think by the end of the week they had a better understanding of forensic evidence.”
WE STRESSED during the camps the fact that crimes are not solved overnight .... I think by the end of the week they had a better understanding of forensic evidence.”

– Lt. Jim Holcombe, Greer Police Department
BMW’s North American plant – a project that would spark an unprecedented period of economic growth in the City of Greer – wasn’t yet a twinkle in the Upstate’s eye when the South Carolina Ports Authority purchased a 100-acre site near the Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport in 1982.

At that time, developing an inland port was not a viable option due to costs, but the Ports Authority watched and waited as BMW’s arrival made the Upstate – particularly Greer – an important hub for transportation and industry.

In July, the state Ports Authority announced that it was funding a study to determine whether Greer would become just the second inland port in the Southeast (joining Front Royal, Va.). The answer came in less than a month, as the ports board voted to spend up to $25 million on the project and Norfolk Southern Railroad is investing an additional $7.5 million.

“This is an exciting project for the Ports Authority, the state of South Carolina, and the Southeast region,” said Jack Ellenberg, the authority’s vice president of cargo development. Economic development is really a team sport and the same can be said about the inland port.”

Ellenberg, who said the inland port will be located about three miles from BMW and two miles from the Airport, added that the inland port will have the benefit of eliminating more than 50,000 truck trips per year on the busy I-26 corridor between Charleston and Spartanburg. He estimates that, at maximum capacity, the inland port will handle as many as 80,000 containers for rail transport in a year.

“This will absolutely separate us from our competition, not just as a port but as a state when it comes to recruitment of new industries,” Ellenberg said.

Given the demand for reliable transportation in the face of growing government regulations on the trucking industry and rising fuel prices, construction is on the fast track. SCPA expects to open the facility in September, 2013.

“We see it as a game-changer for the port and the state of South Carolina. The I-85 corridor . . . is projected to be the fastest-growing part of the Southeast over the next 20 years.”

– Jim Newsome, SCPA President and CEO
“That’s a requirement that our customers imposed on us and that’s something that we’re absolutely focused on,” Ellenberg said. “We need to move quickly. It’s not a complicated project at the end of the day, but it’s one that is necessary for growth.”

BMW shipped 192,000 vehicles through the Port of Charleston in 2011, a 75 percent increase over the 110,000 vehicles it shipped in 2010. The plant’s exports were valued at $7.4 billion in 2011 (up from $4.4 billion in 2010).

In February, 2012, the S.C. Department of Commerce and SCPA released a report announcing that South Carolina had surpassed Michigan in 2011 as the largest exporter of vehicles in the country.

Nearby Michelin North America, South Carolina’s largest producer of commercial, passenger and specialty tires, contributed to a nearly 24 percent increase in the state’s export of tires to $1.6 billion in 2011 compared to $1.3 billion in 2010.

Ellenberg said Greer’s ideal location will make it a destination for businesses across the Southeast and beyond.

“Five-hundred miles from Greer, South Carolina you reach 94 million consumers. That’s why we think Greer has a tremendous opportunity for job creation and job growth,” he said. “It isn’t unrealistic to think that product that comes in via rail to Greer will be going out by truck to that 94 million population. We’re investing (in the inland port) because we’re aggressively going after new cargo.”

The inland port “will act like every like every other terminal we operate, minus the water,” according to Ellenberg. Because of its location, however, he said SCPA is working closely with the S.C. Department of Transportation to route trucks to and from the inland port with minimal interference to local traffic. The end result, port officials believe, will be a win-win scenario for all.

“We see it as a game-changer for the port and the state of South Carolina,” said Jim Newsome, president and CEO of the SCPA. “The I-85 corridor, centered on the Greenville/Spartanburg area, is projected to be the fastest-growing part of the Southeast over the next 20 years. This facility will be a further catalyst to the development of an enhanced distribution hub in this area.”
City departments again held the line during the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2012 and came in under budgeted expenditures. Because revenues also exceeded expectations, the city was able to experience a gain for the second consecutive year. Expenditures were $303,472 under budget and revenues were $360,168 over budget to give the city a $663,640 gain for the fiscal year.

The Finance Office also celebrated the receipt of its fifteenth consecutive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (CAFR). The honor, given by the non-profit Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), 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.
Building and Development Standards

The Building and Development Standards Department experienced significant internal change in 2012. Consistency, however, was present in the form of a continued positive trend in development activity in the City of Greer.

Internal changes included the retirement of longtime director Phil Rhoads. City Engineer Don Holloman was appointed director of the department, while Ruthie Helms was brought on board as the Building Official.

Chuck Cunningham also joined the department at nuisance abatement officer after serving in the Greer Police Department.

The department exists to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the general public through the equal enforcement of all applicable codes and ordinances of the City of Greer for the construction industry, mobile home industry, and engineering practices.

Located on the first floor of Greer City Hall, the Building and Development Standards Department serves a variety of functions for the City of Greer including planning, zoning, building codes, nuisance abatement, geographic information system, engineering, and stormwater.

Construction in the City of Greer followed national trends during the recession, declining sharply through 2009 before enjoying a slight recovery in 2010 and 2011. The figures for 2012, although not at pre-recession levels, show a healthy recovery as both commercial and residential values exceeded the $20 million mark.

The three-year trend is a positive sign that a return to a more normal pattern is beginning.

Under the direction of Glenn Pace, the Planning and Zoning division of the Building and Development Standards Department conveys the community’s progressive vision, promotes quality of life, and manages the city’s growth by incorporating comprehensive planning with sound economic development practices.

The division provides services regarding land development, long-range planning, and historic preservation. It reviews and processes applications for site development plans, conditional use permits, plats, and rezoning, among other development requests. The division issued 401 permits during 2012 for new construction, alterations, addition and tenant up fits for residential and commercial properties.

It also prepares and presents development proposals to the Planning Commission, Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals, the Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Board of Architectural Review.

The division is responsible for GIS activities conducted by GIS planner Justin Kirtz. In 2012, Kirtz traveled to Washington D.C. to partake in a training course offered by ESRI, the company that develops the GIS software that the city currently uses. The training course, entitled ArcGIS for Server: Sharing GIS Content on the Web will allow the City of Greer to develop and deploy a web-based GIS application for the general public.

State and regional associations seek the expertise of the division’s professionals. Pace serves on the board of directors for the S.C. Association of Hazard Mitigation, while Kirtz is secretary for the Greenville County Geographic Information Alliance.

Holloman oversees all activities of the Engineering and Stormwater divisions. He is tasked with coordinating city construction projects; reviewing site development plans for residential and commercial projects; inspecting street construction in new subdivisions; and advising the stormwater program staff in the development and application of the city’s Storm Water Management Program.

Holloman developed the Roadway Assessment Program that annually grades city streets to determine those most in need of repair and maintenance. In addition, efforts are continually underway to update property development and other records into a digital format that can be used in conjunction with the GIS program.

Storm water engineer Lillian Hanley and storm water inspector Dan Cain work with other city departments and government agencies to protect our waterways from storm water pollutants that may be generated by construction sites, industrial emissions, or other means.

Staff members also respond to citizen concerns about drainage.

Because all runoff cannot be captured and treated like sewage, the best way to ensure cleaner water is to prevent runoff from ever becoming polluted. The city relies on strong stormwater ordinances and a diligent staff to accomplish this goal.

By educating the public, 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.

The city partners with organizations like Upstate Forever and local governments to provide information regarding water quality and how all can participate in keeping our streams and rivers clean.

In addition to utilizing the city website and PEG channel to offer public education, Hanley and Cain were active in the community in 2012 at such events as the Friends of Lake Robinson Day of Celebration in October.
The City of Greer Fire Department responded to a staggering 3,344 alarms in 2012, and for the second consecutive year medical calls made up 75% of those responses.

That’s nearly seven medical calls per day, stretching the department’s first responder resources.

To make its medical response protocols both time and cost effective, department officials met with Greenville County EMS and Spartanburg Communications to research and discuss duplicate coverage of non-life-threatening calls.

Beginning in September, EMS units became the exclusive responders to all non-life-threatening calls for service, leaving the City of Greer’s first responders to concentrate solely on life-threatening events.

The new medical response protocols yielded immediate results, reducing the department’s call volume by 25% over the next three months while leaving first responders ready to go where they are most needed.

The department also continued to make great strides in fire education. The fire marshal’s office conducted 1,551 inspections in 2012, identifying 397 violations. Fire Marshal Scott Keeley cited improved safety education and compliance to code for the 13% decline in violations over the past year and a 76% reduction in violations since 2008.

The public continues to take advantage of child car seat inspections offered by the department. GFD conducted 336 free inspections in 2012.

Training remains a key component of the department’s success. Members completed 1,600 hours of training in 2012, including water rescue training in the pool at the Preserve at Westview and confined space training in the water tank at Honeywell’s Greer plant.

All staff participated in Chief Joe McNeese’s tabletop drills, which allowed members to experience commanding an incident.

All shift personnel also completed a 24-hour rope rescue class hosted by the South Carolina Fire Academy at the City’s training center.

Capt. Barry Davis and Lt. Dwayne Brown attended the National Fire Service Staff and Command course in Ocean City, Maryland, while Chief Harvey attended Chief Alan Brunacini’s Fire-Rescue Leadership Institute in Charleston, S.C.

Mat Tidwell and Joe Borrelli completed their EMT training and passed their national tests.

Promotions in the department during 2012 included Josh Holzheimer to the rank of captain and oversight of the GFD Training Division, Davis to the rank of captain and head of the Red Shift, Chuck McConnell to the rank of lieutenant for the Black Shift and Taylor Graham to the rank of senior engineer for the Red Shift.

Holzheimer was among Upstate emergency responders honored in May by Greenville County for having saved lives with their actions. He accepted a Cardiac Lifesaver Award for resuscitating a victim in cardiac arrest.

The department is home to Explorer Post 103, which helps train the next generation of firefighters. Engineer Richie Bradshaw directs the program that allows young people between the ages of 14 and 20 who are interested in pursuing careers as firefighters to learn more about the job, interact with professional firefighters, and compete against hundreds of other Explorer posts in the annual Winterfest Competition in Tennessee.

Fifteen young people participated in the local Explorer program in 2012, three more than in the previous year.
The City of Greer was singled out by the Municipal Association of South Carolina in its September Uptown newsletter for making customer service a priority.

Shortly after that article was printed, the Greer Fire Department earned national attention in B-Shifter Magazine, a professional publication produced by retired firefighter, author, and trainer Alan Brunacini.

In the Spring 2012 issue of B-Shifter, Brunacini invited departments to share their positive service delivery experiences in the magazine. GFD Chief Chris Harvey, who had met Brunacini at a professional event in Charleston, shared the experience of a birthday party that turned into one the department’s most memorable rescues of the year.

The party at Station One for a special needs child could have turned into a disaster when no other children attended the event, but as Chief Harvey noted “my firefighters went above and beyond to ensure she had a great birthday experience.”

The shift on duty treated the girl to a tour of every apparatus, flowed water thru a handline, and even gave her a ride in a reserve truck. They also made sure she saw all the firefighters slide down the fire pole.

“After the party, the child’s parents sent us a nice letter. They expressed their gratitude and stated that our department's kindness turned what could have been a disastrous day into one of their daughter’s best,” Chief Harvey wrote. “Words cannot express how proud I am of the City of Greer firefighters.”

Brunacini elected to highlight the story in his “Be Nice” column in the summer issue of B-Shifter, noting that the effort was one that “can make the whole city proud.”

The online version of the magazine includes a link to a nearly two-and-a-half minute video in which Brunacini calls the shift’s actions a perfect example of added value.

“I have a standard question whenever I hear about or get into a discussion about added value,” Brunacini said. “I ask, ‘What did it cost?’ This is a perfect example. It probably cost these firefighters a half an hour or 45 minutes.

“I don’t think they can estimate the impact and the value that can have with that young person, with the family, with the stories that are going to get told about those firefighters for the chance that they had to really act out the words that we use to describe nice. It’s respect, kindness, consideration, and patience. We could talk for 20 minutes about each one of those in this case.”

-- Alan Brunacini, B-Shifter Magazine
The Greer Municipal Court is part of the unified judicial system for South Carolina and serves as the judicial arm for the city government. With a dedicated staff working daily to maintain the highest level of customer service while always aiming to exceed expectations, the Greer Municipal Court strives to serve the public with integrity, professionalism and respect while adhering to the S.C. Code of Laws and the policies and procedures as set forth by the South Carolina Court Administration.

The National Citizen Survey showed that this professionalism did not go unnoticed by City of Greer residents in 2012. Of the 36 national jurisdictions to which it was compared, the Greer Municipal Court ranked third overall and its comparison to the benchmark was “much above.”

The court staff is also held in high regard by peers in the state.

In 2012, Clerk of Court Kirsten Pressley served as president of the Municipal Court Administration Association of South Carolina (MCAA), which focuses on fostering and developing interest in sound court administration, encouraging the most advanced technologies in the field of court administration, disseminating information and exchanging ideas among its members. The Association offers training and access to a listserv to court administrators, clerks of court, municipal judges, and other city or town employees involved in court administration.

Pressley was a presenter at the MCAA’s spring meeting, and assisted the Pickens Municipal Court in training its new clerk of court.

Greer Municipal Court is in session every Wednesday at the city’s Police and Court Complex 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.

In addition to arraignments held twice daily (every day of the week), the facility is also the site of: General Sessions Preliminary Hearings for Greenville County charges (held monthly to determine if probable cause exists for charges); jury trials held four weeks per year; and pretrial conferences held four to five days per year.

The Department of Motor Vehicles uses the city facility every Monday and Tuesday to conduct regional administrative hearings, while Greenville County Magistrate Judge Robert F.
Simms uses the courtroom or hearing room 8.5 days per month.

The courtroom is also used occasionally by the Greer Police Department for such activities as mock trial training.

During 2012, the court staff handled 4,994 cases filed and disposed of 5,772 cases. They also processed and disposed of 667 bench warrants and issued 755 bench warrants.

The court processed 996 expungements, issued 1,451 arrest warrants, and conducted 1,297 arraignments. It generated $226,646 in revenue from $633,340 total collected.

All alternative sentencing programs and payment plans are set up and monitored by court personnel. Alternative Programs include, but are not limited to: drug counseling, random drug testing, alcohol counseling, criminal domestic violence counseling, anger management counseling, MADD Victim Impact Panel, GED/Diploma, electronic monitoring, weekend jail time monitoring, Alive @ 25, defensive driving, and mental health counseling.

Greer Municipal Court has established successful partnerships with local agencies, such as the Spartanburg Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (SADAC) and the local counseling group “Family...You Can’t Beat Them” to meet the needs of alternative sentencing. Both organizations accommodate local citizens by coming to the City to provide their services.

The staff is tasked with the continuous maintenance of record retention schedules, bench warrant requests and bench warrants, conditional discharge files, pre-trial Intervention files, payment plans, non-resident violators compacts, alternative sentencing files, jail files, and disposed files.

Municipal Judge Henry Mims and the court’s ministerial recorders maintained continuing legal education hours, including required criminal domestic violence training. Judge Mims also attended the annual judge’s training at Hickory Knob State Park and South Carolina Summary Court Judges Association training. Reynolds, Pressley, and Lori Floyd completed South Carolina Gun Law training.

Ed Demko completed DUI training, Barbara Ferguson completed the Magistrate Intensive Training class, and Terri Murray completed a training course about gang activity.

The ministerial recorders faced a challenge following in June when the S.C. Court of Appeals ruled that there are only three categories of offenses for which law enforcement may use a uniform traffic ticket instead of an arrest warrant to commence proceedings in a summary court.

Greer Municipal Court had 91 cases charged by uniform traffic ticket dating back to July of 2011 that, following the ruling, would require an arrest warrant.

An additional burden was placed on both police and municipal courts in 2012. A ruling by the S.C. Court of Appeals limited law enforcement to three categories of offenses for which they may use a uniform traffic ticket instead of an arrest warrant to commence proceedings in a summary court.

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Thanks to the City of Greer Parks and Recreation Department, it’s difficult for residents to be bored. Young people may choose to participate in a wide variety of athletic activities. Parents have such options as Moonlight Movies and tennis. And there is an entire program designed for seniors, with regional trips and other activities built for fun and fellowship.

Consisting of five divisions: athletics, recreation, events, cultural arts, and grounds and maintenance, the department stays busy offering events and activities for all ages.

The Greer Baseball League continues to lead in participation among the youth and adult sports offered by the department, with 768 young people playing in 2012.

The Foothills Soccer Club continued to grow in 2012, climbing to second place with 408 participants. Adult sports enjoyed a strong year, with 400 players in softball leagues and 360 in basketball leagues.

A new program, Academy Baseball, debuted in 2012. It allowed players to participate in weekend tournaments as well as the local league.

A new offering in 2012 was Game Changer, an application available for most smart phones and tablets that allows live scoring, stat updates, and automatic updates of league standings following games.

The athletics division also partnered with local high schools – Riverside High School for youth soccer and Greer High School for youth football – to offer skill clinics for participants and volunteer coaches.

The tennis program has a new look as veteran coach and instructor Donna Arnold has taken over the program. She specializes in lessons, clinics, camps, tournaments, homeschool student tennis, and even tennis for senior citizens. She is also certified to teach “quick start tennis,” which can be taught indoors at the Victor Gym.

The Recreation Division staffs and oversees programs at three recreation facilities.

The Needmore Recreation Center is home to the Senior Action Group of Greer, the Needmore Afterschool Program and various activities for the surrounding community.

The Tryon Recreation Center has hosted such programs as martial arts, Artifacts Club, tennis, Greer Cultural Arts, and numerous instructional programs.

Victor Park and Gym is known for its basketball programs, but also provides a meeting space for the SOAR senior program, Creative Advancement Afterschool Program, and various clubs.

Activities are not limited to those facilities, however. The division puts on such events as the annual Martin Luther King, Jr Celebration Luncheon at City Hall and the popular Egg-Tastic Easter Event at Century Park and Kids Planet.

Rapid expansion of the division’s offerings has also drawn more participants: from 10 programs and 790 participants in 2007 to 30 programs and 3,558 participants in 2012.

To maximize enrollment at the Needmore and Victor Summer Camps in 2012, children were registered by the week rather than the entire summer. This allowed more than 20 additional children to participate in the camps and proved to be more cost-efficient for both parents and the camps.

The Events Division, which is based at Greer City Hall, booked and

![Whitney Walters and her band Groove Planet entertained at the 2012 Freedom Blast festival.](image)
facilitated 537 total events in 2012 at the Events Center at Greer City Hall, bringing in more than $198,000 in revenue and sponsorships.

The division welcomed the opening of the Cannon Centre (see Page 12) in July. The renovated facility overlooking the waterfront gazebo nearly doubled its $20,000 anticipated revenue when it was booked for 81 days during the second half of 2012.

The events halls at Greer City Hall and the amphitheater, picnic shelter, and gazebo at Greer City Park remain popular for events ranging from weddings to family reunions.

The park also hosts the division’s programmed events such as Freedom Blast, Village Hospital Christmas at Greer City Park, the Giving Thanks Student Art Show, a juried art competition, Moonlight Movies, the Rocky Horror Picture Show, and the Fall Harvest Market.

The events staff partnered with various organizations to help make possible such events as Greer Family Fest, Halloween Hoopla, and the American Heart Association Heart Walk. In September, it began assisting with staffing at the Greer Heritage Museum two afternoons per week. Staff give tours to visitors, promote the gift shop, and provide security.

The Cultural Arts Division oversees the Greer Children’s Theatre and Camp ARK (Arts Reaching Kids), which staged Charlotte’s Web, Hairspray, and Schoolhouse Rock Live! Jr. in 2012. The latter was the first show held in the Cannon Centre.

The Greer Cultural Arts Council, which moved its headquarters to the Cannon Centre, was responsible for numerous visual arts events, including a monthly exhibition at the Wall Gallery in Greer City Hall, and the wildly successful Tunes on Trade summer music series that included Greer Idol Season Six and Teen Idol Season Two.

GCAC also facilitated well-attended local performances by the Foothills Philharmonic Orchestra.

Helped largely by its Starry Night Gala fundraiser, GCAC collected more than $35,000 in sponsor contributions in 2012, more than triple its 2011 amount.

The Grounds and Maintenance Division is the ultimate support staff for each of the department’s divisions. Among the division’s 2012 highlights:

- Maintaining more than 148 acres of public parks, downtown flower beds, and parking lots.
- Cleaning restroom facilities daily at City Park and Kids Planet.
- Cleaning and stocking Rec Centers.
- Providing safe playing surfaces for participants on 135 game dates and more than 1,000 games.
- Installing and removing all pole light Christmas decorations.

Staff also set up and broke down the stage for Tunes on Trade performances, moved set pieces for Greer Children’s Theatre productions, assisted the Events Division with set up and break down, and installed and removed banners on seven different occasions in Greer City Park and Greer Station.

As part of the community outreach objective in the department’s master plan, staff members participated in several events throughout the year. Events in 2012 included Clean Up Day at Century Park with the Riverside High School Environmental Club, Servefest and Community Volunteer Day at the Needmore Recreation Center, Friends of Lake Robinson, and the Spring Fling in the Park, held at B.P. Edwards in the Sunnyside Community.

The department also began updating its master plan to effectively manage improvements, growth issues, service provision, and safety.
Police Department

From high-tech patrol cars to communications training for every member of the department, the Greer Police Department is committed to staying on the cutting edge to keep the City safe while improving on its already strong relationship with residents.

The department relies on multiple divisions to accomplish its goals.

Operational Support, under the direction of Lt. Matt Hamby, is responsible for the detention center, telecommunications center, property and evidence, record/data entry, and animal control.

The division's work is evident in patrol officers' use of mobile data terminals (MDTs) in their patrol cars – a system that was enhanced in 2012 to give officers the ability to complete incident reports remotely from the field. Data speed has increased significantly as air cards are replacing older generation modems and increasing the information patrol officers have at their disposal.

The Telecommunications Center staff is at the heart of processing and distributing information. In 2012, the staff handled 17,488 emergency 911 calls, as well as 59,222 non-emergency calls. There were 22,836 dispatched police calls for service along with 3,097 dispatched fire calls.

GPD's detention center is certified by the S.C. Department of Corrections to house male inmates for up to 48 hours. During 2012, the Detention Center processed 2,259 inmates, a 4.6% decrease from 2011. The center transported 382 inmates to the Greenville Detention Center and 148 to the Spartanburg Detention Center. Also in 2012, the center upgraded its computerized booking system and added one staff position, reducing its need for assistance from the Uniform Patrol Division.

One officer is assigned full-time responsibility of property and evidence management with the responsibility of entering, storage, and disposing of all evidence and property in GPD custody. The assignment also includes transporting all evidence that must be processed by a crime lab in Spartanburg, Greenville, or Columbia. During 2012, the property and evidence officer entered or transferred 3,102 items of property.

The Animal Control Officer responded to 1,395 calls for service during 2012, collecting 213 animals and taking 172 to a county animal shelter.

The Uniform Patrol Team, headed by Lt. Cris Varner, is responsible for answering all calls for service and working with the community to address quality of life issues. Patrol experienced a shortage of personnel in 2012 due to attrition, National Guard call-ups, and an unusually high number of retirements due to changes in the state pension, but officers worked to cover all shifts and offset the shortfall.

The patrol teams work closely with the crime analyst to pinpoint any problem areas through density mapping and focusing on those areas by redistributing manpower to reduce problems.

Lt. Jim Holcombe supervises the administrative division at GPD. An important part of the division is training, not only for GPD staff but also for law enforcement officers from across the southeast.

The City of Greer is becoming known as a hub for training opportunities as it offers numerous quality training classes. The 32 classes in 2012 ranged from Federal Law Enforcement instruction to South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy classes, drawing total 849 students. Hosting classes in the GPD Training Center and the Events Center at Greer City Hall makes it both affordable and convenient for GPD officers to attend.

Police Chief Dan Reynolds has mandated that his entire staff attend Social Intelligence Skills for Law Enforcement, a communications-based class taught by Dr. Stephen Sampson. The class allows personnel to utilize verbal and nonverbal communication skills in a practical application setting. In addition to improving general communications skills, the training will as-
As part of its community policing efforts, GPD encourages young people to become involved in the department through activities such as Police Chief for a Day. Jade Jones (left) played that role in February.

Under the direction of Lt. Eric Pressley, GPD’s Criminal Investigations Division (CID) assigned 393 cases to detectives for follow-up investigations in 2012 – a 36% increase from 2011. The increase in case load can be attributed to several property and fraud related crimes, all of which were successfully resolved by City detectives.

Detectives have successfully cleared 27% of all property crimes and 49% of all crimes against individual persons. These percentages remain above the national average for crime clearance rates. GPD detectives also successfully cleared 54% of all financial and fraud related cases.

CID continues to provide valuable information related to the department’s problem-oriented policing initiative. The information provided to the department is geared toward data-driven policing, allowing patrol officers to focus on areas requiring the most police service.

Data-driven policing is also geared toward a focus of known criminal offenders based upon specific and articulable intelligence. Known offender mapping and fluid databases assist the department.

CID also initiated a police intelligence website that allows patrol officers and detectives to share real-time information regarding criminal incidents.

“The ultimate goal for the website is expanding it throughout the Upstate law enforcement community,” Chief Reynolds said.
Public Services

It can be easy to take for granted that neighborhood trash will be collected weekly or that city streets will be swept clean following the annual Christmas Parade, but it’s a group of dedicated Public Services Department employees who make sure that the City of Greer looks its best—and that elements of the infrastructure work as designed.

Take, for example, routine sweeping of city streets. During 2012, the city’s sweeper removed 266 tons of debris from the city streets. Department members mowed approximately 80 miles of road right-of-way, collected trash on roadsides and in the central business district, and cut grass at the city-owned Mountain View and Edgewood Cemeteries.

They cleaned 3,000 feet of storm drain replaced or rebuilt 65 storm boxes, repaired broken pipe joints in 16 different locations, repaired 963 feet of sidewalk, repainted the crosswalks in Greer Station that experience high pedestrian traffic, and repaired potholes on city streets. They also replaced 61 overhead intersection street signs and 178 regular street signs, and installed the city’s Christmas decorations.

It would be difficult to hold an outdoor festival in the city without the department, as staffers hang and remove banners, barricade streets, install and remove drop cords, set up and empty trash cans. They are the first on site to set up for an event and the last to leave, making sure the streets are as clean as before the event began.

One of the department’s more popular services is its 12-week curbside leaf collection that operates on a schedule allowing trucks to visit each residence three times during the collection season.

Public Services also facilitates solid waste removal through ACE Environmental, the city’s contractor for curbside trash and recyclables collection, and delivers green carts, recycling bins, and yard waste carts to residences. The City Recycling Center at the former home of the Public Services Department on Buncombe St. continues to be a popular destination, as 7,682 residents delivered 2,684 tons of material that would have otherwise gone to the landfill.

The department hosted its seventh annual Amnesty Day at the Center in April, drawing 193 residents with materials that are not collected in weekly curbside collection. The event brought in 152 containers of chemicals, 1,016 gallons of paint, and 38 pieces of electronic waste. A shredder truck, new to Amnesty Day, collected and shredded approximately one ton of personal papers. Residents also brought 135 pounds of prescription medicine to GPD’s “Take It Back” collection station.

Public Services crew members not only clean city buildings, but also conduct repairs and install new equipment. The department helped prepare the renovated Cannon Centre for its 2012 opening, installing fascia, soffit, domes tic water lines, and road tap. Members videoed sanitary sewer lines for blockages and damage, painted both interior and exterior surfaces, and restriped the parking lot.

The department issues Street Excavation Permits and inspects sites following the work.

The maintenance shop at the City Operations Center ensures a long life for a large fleet of vehicles. In 2012, the shop performed 191 oil changes and made 55 road calls in addition to tire changes, brake service, and other routine maintenance. The department orders the fuel supply for all city vehicles and maintains the city fuel pumps.

The administrative staff works closely with the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control to ensure compliance with all state regulations and compiles an annual report to DHEC on garbage, recycling, and the cost to the city.

Events like Greer Family Fest are made possible by the city’s Public Services Department, whose staff members work before, during, and after the events.
The Greenville County Redevelopment Authority has worked with The Upstate Homeless Coalition to implement a $4 million, 36-unit Housing and Urban Development senior housing complex in the Creekside Subdivision.

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 residents by building new homes, rehabilitating existing homes and improving the infrastructures within communities. 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 newly constructed homes, or current homeowners can repair or improve their homes through GCRA’s Rehabilitation Program.

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

The latter has been particularly effective in the City of Greer’s Needmore Community for which GCRA staff collaborated with Clemson University to create a master plan. As part of the plan’s first phase, the City of Greer and GCRA submitted an application to the Greenville County Transportation Committee. The committee approved funding totaling $150,000 to match the CDBG funds for infrastructure improvement and engineering design work for Canteen and Tremont Avenues.

GCRA has also worked with The Upstate Homeless Coalition to implement a $4 million, 36-unit Housing and Urban Development senior housing complex as part of the Creekside Subdivision project.

Infrastructure improvements for those two projects accounts for 59% of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the 2012 program year. The City also received $62,000 in CDBG funds toward the renovation of the Cannon Centre.

GCRA offers a façade 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. This program provides as much as $5,000 in grant funds to finance exterior improvements to a property owner or tenant’s commercial building. Two properties in Greer Station received funds from the program in 2012.

A portion of the annual CDBG allocation is made available through a competitive application process to sub-recipients for public service activities. In the City of Greer, subrecipient funding totalling $29,000 was approved in 2012 for the Needmore Summer Camp, the Seniors Program at the Tryon Recreation Center, The Creative Advancement Center, Greer Community Ministries, Greer Relief, and the Helping Hands Ministry at Brushy Creek First Assembly of God.
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 targeting quality development for a secure future for the Greer community. 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; and introductions to community resources; and site selection and community tours.

Thanks largely to GDC’s marketing efforts, the City of Greer continues to enjoy a strong reputation as a great place to do business.

GDC’s commercial projects in 2012 included the redevelopment of the Piedmont Plaza into Piedmont Marketplace with a projected new capital investment of $9 million and 60 new jobs. Greer Plaza also redeveloped, adding South Carolina’s first Walmart Neighborhood Market. That project represents an estimated $5 million capital investment creating 90 new jobs.

Zaxby’s redeveloped a space on Wade Hampton Boulevard at an estimated $1,300,000 in new capital investment and 60 new jobs. In Greer’s historic downtown, Stomping Grounds opened in 2012.

GDC was also busy with industrial projects. It facilitated A&E Engineering’s move to the former Edscha building in Gateway International Business Park. The project included more than $1 million in new capital investment and the creation of eight new jobs as A&E consolidated two other facilities into its Greer headquarters.

MW Industries / Springmasters / B&S Screw Machine Division similarly expanded its South Buncombe Road facility in 2012, consolidating its North Carolina operations into its City of Greer facility. This project represents $1 million in new capital investment and the creation of at least 10 new jobs.

The year also saw the announcement of the South Carolina Ports Authority’s Inland Port in Greer (see Page 20).

“With a capital investment in excess of $25 million, this facility will provide a more effective and cost efficient logistics solution for many Upstate manufacturers and will leverage new recruiting opportunities for years to come,” GDC Executive Director Reno Deaton said.

Total capital investments of projects facilitated by GDC in 2012 exceeded $42 million. The projects also created 294 new jobs for the local workforce.

Officials hailed 2011’s historic gross retail sales in the City of Greer as a sign that the city was leading the state out of the recession. The 2012 report solidly confirmed those statements, shattering the record again with gross retail sales in excess of $684 million.

“Not only did the City of Greer surpass last year’s total gross retail sales, but the total gross retail sales in 2012 represents more than a 27% increase over the pre-recession high,” Deaton said. “Greer’s retailers have adapted to the changing economic landscape. They have learned to connect with Greer’s growing and dynamic market, and they have distinguished themselves with outstanding and consistent customer service.”

City of Greer Gross Retail Sales (2002-2012)
Among projects facilitated by the Greer Development Corporation in 2012 were (clockwise from top): MW Industries’ expansion and consolidation on South Buncombe Road, and Zaxby’s and Greer Plaza on Wade Hampton Boulevard.
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<td>Abandoned Vehicles</td>
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<td>Auctions (city items)</td>
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<td>Audit</td>
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<td>Easements</td>
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<td>Event Permits</td>
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<td>Events Center</td>
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<td>Budget</td>
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<td>Finance</td>
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<td>Fire Department Tours</td>
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<td>Garbage Collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>(864) 879-4307</td>
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<td>Graffiti</td>
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<td>Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<td>Greer Development Corp</td>
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<td>Greer Heritage Museum</td>
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<td>Hazardous Materials</td>
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<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>Illegal Dumping</td>
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<td>Immigration</td>
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<td>Information Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jail (Detention Center)</td>
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<td>Jean Smith Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Openings</td>
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From reserving an event hall to purchasing a dog license, the directory below will direct you to the correct City of Greer office or outside agency.

| K | Kids Planet ........................................ (864) 416-6606 |
| L | Library ................................................... (864) 877-8722  
|  | Litter ..................................................... (864) 801-2040 |
| M | Maps ........................................................ (864) 879-4307  
|  | Mayor ....................................................... (864) 848-5387  
|  | Municipal Court .......................................... (864) 848-5374  
|  | Mapping .................................................... (864) 879-4307  
|  | Missing Person ............................................ (864) 848-2188 |
| N | Neighborhood Safety ..................................... (864) 968-7002  
|  | News & Media ............................................... (864) 416-0121  
|  | Noise / Nuisance .......................................... (864) 801-2040 |
| O | Ordinances (City) ......................................... (864) 801-2027  
|  | Overgrown Lots ............................................ (864) 801-2040 |
| P | Parks ....................................................... (864) 416-6607  
|  | Planning ..................................................... (864) 848-5396  
|  | Police ....................................................... (864) 416-6615  
|  | Police Reports ............................................. (864) 848-2194  
|  | Public Services ............................................ (864) 848-2182 |
| R | Recreation Programs ...................................... (864) 416-6606  
|  | Recycling (curbside) ..................................... (864) 848-2182  
|  | Recycling Center .......................................... (864) 934-0268  
|  | Road Maintenance ......................................... (864) 416-6611 |
| S | 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 |
| T | 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 |
| V | Vacant House Disrepair .................................. (864) 801-2040  
|  | Victim Advocacy .......................................... (864) 877-7985  
|  | Voter Registration  
|  | Greenville County ....................................... (864) 467-7250  
|  | Spartanburg County ...................................... (864) 596-2549 |
| W | Wanted Persons ........................................... (864) 848-2188  
|  | Website ...................................................... (864) 416-0121 |
| Y | Yard Waste ................................................. (864) 848-2182  
|  | Youth Activities .......................................... (864) 416-6606  
|  | Youth Sports ............................................... (864) 416-0105 |
| Z | Zoning ...................................................... (864) 848-5396 |
Delivering effective and efficient services to provide a quality of life that makes the City of Greer a great place to live, work and play.