GREER AT A GLANCE

Founded: 1876
Population: 27,167 (2013 U.S. Census estimate)
Government: Council
City Administrator: Edward Driggers
Mayor: Richard W. 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 miles
Elevation: 1,024 ft.
Departments:
- Administration
- Building and Development Standards
- Fire
- Municipal Court
- Parks and Recreation
- Police
- Public Services

GREER CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

DISTRICT 1
Jay Arrowood

DISTRICT 2
Wayne Griffin

DISTRICT 3
Kimberly Bookert

DISTRICT 4
Lee Dumas

DISTRICT 5
Wryley Bettis

DISTRICT 6
Judy Albert
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City of Greer, SC
Collaborative efforts leading to great things in the City of Greer

Think about some of the great partnerships of the 20th Century:

• The Beatles (specifically the songwriting duo of John Lennon and Paul McCartney) who etched their names into rock and roll royalty with more than two dozen number one songs.

• Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, who urged the world to “Think Different” as the founders of Apple Computers.

• Wilbur and Orville Wright, whose Wright Flyer made aviation history at Kitty Hawk, N.C.

• Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, perhaps better known simply as Ben & Jerry after selling millions of containers of ice cream worldwide.

When great minds, whether scientific or creative, work together, the result more often than not yields something positive that changes the world, impacts society, or just makes us feel good.

In today’s competitive business environment, collaboration is integral for the successful execution of a project. Locally, you need only look at the Inland Port project to realize that many different groups worked toward the same goal, providing the required synergy and resources to overcome the risks involved in such a major project.

We can boil it down to one simple word: partnerships.

It’s no coincidence that partnership is a key word in another effort that has, for the past 15 years, produced great results in the City of Greer — the Partnership for Tomorrow.

The PFT was formed in 1998 by a concerned group of business, civic, government and community leaders to address the issues and concerns related to the growth of the Greater Greer community and the opportunities it would bring to the area. It’s about our future.

“It’s no coincidence that partnership is a key word in another effort that has produced great results in the City of Greer.”

The mission of the PFT is to provide the City of Greer and surrounding areas with the resources necessary to address a variety of issues that will benefit our community and make Greer a better place to live and work.

The PFT sponsored two previous five-year plans that yielded such results as the Municipal Complex that has helped shape Greer Station. The “Plan Greer” Community Master Plan that sought input from many different groups, is the third installment. I’m proud that City Administrator Ed Driggers has served as chair of the Community Master Plan Committee.

Why should those partnerships matter to you? Every business, every professional and every citizen in the Greater Greer Area benefits from the PFT. Economic and community development has a positive effect across the entire county. Expansions of existing business and industry, new entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as new business and industry will create thousands of new jobs, millions in new capital investments and enhance the quality of life for all of us.
Fire Chief’s tenure shows loyalty and a commitment to fire safety

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth has tracked younger baby boomers and their work history over a considerable segment of their lives.

A BLS news release published in July 2012 examined the number of jobs that those born in the years 1957 to 1964 held during their lifetimes. It is the first study of its kind and the results may prove surprising to some.

These baby boomers held an average of 11.3 jobs from ages 18 to 46. Twenty-six percent held 15 or more jobs.

Those statistics are one reason I would like to dedicate this space to City of Greer Fire Chief Chris Harvey, who is concluding 38 years of service to this community. That span is rare in this day and age — not unlike a professional athlete spending his entire career with a single team.

Chief Harvey’s career has spanned more than one-third of the history of the City of Greer Fire Department. Although his retirement isn't effective until the spring of 2015, he deserves to be included with the coverage of his department's 100th anniversary celebration in this annual report.

It was an honor to participate in recognizing the growth and accomplishments of the department during its first century. Chief Harvey took the leader's role in planning a public celebration of that anniversary on Nov. 1 that included a showcase of fire vehicles, tours of Station One on Poinsett Street, music, refreshments, and friendly competitions such as a bucket brigade challenge.

And it was very fitting that one of the more popular services of the day was the free child safety seat inspection because, at the heart of the department and its chief, is a desire to serve and protect the city’s residents of all ages.

“That span is rare in this day and age — not unlike a professional athlete spending his entire career with a single team.”

City government is a service industry and more than sixty percent of the city’s annual budget is invested in men and women who provide those services. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth would likely call it a job, but many members of Team Greer — and I dare-say Chief Harvey is among them — would refer to it as a calling.

We’ve created a culture in the city that is expressed in ethical behavior, respect for co-workers and those we serve, and a basic desire to help others. That doesn't always translate to a 38-year career with the City of Greer, but the opportunity exists and I’m extremely proud when city employees are honored for work anniversaries at City Council meetings.

I’m also proud of the loyalty that Chief Harvey has displayed to the city, its residents, and the many charitable organizations touched by the department under his leadership. He will step away knowing that the City of Greer is a better and safer place because of his tireless work.

That is the ultimate retirement gift for anyone who has given his or her life to public service.
A cold, rainy day couldn’t keep the world from visiting Greer in late March. In fact, moving the inaugural City of Greer International Festival inside the Events Center at Greer City Hall made the celebration an intimate affair.

Hundreds of visitors filled the events hall throughout the day to learn about more than a dozen countries. Whether they wanted to learn about food, language, music or sports, guests found experts filled with national pride eager to share information.

Hosted by the City of Greer Parks and Recreation Department, the festival was designed to celebrate international culture in the Upstate through a diverse program of entertainment, children’s crafts and events, visual arts displays and sports demonstrations.

All festival activities, events and entertainment were produced and influenced by the variety of cultures in and around the Greer area.

Moving the festival indoors “captured the synergy and essence of an international event. And I think it’s perfect,” Mayor Rick Danner said. “You realize that people are the same all over the world. Unfortunately, politics and politicians sometimes get in the way of us finding out that we’re all in this together. We’re all proud of our countries and our cultures and we have so many similarities.”

The festival, which was free to the public, was made possible by an Elevate Upstate Grant awarded by Ten at the Top. Mayor Rick Danner, presented the creator of the Elevate Upstate Grants, Phil Hughes, with a key to the city during the festival.

“Rick is right that people are the same all over the world,” Hughes said. “The ones who are attracted to Greer and the Upstate, well they’re the best people in the world. It gives me great pleasure to help out (the festival).”

The festival closed Upstate International, a month-long celebration planned by the International Center of the Upstate and filled with events that showcase the world’s cultures found in the Upstate. The region is home to offices representing 350 foreign-based companies, and more than 100 cultures are represented by citizens of the Upstate community.

Based on the success of the first festival, Danner said the city plans to make it an annual event. The 2015 City of Greer International Festival is set for April 11.

“The ones who are attracted to Greer and the Upstate, well they’re the best people in the world.”

— Phil Hughes
Let’s face it. Potholes are inconvenient. So are burned out streetlights, overgrown lots and barking dogs.

A new app released in August by the City of Greer allows city residents and visitors to report such issues at any time with a few simple clicks on their smart phones or tablets.

The Greer Connect app is available in the Mac App Store for iPhones and iPads, as well as in the Google Play store for Android devices. It is free to download and use for both platforms.

“It isn’t always convenient for someone to come by Greer City Hall to report a problem, or an issue may arise overnight when city administrative offices are closed,” city administrator Ed Driggers said. “The Greer Connect app allows a user to describe the issue and its location, then submit their notice to the city through a user account or anonymously.”

City officials recommend that users take a moment to set up an account so they may be kept informed about progress on their submissions. Based on submissions during the latter half of 2014, residents are following through and have made the app a popular way to communicate with the city. The service has already generated more than 700 notifications and requests.

Powered by WebQA, one of the nation’s leading developers of interactive technologies for state, county and local governments, the app is under the city’s Greer Connect brand that launched in 2012 when a Blackboard Connect system gave city officials the ability to contact residents with important and emergency notifications.

“The app completes interactivity between the city and residents under the Greer Connect umbrella,” Driggers said. “It isn’t limited to residents, however. The app includes a searchable directory of local businesses that should be of particular interest to visitors to the City of Greer.”

Also included are links to city news, frequently asked questions, and city department information.

Submissions through the app are frequently monitored and city officials track response times to ensure rapid service. Driggers said the city also welcomes feedback from users in an effort to make the app as user-friendly and effective as possible.

More information on the app is available by clicking on the “Request a Service” link at www.cityofgreer.org.
The Heart of the Matter

In the event of an emergency, the best-case scenario is to have a calm and collected emergency responder nearby to take action. The City of Greer is making available the next best thing should visitors to its recreational facilities or events suffer sudden cardiac arrest.

The city’s Parks and Recreation Department has purchased 13 Lifepak CR Plus automated external defibrillators – eight that will be mounted inside security cabinets in city facilities, including Greer City Hall. Five mobile units will be kept on-site during athletic practices and games, as well as during special events such as Moonlight Movies and Freedom Blast.

“We’re really excited about having these. Ensuring the safety and security of our patrons and our staff is a priority when planning any event or activity, or as well as managing any of our facilities and parks,” said Ann Cunningham, the city’s director of parks and recreation.

“Many of the Parks and Recreation Department staff are currently trained in first aid and CPR, however we haven’t had the ability to address an incident with a defibrillator until now.”

The fully automatic AED unit is simple to operate thanks to ClearVoice® technology that guides a user through two simple steps: opening the unit and applying two color-coded electrode pads that include illustrations showing exactly where to place each pad.

The unit then takes over and determines if the victim’s heart needs a shock. It automatically issues a voice warning to responders and issues the shock when necessary.

“It does everything. It’s really made for a lay person,” Greer Fire Department training officer Capt. Josh Holzheimer said. “I’m super excited about this, especially from the Fire Department’s side. We have a great response time in the city and get (to a scene) within four or five minutes. However, national statistics tell us that’s not quick enough. Having these units in place allows a victim to be shocked even quicker and making the chance of survival higher.”

The city purchased the AEDs directly from manufacturer Physio-Control of Redmond, Wash., at a cost of $1,676.50 per unit.

Each AED unit conducts weekly and extended monthly automatic self-tests, initialization tests each time it is powered on, and a series of concurrent tests throughout the time the device is in operation. A battery charger keeps the internal battery at its optimum level during the life of the unit.

Sudden cardiac arrest is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. The American Red Cross estimates that more than 350,000 people will suffer from sudden cardiac arrest this year, noting that an AED is the only effective treatment for restoring a regular heart rhythm.

Each minute defibrillation is delayed, the chance of survival is reduced by approximately 10 percent.

Recreation Supervisor Justin Miller checks the status of one of the city’s new automated external defibrillators.
The City of Greer honored a native son on Veterans Day, flying the burial flag of Sgt. Nathan Jordan’s from Brittany American Cemetery in St. James, France.

Sgt. Jordan, a 1937 graduate of Greer High School and one of three brothers who served during the war, was killed in France during World War II.

“It’s difficult to find a family in the United States that was not affected somehow by World War II,” Mayor Rick Danner said. “To stand at our Veterans Memorial Park and read the names on monuments of those who were killed during the conflict reminds us of how entire towns and cities were affected as well.”

The flag, which was mailed to Sgt. Jordan’s parents following burial, was on loan to the city from Sgt. Jordan’s sister-in-law, Dr. Rose Marie Cooper Jordan of Greer. It was raised at the Greer City Hall flagpole

As a corporal earlier in the war, Jordan spent most of his time stationed at an infantry training post at Ft. Wheeler, Ga.. After the invasion of Normandy, he was transferred to France, where he was assigned to the 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division on Aug. 7, 1944, and entered combat the following day.

He was promoted to staff sergeant on Aug. 11, just three days before he was fatally wounded in fighting near Tinchelbry, France.

Veterans Day 2014 will also brought to a close a time-intensive project undertaken by members of the Joyce Scott Chapter of the South Carolina Daughters of the American Revolution. DAR researchers compiled a roster bearing the names of veterans buried at four cemeteries in Greer – Mountain View, Edgewood, Wilson, and Needmore Community – and the chapter presented the roster at its Veterans Day meeting.

Dr. Rose Marie Cooper Jordan helped raise a flag that last flew 70 years earlier at Brittany American Cemetery in France in memory of her brother-in-law, Sgt. Nathan Jordan of Greer.

The leading philanthropic craze of 2014 was easily the Ice Bucket Challenge to benefit the ALS Association. Not surprisingly, the campaign that included a frigid drenching for a good cause hit its peak during mid-summer and translated to great videos and photos and $115 million in contributions to the ALS Association.

Members of the Greer Fire Department were the first City of Greer employees to complete the challenge. Firefighter/EMT Scott Tompkins issued a challenge to city administrator Ed Driggers, who undertook one of the more creative challenges — sliding head-first down a sheet of plastic while city employees formed a gauntlet and dumped buckets of ice water on him.

Drenched, Driggers had the last laugh, issuing a challenge to all City of Greer employees to endure the icy shower and write a check to the ALS Association. Members of the city’s Leadership Team dutifully lined up in the Greer City Park amphitheater days later and took their dousing, then issued a challenge to the city’s news media.

Undaunted, the staff of The Greer Citizen accepted the throwdown and braved ice buckets in front of the newspaper’s office on Trade St.
GIS makes city tours simple

It may not have the same charm and health benefits as an actual stroll through tree-shaded streets, but Internet users may now navigate through the City of Greer take a “walking” tour of downtown without ever leaving their homes thanks to the work of the City of Greer’s GIS office.

The city’s Planning and Zoning office has produced an online mapping application that incorporates the city’s geographic information system data, allowing any user to quickly examine such elements as city limits, city council districts, fire districts, school districts, South Carolina State House and Senate districts, and the Greenville-Spartanburg Airport environs.

Users may also zoom to individual properties to determine their zoning status and such property information as the deed and owner supplied by Greenville and Spartanburg counties. A list of editable layers gives the user the opportunity to make the map as simple or as detailed as desired.

The online tool also allows users to switch from a base map to a satellite or topographic view while maintaining map labels, and print their selection. Users may also switch to Google’s street view option for a photographic look at streets and points of interest.

“We think this will be a useful tool for new residents, developers, appraisers, real estate professionals, and anyone who just wants to get a better feel for the layout of the City of Greer,” said Glenn Pace, planning and zoning coordinator for the city. “We’ll look at future expansion of the site as we continue to work with this technology.”

Justin Kirtz, the city’s GIS planner, created a custom “Find Community Information” feature that identifies in a pop-up window the council district and representative, churches, schools, parks, and subdivisions within a one-mile radius of any point clicked on the map.

“If someone is interested in moving here and looking at a specific house they may be wondering where they can go to church, where their kids will go to school, and who their council representative would be,” Kirtz said. “It’s a quick and easy tool to return some information on a specific area.”

Kirtz said Greer joins Greenville and Greenwood as the only Upstate cities to offer an online GIS mapping application.

Adding an online tour of Greer Station and its historic properties is the newest offering from the department.

“It surprises many people to learn that downtown Greer has 40 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places,” Pace said. “Our local historians have done a great job of recording the city’s history and the city has been diligent about preserving the look and integrity of the district.”

The result is a tour that is certain to interest history buffs, whether they surf Trade Street online or slip on a pair of comfortable walking shoes and cover Greer Station in person.

The online mapping application is available on the City of Greer website at www.cityofgreer.org. The online tour is available at that site, as well as on the Greer Station website at www.greerstation.com.

“It surprises many people to learn that downtown Greer has 40 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.”

– Glenn Pace
Planning & Zoning Coordinator
Federal grant to bring change to Century Park

Grant money from the U.S. Land and Water Conservation Fund in 1976 allowed the City of Greer to acquire land and develop Century Park, one of the most popular facilities overseen by the city’s Parks and Recreation Department.

City officials anticipate a LWCF grant in 2014 helping to replace one of the park’s original structures—a deteriorating press box, concession stand, and restroom building that is not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act—and eliminating storm water issues at the site.

A $400,000 grant requiring a 50% match from the City of Greer has been recommended by the South Carolina Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism to the National Park Service for approval. The city will learn in September, when the National Park Service approves projects, if it may commence work on the project.

“We are excited at the prospect of having a building that is ADA compliant and we can address some of the stormwater issues with the new plaza area,” said Ann Cunningham, director of the city’s Parks and Recreation Department. “It will certainly help us become a more desirable site for baseball and softball tournaments.

Greer City Council had earlier issued a letter of commitment as part of the grant application and approved funding the project through the city’s fund balance. The project total will be $400,000, and the city will be reimbursed $200,000 at the completion of the project.

Design and construction documents would be completed this winter with the project bid scheduled for next spring. To avoid any conflict with baseball and softball games at Century Park, demolition and construction would begin in the fall of 2015 and the project would be scheduled for completion early in 2016.

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell emphasized that Land and Water Conservation Fund grants not only improve the health and vitality of urban areas, but also boost local economies and support jobs in the outdoor recreation and tourism industries. Every $1 invested in land acquisition generates a $4 return on the investment for communities.

Businesses show record retail sales

October brought the welcome news that gross retail sales in the City of Greer—a strong indicator of economic recovery following the recession—set a new record during Fiscal Year 2014.

Reno Deaton, executive director of the Greer Development Corporation, and Mark Owens, president and CEO of the Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce, reported to Greer City Council that city businesses recorded $843,576,165 in gross retail sales.

The total was a record for the fourth consecutive year and marks an increase of more than 13% over gross retail sales during Fiscal Year 2013. It is a 57% increase compared to the pre-recession high in 2008.

“We’re obviously thrilled because these figures directly reflect what consumers and retailers already know: the City of Greer is a great place to do business,” City Administrator Ed Driggers said. “The Highway 29 corridor continues to attract exciting new businesses with easy access to consumers. Greer Station, our central business district, has been a crucial part of the city’s post-recession recovery and is a destination for shoppers and diners from across the Upstate.”

The gross retail sales figure includes $541,173,047 in sales in the portion of the City of Greer located in Greenville County and $302,403,118 in the portion located in Spartanburg County.

“These gross retail sales figures are a great indicator of the overall business climate in the greater Greer area. We are proud to be a part of such a vibrant community that fosters economic growth,” Owens said.
Online courses cut travel costs

Staying up to date on job skills is an important part of professional development – one that has become increasingly difficult with tight budgets.

The City of Greer utilizes its technology and the Events Center at Greer City Hall to help employees learn while holding the line on travel expenses and consultant fees.

More than 25 city supervisors and managers gathered for the Effective Supervisory Practices training series presented by the International City/County Management Association. Sessions were presented once monthly over a six-month period.

All employees annually complete mandatory risk management classes online through the Municipal Association of South Carolina.

“Our technology and facilities are ideal for satellite courses,” city administrator Ed Driggers said. “That reduces time away from work and the expense of travel.”

City plays host to Special Olympians

The disc golf course at Century Park has become a popular location for fans of the rapidly growing sport. In October, a group of athletes proved just how meaningful a single round at the course can mean.

The City of Greer played host to the South Carolina Special Olympics’ disc golf competition, welcoming athletes and volunteers from Loris and Rock Hill.

“I’m so proud the city was able to participate as a host,” Parks and Recreation director Ann Cunningham said. “It’s inspiring to see the athletes compete and display sportsmanship and camaraderie. Many tournaments are held at the course each year, but I don’t know that any will have more meaning than the Special Olympics. We hope to welcome them back in 2015.”

Jonathan Melton of Rock Hill won the men’s gold medal, while Becky Smith, also of Rock Hill, took home the women’s gold medal.

Jonathan Melton of Rock Hill takes aim at a disc golf hole on his way to winning the men’s gold medal at Century Park.
Driving program benefits both city and employees

Ask anyone over the age of 30 what was drilled into their minds during driving school and you’ll likely receive an answer like “ten-and-two” — their instructor’s recommended position for a driver’s hands on the steering wheel.

Like new math, some things have changed over the years.

That’s one of the reasons the City of Greer made the AAA Driver Improvement Program mandatory in 2014 for any employee who operates a city vehicle.

Sgt. Randle Ballenger and Cpl. Roman Wilson of the Greer Police Department completed the AAA Driver Improvement Program Instructor Course and are certified to teach the eight-hour program. Offering the program on-site in a classroom setting to employees has not only protected the city’s fleet of vehicles but also the drivers.

The course, which includes the latest driving tactics, techniques and procedures, focuses on safety and best practices for a variety of situations.

“It’s all about safety. Many of us have been driving for decades and now take it for granted as a part of our daily schedule. But technology and tactics bring changes to existing driving procedures every year,” Sgt. Ballenger said. “Someone who learned to program a television in 1980 would find it to be a very different experience today. We should take the same approach to driving.”

Air bag technology, for instance, has changed the recommended hand positions on the steering wheel from the aforementioned ten-and-two to five-and-seven. The class begins with a short quiz that gives veteran drivers a quick example of how times have changed since their driver’s education classes.

“I was apprehensive going into the course, but the quiz got my attention from the very beginning,” said communications manager Steve Owens, one of 204 city employees to complete the course in 2014. “It was going from ‘I learned this stuff 35 years ago’ to ‘when did it change and why didn’t I know about it?’ It’s definitely time well spent.”

Insurance companies feel the same way. Many companies offer a discount on personal policies to drivers who complete the AAA course.

The program has paid off even more for the city. Not only did the number of at-fault accidents decline in 2014, but the cost of fleet repairs and payments to claimants decreased by more than $33,000 from 2013.

The driving course is added to a city program administered by the police department that already includes the award-winning SIDNE go-kart driving experience and Alive at 25! course – both of which are shared throughout the year with young drivers.

“The AAA Driver Improvement Program is an excellent complementary program to Alive at 25! and the SIDNE experience,” Sgt. Ballenger said. “Where those are designed to show the dangers and results of impaired and distracted driving, this program builds on a driver’s experience and updates their knowledge to current safety standards.”

The effectiveness of the AAA program is leading to expansion of its offerings. One of the 18 sessions held in 2014 was open to city employees’ family members. Sgt. Ballenger expects the city to open the program to City of Greer residents in 2015.

“According to the AAA website, there is only one public offering of the course in the entire Upstate,” he said. “Improving the knowledge and skills of drivers in the city only makes our roads safer for everyone.”
Helping to make sure the South Carolina Inland Port site was be up and running just seven months after the project’s groundbreaking was no easy task for city officials, but that hard work was rewarded in 2014.

The City of Greer received the Municipal Association of South Carolina’s Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Award for Economic Development for its work on the inland port project. City officials accepted the award during the association’s annual meeting in July. Twenty-six South Carolina cities and towns submitted their projects and initiatives.

The idea for the port in Greer was born when global trade in the Port of Charleston began to pick up speed after years of deep recession. Located on both the Norfolk Southern Railroad and Interstate 85 (and with convenient access to the freight runway at Greenville-Spartanburg Airport), Greer was the ideal location for the state’s first inland port.

City officials acted quickly and committed to the port, knowing it would be an economic boon for Greer, as well as the Upstate region as a whole. With a $3.5 million loan, the City of Greer and the Greer Commissions of Public Works designed and will build a substation to provide electricity to the Inland Port and to serve additional industrial customers as the area around the port grows. City building officials expedited reviewing plans, processing permits and performing inspections to keep the project on track.

Many state and private entities contributed to the massive project, which included a 400,000 square-foot warehouse for BMW that created 300 new jobs. The port has also benefited the entire state...
by annually removing an estimated 25,000 trucks from road annually, which means less fuel being burned and less wear and tear on the state’s highways.

The end result was a facility that industry and state leaders have called “an economic engine” for the city and state.

The City of Greer’s location provides access to 94 million customers within a 500-mile (one day’s drive) radius. As the inland port attracts blue chip companies interested in warehousing and distribution to the City of Greer, new jobs and revenue will be created.

“Eventually you’re going to see the kind of growth that will turn the Greenville-Greer-Spartanburg area into the single metropolitan industrial area that people had envisioned for many years. I think that will come to fruition in the next two decades,” Greer Mayor Rick Danner said.

South Carolina Ports container growth rose 8 percent in Fiscal Year 2014 and port officials said the inland port will continue to be a vital component of SCPA growth.

The first half of Fiscal Year 2015 shows the inland port 47 percent ahead of expected volume.

“Seven months after breaking ground, the Inland Port offloaded its first cargo partially because of the swift work of city officials from Greer. This is tremendous work on the part of city officials,” said Miriam Hair, executive director for the Municipal Association.

These winning entries represent innovative projects undertaken by Municipal Association member cities and towns. More information and a video about the project are available on the association’s website.

The Municipal Association of South Carolina initiated the Achievement Awards in 1987 to recognize and encourage innovations and excellence in local government.

In 2014, the economic development award was named in honor of Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. in recognition of his decades-long commitment to the economic development of South Carolina.

“Seven months after breaking ground, the Inland Port offloaded its first cargo partially because of the swift work of city officials from Greer.”

— Miriam Hair
MASC Executive Director
The camera never lies.

That’s the argument broadcast journalist have long used to tout the sincerity of their medium. In an age of smart phones that make it easy for a user to capture video and post it quickly online, it’s clear that video capture devices are here to stay.

The Greer Police Department’s patrol officers are among the latest carriers of video cameras – not for entertainment value but for evidence, accurate reporting and training opportunities.

Or, more simply stated, to present the truth.

The department issued Pro-Vision body worn camera (BWC) units to 12 patrol officers in September following an extensive testing period of three models with various features and the creation of a policy and procedure manual. The selected cameras are designed specifically for law enforcement use, are waterproof, capture high-definition footage, have night vision and offer a wider field of view than many competitors.

Air card memory can capture a full day’s work and will be uploaded to a secure server after each shift. Video files will be kept for 60 days — longer if deemed necessary by supervisors for investigations, court proceedings or training purposes.

“The overall reaction (from patrol officers) has been very positive,” Capt. Matt Hamby said. “Most of our officers understand that the BWC is actually a tool that can be used to protect them. In this profession, an officer can expect to be challenged about his or her account of what happened during an officer’s investigation of an incident.

“Our officers seem to view the BWC as a backup to their honesty as well as a good reference to ensure accurate reporting of incidents. A few officers have noted that once the citizen became aware of the BWC in use, he or she immediately changed their demeanor to a more positive and less agitated one.”

The case for officers wearing body cameras has many arguments: enhancing officer safety, improving agency accountability, reducing agency liability, simplifying
incident review, enhancing new recruit and in-service training through post-incident use of videos, improving community and media perceptions, strengthening police leadership, advancing prosecution and case resolution, and enhancing officer performance and professionalism.

Perhaps last year’s drama in Ferguson, Mo. holds the most compelling argument for body cameras. The uproar and riots in that town may have been avoided had Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson been wearing a body camera when he encountered Michael Brown prior to fatally shooting the teen.

Wilson was eventually cleared by a grand jury and Brown’s parents began a campaign to make body cameras a part of every police officer’s uniform.

Because the Greer Police Department had been testing camera models since August of 2013, it was well ahead of the curve when the Ferguson incident prompted a national call for the use of BWCs.

“It’s fair to say that the incident in Ferguson has helped to bring more attention to considering usage of BWCs,” Hamby said. “This is due to the divisive opinions that resulted as to what actually happened during the incident with Michael Brown.

“There is a chance that a BWC could have provided some additional evidence to assist in understanding the incident. It is important to remember that BWCs fall short of providing studio quality video coverage of an entire incident. They will hopefully provide video evidence that will aid in recalling where people were positioned and what they were doing. The audio recordings from the BWCs should be very helpful as well. Audio recordings can be very valuable to either confirm or exclude what people may or may not have said during an incident.”

Hamby said the privacy of citizens was an important consideration in the use of the cameras, adding that the department’s officers are thoroughly trained on Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable searches and seizure of property.

Officers are required to disclose the use of a BWC when they enter an area in which there is an expectation of privacy, such as needing to enter a residence for any reason for which they would typically need to ask permission.

“As we were developing our policy on the use of BWCs, we reviewed a model policy that has been published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police as well as policies from nearby agencies. Because we value the right to privacy in homes of individuals, our policy requires officers to inform citizens that the officer has a camera in use before going into their home in occasions when the citizen has a reasonable expectation of privacy,” he said.

“As a general rule, if our officer would normally have to have permission to enter into someone’s residence, then the officer should also inform the resident that a BWC is in use. If the resident refuses the BWC to be used in this scenario, then the BWC will be turned off before entering the residence.”

The department plans to purchase 18 additional cameras to outfit the entire Uniform Patrol Division by February of 2015. The cost of each camera is modest by technology standards – approximately $300 each – while the largest expense lies in securely archiving the data.

A secure server has been added on the city’s computer network for data storage of police video files. The $80,000 addition was purchased with shared assets from the investigation of a large-scale illegal gambling operation and money laundering case.

Access to archived video files will be limited to supervisors and the command staff. Officers will not have the ability to delete video files.

“Our expectation is that BWCs will enhance our officers’ abilities to accurately document police-public contacts, arrests, and critical incidents,” Hamby said. “They should also ensure the accuracy of officer reports and court testimony. BWCs will also improve our ability to evaluate performance and identify training needs for our officers.”

The cameras are expected to complement dash-cams mounted in patrol cars by recording an officer’s interaction with others. Hamby calls it a best-case scenario for both police and the public.

“We believe they will remove the rare occurrence of the ‘unknown’ when someone brings into question what happened. We want to protect our officers and the public with the truth.”

“**In this profession, an officer can expect to be challenged about his or her account of what happened during an officer’s investigation of an incident.**”

– Captain Matt Hamby

Greer Police Department
When a group of business, civic, government and community leaders gathered in 1998 to address issues and concerns related to the growth of the Greater Greer community and opportunities it would bring to the area, the end result was The Partnership for Tomorrow.

“THE BEST WAY TO PREDICT THE FUTURE IS TO CREATE IT.” – PETER DRUCKER
That community initiative sought to provide the City of Greer and surrounding areas with the resources necessary to address a variety of issues through planning for a decade when the city would undergo unprecedented population growth.

The results of that planning yielded a revitalized city center as Greer Station became a destination for shoppers and diners. PFT’s plan completed in 1999 also included a vision for a downtown municipal complex that was realized a decade later when Greer City Hall, Greer City Park, and the Police and Court Complex opened in their current Greer Station locations.

“The Municipal Complex is proof that the planning process works,” said Ed Driggers, Greer’s City Administrator and chair of the Community Master Plan Committee. “Master planning isn’t predicting the future. It’s the science of determining where we are as a city and what we want it to become in the near future.”

With past plans positioning the city for success, PFT again cast its eyes to the future and commissioned the Greer Community Master Plan to study issues that will benefit the community and make Greer a better place to live, work, and invest.

Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. of Charlotte, one of the nation’s leading design consulting firms, was selected to guide a balanced cross-section of the community in a planning process designed to create a plan that best positions the area to achieve success against a set of goals and metrics that are clear, relatable, and important.

With partners Arnett Muldrow & Associates, Langley & Associates Architects, and Craig, Gaulden & Davis, Kimley-Horn and Associates launched the process in January of 2014, guided by a Project Oversight Committee with active support from five committees focused on specific planning themes: economic development; transportation and mobility; culture, art, and historic resources; parks and open space; and the central business district.

The plan also looks at the city’s key corridors and how they may be enhanced.

“We think the character of each of those areas is a little bit different, so we’re not looking for a one-size fits all solution,” said Eric Bosman, an urban designer and planner with Kimley-Horn and Associates. “We’re trying to pay very close attention to the character in each part of the city so that we can create a roadway system and pedestrian network that fits within the existing character.”

A key component of the planning process was public feedback through an online community survey, committee meetings, a design workshop and community workshops. A public roll out of the completed plan is scheduled for April of 2015.

“The community’s participation has been tremendous,” assistant city administrator Mike Sell said. “The various workshops and surveys have provided a wealth of information and opinions on not only how our past has influenced our present but what should be done to shape our future.”

Walking trails? More parks? Transportation needs? Each has been discussed as the process moved forward, reflecting a desire to maintain a high quality of life and required infrastructure in a desirable community that is expected to continue to grow rapidly over the next 15 years.

“What the Partnership for Tomorrow has done over the past year is look at those accomplishments over the past 15 years and now ask the community where we should go over the next 15 years and what should be the community’s priorities,” Bosman, said. “It’s asking how we continue to grow smartly and preserve the things about the community that we enjoy best.”

Predicting the future? Planners and city leaders recognize that predictions have not played a role in the master plan’s initiatives. Planning through public input will have created the Greer Community Master Plan.

“The master plan allows us to drill much deeper into what our community perceives our needs to be and what we want this community to look like in the future,” Driggers said.
As part of the Greer Fire Department’s 100th anniversary celebration in November, department members gathered on a cold, windy day to participate in a bucket brigade competition.

It was a fitting way to celebrate the fire department’s birthday because bucket brigades were the first organized form of firefighting in the city. Prior to 1914, able-bodied men and boys would dip water from horse troughs and pump it from wells before sending it down the line to be poured on a fire.

Times have certainly changed, and today’s firefighters can better appreciate those changes following the anniversary celebration.

“I know it meant a lot to the veterans who have witnessed many of the changes in the fire service,” fire chief Chris Harvey said. “And it was important for the newer employees to understand where we came from. Some of these guys have never been in the position of having to deal with anything but the best equipment.”

Harvey, who began his tenure with the Greer department in 1977 and plans to retire in the spring (see page 23), is one of those veterans who has a deep appreciation for the local fire service history.

He narrated a video that chronicled the department’s history and planned many of November’s 100th anniversary celebration activities, including an open house for the public at Station One.

“I think it went well. We had a lot of good comments from the community,” Harvey said. “Most people didn’t realize we’d been here for 100 years.”

Local historian Joada Hiatt and the Greer Heritage Museum helped with the education and cited one of the city’s worst fires for prompting city council to decide that the time was right to fund a fire department.

In 1912, the Yates Restaurant on Main St. caught fire when the gas stove exploded. Fire spread to two livery stables and threatened the entire downtown district. Realizing that a near catastrophe had been avoided, council asked Chief Ligon of the Greenville Fire Department to advise on forming a fire department for Greer.

On Nov. 1, 1914 the department was organized as Greer Volunteer Fire Department No. 1. A cart-mounted pumper was housed on Hill St. and volunteers chose the chief annually from their ranks. Mack Fowler, William Pennington, and G. W. Hoesh were the first to serve.
Three years later, the city constructed a municipal building on Randall St. to house the fire and police departments, the jail, court, and city hall.

Sam Mahaffey became the city’s first full-time paid fireman when he was hired to drive the department’s first motorized truck, a 1919 Seagraves pumper.

The department has lost just one member in the line of duty during its storied history. When the McLellan Store on Trade St. caught fire in 1927, volunteer fireman Carl Miller died after the upstairs collapsed. Heroically he begged his fellow firefighters to save others.

Few could have realized the impact a volunteer would have on the department when he joined in 1933. Robert Broughton Colvin was a full-time police officer and volunteer fire truck driver, but 10 years later he was named fire chief, a position he would hold until 1977.

Colvin remains the longest-serving fire chief in the city’s history. During his service Colvin helped battle some of the city’s major fire: the old Central School fire that threatened the Presbyterian Church; the Franklin Mill fire; and a blaze at the old Greer Oil Mill near downtown.

As he neared the end of his historic tenure as chief, Colvin helped oversee the construction of the current fire department headquarters on W. Poinsett St. The new station included a modern communication center and expanded space for the growing department. Colvin and city council members dedicated the new fire station in 1975.

The department’s growth paralleled that of the community in the decades that followed. The city opened Station Two on Hood Rd. in 1991 and established a working relationship with the Pelham-Batesville Fire Department to cover the expanding city limits south of I-85.

Such agreements are, Harvey said, essential to provide services as new residential developments, businesses, and industries spring up across the city.

A good example was a fire started by a discarded cigarette at the Riverwood Farms subdivision in early April.

Dry, windy conditions and thick Bermuda grass allowed the fire to spread quickly to one home before crews from seven fire departments and EMS arrived on the scene. Working together, firefighters limited the loss to one additional building. There were no injuries.

“We’ve made some great working relationships with neighboring departments that allow all of us to work smarter, not harder,” Harvey said. “I’ve never heard anyone complain about whose name was on the side of a truck when services arrive.”

Also important are public-private partnerships that help supplement the department’s needs. Harvey cited Mitsubishi Polyester Film’s commitment to building the burn tower and training center adjacent to the Station Two as a prime example.

“That’s a facility that is so important to us and it isn’t going to go away. It was an investment that is going to help everyone in the city for many years to come,” Harvey said. Whether it’s through grants, partnerships, or community support, we often have to figure out how to get from Point A to Point B without asking for a tax increase. We understand that safety is the ultimate goal citywide.”

Advances in fire training, equipment technology, building codes, and public education continue to reduce the number of annual fire calls. But the department’s role as medical first responders has increased dramatically and the demand for dealing with hazardous material accidents, vehicle extractions, and other emergency response isn’t likely to diminish.

“The accomplishments and progress I’ve seen in my 38 years has been unbelievable, in many ways. And I think the fire service is going to continue to have an ever-expanding role. We will have to constantly change,” Harvey said. “(Former Phoenix Fire Chief) Alan Brunicini says that what in the past took 100 years to evolve will now happen in the next 10-15 years. Changes will come that much quicker. It will be up to us to get ahead of the curve.”
An early blast of winter weather was in store for the Fire Department’s 100th Anniversary Open House on Nov. 1, but residents (especially young ones) enjoyed tours of the fire station, historic trucks, music and refreshments. More than 30 families pulled their vehicles into the bay for child seat inspections, a service the fire department offers free of charge by appointment.
Chief reflects on 38 years of service
Harvey to close his distinguished career with the city in 2015

As he prepares to retire in 2015, City of Greer Fire Chief Chris Harvey can reflect on accomplishing two major goals since joining the department in 1977: making the fire service as safe as possible for the next generation of firefighters and making a difference in the lives of Upstate children.

The latter is reflected in his department’s commitment to the Muscular Dystrophy Association and promoting awareness of the disease through public acts. Since his promotion to fire chief in 1996, Harvey has led boot drives and other fundraisers for MDA.

In August, Harvey led a group of Greer firefighters to the MDA Summer Camp north of Greenville. The camp offers programs for children ages 6-17 who are affected by neuromuscular disease and the firefighters provided hands-on support by preparing and serving lunch to 170 staff and special needs campers.

“The fire service has had its arms around the Muscular Dystrophy Association as long as I can remember,” Harvey said. “It’s a cause that allows us to get out in the community and help a good cause.”

Being a visible part of the community the department serves is important to Harvey. Having children dress up in fire gear (as many did during the department’s 100th Anniversary Open House) reminds him of the standards to which the city’s firefighters are held.

“I think it’s essential to connect with the public, whether it’s riding in the Christmas parade or participating in a festival,” he said. “It always gives you the opportunity to get your message of safety out there. More importantly, you get to see people at their best instead of just when they need you.”

Harvey proudly points to one of the department’s former service vehicles – a 1941 Chevrolet Southern open cab truck – as a means of introducing young people to the department’s history.

“It’s never been just about me. I probably could have been just as happy being an engineer and driving the truck. That’s the best job in the world as far as I’m concerned. I love driving the truck.”

When the truck, which had been privately owned after being taken out of service, was returned to the city in 2011, Harvey personally led a renovation campaign. Performing much of the mechanical work himself, the campaign successfully restored the truck to nearly new condition for the 100th anniversary.

“I always enjoy a challenge, but knew the support was there for the project,” he said. “I talked to people who remembered the truck responding to a fire or who rode on it. The support really was great. And it was also great to get dirty and be a part of it.”

In many ways, the vehicle mirrors Harvey’s own career of service. Trained as an “old school” firefighter, he has kept pace with training and technology to keep the Greer department among the state’s elite.

He has shared his expertise as a past president of the S.C. State Fire Chief’s Associations, the Greenville and Spartanburg County Fire Chief’s Association, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs, and the S.C. Fire Marshal’s Association.

“It’s never been just about me. I probably could have been just as happy being an engineer and driving the truck. That’s the best job in the world as far as I’m concerned. I love driving the truck,” Harvey said. “But it’s been a privilege to be given this opportunity by the city and I hope I’ve been able to pass along to everyone else in the department how important their jobs are. It’s a calling. We get to help our fellow man every day.”

He knows it won’t be easy to walk away after working his final day in the spring. However, he provides a tip for the perfect retirement gift.

“I guess I’ll have to buy a scanner to be able to sleep,” he said with a grin. “I’m so used to hearing a call in the middle of the night.”
Each December, Greer City Council receives a thorough report of the city’s financial report from independent auditors. Council members certainly enjoyed what they heard regarding the report for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2014.

Johnny Britt, a partner with S. Preston Douglas & Associates, LLP, told council that the city’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report received an unqualified opinion, the highest level of assurance of fair and accurate reporting.

Key highlights for the fiscal year:

• The assets and deferred outflows of resources of the City of Greer exceeded its liabilities at the close of the most recent fiscal year by $28,502,886 (net position). Of this amount, the unrestricted net position is $11,587,723, which may be used to meet the government’s ongoing obligation to citizens and creditors.

• As of the close of the current fiscal year, the City of Greer’s governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of $12,472,525, a net change of $3,335,508.

• At the end of the fiscal year, unassigned fund balance for the general fund was $7,193,214 or 40.1% of general fund expenditures and transfers. The $1,892,635 increase is primarily a result of the improved economic activity in construction business licenses and related permits generating revenues in excess of budget of approximately $730,000. The increase can also be attributed to additions to the city’s tax base occurring through annexation and development, which resulted in an increase of approximately $704,000 of tax revenue over the prior year. Additionally, council’s and management’s commitment to improving the financial stability of the city is reflected in the city’s results in finishing the year under budget for expenditures.

• The city’s long-term obligations decreased by $460,781 from $21,905,856 to $21,445,075, a reduction of 2.1% as principal payments outpaced new borrowing. The overall decrease in long-term obligations includes a net increase in compensated absences of $307,341, a result of recording a contractual liability held by the city.

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the past fiscal year (and previous years) is available on the city’s website for public inspection.

The Finance Office also celebrated the receipt of its seventeenth consecutive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (CAFR). 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.

“That’s certainly something for the Mayor and City Council to be proud of,” Britt said.

Residents may also monitor city finances monthly through a web dashboard that offers a comprehensive view of year-to-date revenues and expenditures. Monthly financial reports posted to the website include a general fund check register, a general fund budget report, a general fund ledger by individual fund, a monthly cash flow analysis, and reports on the hospitality taxes and storm water funds.

Financial reports may be accessed at www.cityofgreer.org by navigating to the finance section under City Administration or by clicking the Quick Links tab and scrolling to the financial reports link. Visitors are encouraged to bookmark the page for easy future access.

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**Revenue by Source**

**Governmental Activities**

- **Property Taxes**: 41%
- **Business and Franchise Taxes**: 25%
- **Hospitality Taxes**: 7%
- **Grants and Contributions**: 1%
- **Miscellaneous Income**: 17%
- **Charges for Service**: 9%
Revenues again exceed expenditures, strengthening financial position

While challenged during the recessionary period, the City of Greer’s financial position is strong and improving. Revenues exceeded expenditures during the fiscal year, 2013-2014, as they did in 2010-2011, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, reversing a previous negative trend. The graph below illustrates the revenue and expenditures of the General Fund since 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>$15,257,989</td>
<td>$17,553,147</td>
<td>$16,562,842</td>
<td>$17,620,910</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expenditures</td>
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<td>$15,614,735</td>
<td>$15,468,278</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures</td>
<td>$(761,727)</td>
<td>$1,938,412</td>
<td>$1,094,564</td>
<td>$1,711,546</td>
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City of Greer Fund Balance 2010-2014

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<th>2012</th>
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<th>2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fund Balance</td>
<td>$1,400,739</td>
<td>$2,975,952</td>
<td>$3,851,443</td>
<td>$5,474,027</td>
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</table>
The Building and Development Standards Department exists to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the general public through the equal enforcement of all applicable codes, ordinances, and sound engineering practices within the construction industry, mobile home industry, and engineering fields as needed.

Located on the first floor of Greer City Hall, the department serves a variety of functions for the City of Greer including planning, zoning, building and codes, nuisance abatement, geographic information system, engineering, and storm water.

The city enjoyed a record-breaking year for permits as residential and commercial construction valuations more than doubled 2013 totals and were more than 2010 through 2012 combined.

Commercial development was valued at $51.6 million and the city saw 224 new home starts which helped push residential valuation to more than $44 million for the year. The city issued 2,623 total permits on construction that had an overall valuation of $117,051,161.

The Kohl’s store on Wade Hampton Blvd. was among highlighted commercial projects in 2014. The department also oversaw completion of three buildings at Caliber Ridge Industrial Park that included new tenants Bosch, Cardinal Health, IEWC Global Solutions and Pilot Freight.

In addition to its other properties at Caliber Ridge, Liberty Property Trust broke ground on a fourth building at the Industrial Park in December, a 156,000-square-foot warehouse that is expected to be ready for occupancy in April of 2015.

The dramatic increase in housing starts was expected in 2014 as residential lot inventory in the city had been depleted in recent years and the post-recession demand for lots has increased. Consequently, developers have been working since 2013 to meet the demand.

The Planning and Zoning division approved 733 lots for new housing in 2014 and saw an increase in 2014 as it approved 918 single family lots that could grow the city’s population by 2,295 and push its total population past 30,000.

The division also reviewed and approved 775 apartment units with the largest being the Residences at Brushy Creek at the intersection of Brushy Creek Rd. and S. Buncombe Rd. and The Ledges on Abner Creek Rd.

The Planning and Zoning division is directly responsible for the staffing of the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Board of Architectural Review. The Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals, each comprised of seven members appointed by Greer City Council, play an important role in the continued development of the city. The Board of Architectural Review include five members who are architects, building industry members, historians, and owners of historic buildings in Greer. They are tasked with the responsibility of reviewing building and development in Greer Station, the city’s historic downtown district.

The division oversaw the annexation of 280 acres in 2014.

The GIS division staffed by Justin Kirtz implemented the launch of the city’s online mapping application (see page 10) in which users may directly access Google Street View through the mapping application to get a street-level view of a selected map area.

Kirtz also served as chairman of the Greenville County Geographic Information Alliance in 2014.

Department head Don Holloman, while preparing for retirement at the end of the year, oversaw all activities of the Engineering and Stormwater divisions. The City Engineer
is tasked with coordinating city construction projects; reviewing residential and commercial site development plans; inspecting street construction in new subdivisions; and advising the stormwater program staff in the development and application of the Stormwater Management Program.

Holloman developed the Roadway Assessment Program that annually grades city streets to determine those most in need of repair. This program has resulted in an improvement in the overall condition of streets within the city. 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.

Stormwater Engineer Lillian Hanley and Stormwater Inspector Dan Cain worked with other city departments and government agencies to protect the city’s waterways from stormwater pollutants that may be generated by construction sites, illicit discharges, or other means, as required by state and federal law. 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.

Hanley reviewed 82 total stormwater plans, conducted 24 as-built reviews and held 23 pre-construction meetings during the year.

The city partners with Upstate organizations to provide information regarding water quality and how all can participate in keeping streams and rivers clean. The city’s stormwater division co-sponsored the 2014 meeting of the southeast chapter of the International Erosion Control Association.

In addition to utilizing the city website and PEG channel to offer public education, Hanley was active in the community in 2014 at such events as the Friends of Lake Robinson Day of Celebration.

Major accomplishments for the division in 2014 were:

- Preparing and submitting to DHEC the Stormwater Management Program and Notice of Intent for the new SMS4 permit.
- Revising the City Recycling Center’s Industrial Stormwater Pollution Plan and providing training to members of the Public Services Department.
- Preparing and submitting to DHEC a draft Stormwater Monitoring Plan.

Professional development was a priority for the Building Inspections and Code Enforcement division in 2014. Chuck Cunningham obtained his certification as International Property Maintenance Inspector. Billy Campbell earned certifications as a Residential Building Inspector and Property Maintenance Inspector, while Dave Awde is now certified as a Commercial Plumbing Inspector.

The Building Inspections and Code Enforcement division was recognized by the International Codes Council and Target as being 100% certified.

Codes Enforcement Officer Cunningham partners with neighborhood leaders and other city departments to address community concerns such as overgrown lots, trash, debris, and derelict vehicles.

Greer City Council approved an ordinance allowing the city to bill property owners to recover expenses incurred to abate nuisance violations, demolish unsafe structures and administration costs (including legal fees).

Building Official Ruthie Helms noted that imposing liens against real property for delinquent payments makes fiscal sense for the city and its residents.

“We currently are using tax payer dollars, through our annual budget, to perform activities that should be the responsibility of the property owner,” Helms said. “We currently budget $15,000 annually and the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority budgets a similar amount for these types of community needs. This ordinance is intended to place the fiscal responsibility where it belongs, with the owner of the property.”

Helms was elected president of the Upper State Code Enforcement Association and serves on various committees for the Building Officials Association of South Carolina.

The addition of part-time inspector Jeremy Morgan, a licensed residential builder, helped the division manage the construction boom in the city.

The city’s inspectors have incorporated mobile technology in the field, allowing them immediate access to viewing plans, searching codes, and working more efficiently and effectively to serve customers. They are working toward integrating GIS into field work.

Redwood Living will develop The Ledges on Abner Creek Rd. “We offer a condominium atmosphere with the feel of a single-family home” says Redwood CEO Steve Kimmelman.
After medical calls comprised 75% of its responses in both 2011 and 2012, the City of Greer Fire Department employed a strategy to eliminate duplicate service and to make its medical response protocols more time and cost effective.

The department’s emergency medical personnel now respond solely to life-threatening events, allowing Greenville County EMS and Spartanburg Communications to respond exclusively to non-life-threatening calls for service. It allows GFD first responders to go where they are most needed.

The strategy reduced medical calls by 7 percent in 2013 and continued to pay dividends in 2014 as medical calls fell another 10 percent, down nearly 900 calls from 2012.

GFD responded to 58 structure fires during the year, including an April blaze in the Riverwood Farms subdivision. High winds fanned a brush fire off Dillard Rd. and the flames quickly spread to the subdivision. Multiple departments responded and helped limit the loss to one home and a structure with three condominiums. There were no injuries or loss of life.

Increases in other alarm categories were minor, but the department enjoyed significant decreases in hazardous responses and vehicle fires.

Training is a key part of the department’s preparedness. Paid staff completed 8,577 training hours in 2014, while volunteers completed 605 training hours. Training areas included officer classes, company level training, driver operator training, and training on radioactivity / hazardous materials. All shifts completed Risk Based Air Monitoring, an eight-hour course offered by the S.C. Fire Academy.

Capt. Josh Holzheimer, Lt. Chuck McConnell, Lt. Jody Norris and Lt. Eddie Burch attended the week-long 2014 Fire Department Instructor Conference in Indianapolis. The conference brought together more than 30,000 firefighters from around the world for training.

Capt. Holzheimer and Fire Marshal Capt. Scott Keeley attended the National Fire Service Staff and Command Course at the University of Maryland. The high-level training includes such topics as Fire Service Leadership and Culture, Personnel Action and Grievance Management, Public Finance and Budgeting, and Fire Service EMS.
Many a Christmas morning has found young children stretched on the floor playing with a brand new toy fire truck.

Christmas arrived in July for the Greer Fire Department when a custom 2014 Spartan/Smeal pumper truck pulled into headquarters. It didn’t take long for firefighters to test the lights, horns, and other à la carte features built into the new truck.

Department members Joe Borrelli, Kevin Holtzclaw, Kevin Meadows and Jody Norris formed a committee that ultimately determined the design and features of the new truck, which provides rescue capabilities in addition to firefighting. A hydraulic rack is included to raise a ladder to the needed height, while from coffin compartments provide wider and deeper storage spaces.

LED lighting throughout the truck provides bright white light for night calls, as well as external lighting to improve visibility at the scene.

A stainless steel body, disc brakes, and a 450 horsepower Cummins engine help provide what Holtzclaw called the best ride of any truck he has driven.

“The fire service has had its arms around the Muscular Dystrophy Association as long as I can remember,” Harvey said. “It’s a cause that allows us to get out in the community and help a good cause.”

The MDA Camp offers a wide range of programs for children ages 6-17 are affected by neuromuscular disease, allowing them to participate in such fun activities as fishing, swimming, nature study and talent shows.
As the judicial arm of the City of Greer, the Greer Municipal Court is responsible for the administration of justice. An efficient and courteous staff serves the public with integrity, professionalism, and respect.

“We diligently hold ourselves to a higher standard of excellence, preserving public trust, while at all times adhering to the South Carolina Code of Laws and all policies and procedures set forth by South Carolina Court Administration,” Court Administrator Kirsten Pressley said. “We are dedicated to the public while always striving to exceed expectations.”

The court staff consistently earns high marks in customer satisfaction in a facility that is one of the busiest in the city. It also earned high marks following a State Law Enforcement Division audit in January.

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.

Due to an increasing need for a ministerial recorder on site in the early morning hours, Municipal Court also adjusted its weeknight hours. A ministerial recorder now works from 11 p.m. until 7 a.m.

“This has accommodated (Greer Police) third shift during those early morning hours when it’s difficult to find a judge to issue a search warrant or an arrest warrant,” Pressley said. “It’s eliminated the need to call in staff from home and it’s also reduced the number of temporary commitments of prisoners at the Greenville County Law Enforcement Center. Officers would have to transport the prisoners to the jail and then have to pick them back up and transport them back to Greer in the morning to see a judge.”

The City of Greer’s two full-time and three part-time ministerial recorders must complete 14 mandatory hours of annual training with three hours of ethics training.

“We believe training is vital. Although 14 hours are mandated, we far exceed that and most go through 35 to 40 hours of training. It’s critical to get as much training as possible in an ever-changing environment. The laws change and new case law comes out so we have to be apprised and on top of those changes,” Pressley said.

Ministerial judges completed annual criminal domestic violence training, online safety training, and quarterly in-house training that Pressley conducts on Saturdays.

The court clerks must also remain aware of critical changes in state law, case laws, and bond procedures. Although training for clerks is not mandated by the state,
Six-year-old Emma Longstreet’s memory will live on as Senate Bill 137 – “Emma’s Law” – was signed into law in 2014 by South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley.

The Longstreet family has worked tirelessly to get legislation passed in the state since Emma was killed by a drunk driver on New Year’s Day 2012. The law went into effect Oct. 1 in South Carolina.

“The passage of this bill ensures that Emma’s name will live on forever and it puts South Carolina in a position of national leadership in DUI enforcement,” Emma’s father, David Longstreet said. “I want to thank MADD, Governor Haley, and all of South Carolina for supporting us throughout this process.”

Pressley requires her employees to attend quarterly training sessions she conducts.

Because they are called victim service providers by law, the clerks attend annual training in that area in addition to training opportunities from the Municipal Association of South Carolina. On a daily basis they monitor all files, programs and alternative sentences, and foster partnerships with service providers.

Greer Municipal Court staff are active in 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 state’s latest round of amendments to the expungement law placed another burden on the court staff.

“Last year they made us remove from the public index anyone who was found not guilty, even if they were not fingerprinted,” Pressley said. “An expungement order is also called a destruction of arrest records. However, now it doesn’t matter whether you’re arrested or not. If it’s criminal, we have to expunge it. It has drastically increased the number of expungements we have to process. It’s a very taxing procedure”

Municipal courts are paying the price to make Emma’s Law work

An ignition interlock is a device about the size of a cell phone that is wired into the ignition system of a vehicle. A convicted drunk driver must blow into the device in order to start their vehicle. If they have a measurable amount of alcohol in their system, the vehicle will not start.

Additionally, first-time offenders with a BAC of .08 to .14 may elect to use an interlock in order to drive with no geographic restrictions in lieu of a license suspension. In the event of a repeat offense, the convicted drunk driver with a BAC of .08 and above will be required to install an ignition interlock device to drive.

Requiring all convicted drunk drivers to use ignition interlocks to prove they are sober before they can start their vehicles has been effective in states that have enacted the strategy.

Arizona, Oregon, New Mexico and Louisiana have experienced a reduction in DUI deaths by 33 to 46 percent.

According to the MADD website, the average drunk driver has driven impaired 80 times before his or her first arrest and, on any given day, more than two million drunk drivers with three or more prior convictions are on U.S. roads.
The City of Greer Parks and Recreation Department is committed to fulfilling its mission of providing quality recreational experiences while administering the values of community image, human development, preservation of environmental resources, health and wellness, economic development, and cultural unity.

The department relies on five divisions to accomplish this mission: athletics, recreation, events, cultural arts, and grounds maintenance. Working together, members of every division help provide events and activities for all ages in safe and comfortable settings.

The Athletics Division offered six different youth sports and two adult sports in 2014, drawing 2,185 total participants.

The Greer Baseball League continues to be the most popular offering with 623 young people playing in 2014, followed by the Foothills Soccer Club with 484 participants. The division planned to add both youth and adult flag football for 2015.

Tournaments continue to have a positive impact on the community, contributing more than $60,000 of direct impact to the local economy in 2014.

With more than two decades of teaching and coaching experience, Patrick Wood continued to grow the city’s tennis program. He added 31 memberships and produced revenue in excess of $10,000 through lessons, camps, clinics, racquet stringing, and league play.

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, the Needmore Summer Camp, National Night Out, art classes and various other activities for the community.

The Tryon Recreation Center has been an excellent facility for such programs as the Artifacts Club, Cutlery Club, Greer Cultural Art set builds, play rehearsals, tap classes, tennis, and a number of other instructional programs.

Victor Park and Gym is known for its athletic programs,
but also provides a meeting space for the SOAR Senior program, Girl Scouts, and “Camp Greer” summer camp.

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. The latter event, while rained out in 2013, enjoyed a record 2,700 participants in 2014 for inflatables, games, face painting, photos with the Easter Bunny provided by Walgreen’s, Jack Roper’s magic show, and egg hunts for all ages.

Program participation increased by 3,000 in 2014, an 85% increase over 2013. The division continues to grow rapidly, offering more than 40 programs. In 2007, the city offered just 10 programs.

New summer camp activities included BB&T sponsoring a field day that included school supplies for Needmore summer campers. The campers also enjoyed food, games and a special guest speaker on Dynamites Day, and delivered meals to homebound seniors.

The division partnered with Livewell Greenville to offer the CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) program for Needmore afterschool students. The program stresses education about nutrition and physical activity.

Seniors Out and Around (SOAR) partnered with the Senior Action Group, a non-profit organization that has provided programs and services for seniors in Greenville County since 1967, to make available nearly twice as many activities in 2014.

One of the more popular programs was the Senior Action Talent Show which was held at the Cannon Centre for the first time and drew more than 50 participants and an audience of more than 200 seniors.

The City of Greer again participated in the Greenville County Park Hop to foster an awareness and appreciation for the wealth of parks in the county, increase youth physical activity, and establish an annual tradition for all to enjoy.

The Events Division, which is based at Greer City Hall, is the office to visit to book event halls at Greer City Hall, the Cannon Centre, the gazebo, outdoor amphitheater and picnic shelter.

Facilities at Greer City Hall and Greer City Park continued to grow in popularity as sites for weddings, parties, and community meetings. With the renovated Cannon Centre among the available facilities, rentals enjoyed an 8.4% increase in 2014.

More than 118,000 people attended events in 2014 and revenues paid for such facility upgrades as the replacement of carpet throughout the second floor at City Hall.

The Events Division plays a major role in the city hosting such programmed events as Freedom Blast, Christmas at Greer City Park, Moonlight Movies, the inaugural City of Greer International Festival, and art shows.
Staff also partners with various organizations to help make possible such events as Greer Family Fest, Halloween Hoopla, and the American Heart Association Heart Walk. The division is in its third year of staffing at the Greer Heritage Museum two days per week.

The Cultural Arts Division enjoyed a busy year. The Greer Children’s Theatre staged two Disney productions, Tarzan and Sleeping Beauty Kids, as well as Shrek the Musical. Camp ARK, which annually holds summer camps for young people ages 5-16 on beginning theatre and advanced theatre, staged four free performances of Into the Woods Jr. at the Cannon Centre that drew capacity crowds.

Cultural Arts and Events partnered to offer two art shows and ongoing exhibits in 2014. Greer Goes Global was a juried art show for artists of all ages, while the Giving Thanks art show was for students. New exhibits by Upstate artists were installed every two months in the Wall Gallery at Greer City Hall.

Friday evenings during the summer were reserved for Tunes in the Park, the annual concert series that again included the popular Greer Idol and Greer Idol Teen events. Josh Jordan and Keddy Mendoza earned those titles, respectively, in 2014.

In addition to weekly Tall Tale Tuesday storytelling during the summer, the Foothills Philharmonic treated residents to four total performances at the J. Harley Bonds Career Center and the Cannon Centre.

The Grounds Maintenance Division cares for approximately 150 acres of facilities every day of the year — from preparing athletic fields and maintaining Greer City Park to changing banners and annual flowers.

With two certified playground inspectors on staff, the division completed its first audit of all playgrounds in the city’s inventory.

Country Club Park was the site of considerable work in 2014, as power and water were installed in the maintenance buildings, areas were sodded for erosion control, baseball fields were verti-cut and the deck of the concession stand was water-proofed and sealed.

The division partnered with the Camellia Garden Club to plant a London Plane Tree at Stevens Field, and The Home Depot to install benches, planters and landscaping at Kids Planet.

Among the division’s responsibilities:

- Maintaining public parks (including buildings, fencing, electrical, plumbing, irrigation, trees, etc.), downtown flower beds, and parking lots.
- Cleaning park restroom facilities daily.
- Cleaning and stocking recreation centers.
- Providing safe playing surfaces for participants on 133 game dates for more than 1,000 games.
- Set up and breakdown for activities in City Park and the Events Halls.
- Pond and fountain maintenance at City Park.

That’ll do, Donkey!

The Greer Children’s Theatre brought to life the Kingdom of Duloc on the J. Harley Bonds Career Center stage, complete with a swamp and a fire-breathing dragon in its production of Shrek the Musical. A cast of 70 made the fall production a hit.

Photos by McLaurin Photography
• Handling event setup and multiple stage rentals for private functions.
• Installing and removing banners on seven occasions downtown and three times annually at City Park.
• Installing and removing light pole Christmas decorations.

As part of its community outreach objective, the department participated in the National Night Out campaign in the Needmore Community, the Friends of Lake Robinson Day of Celebration, Greer Middle School Career Day, the Greenville Technical College Employee Fair, and Greer Family Festival.

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The Parks and Recreation Department actively seeks grants to support its programs and facilities beyond the operating budget.

The department was awarded $454,000 in grants in 2014, funds that assisted current programs and participants, will help update facilities, and help plan for future recreational opportunities.

“These are dollars that help us not only maintain vital programs but also grow our overall offerings to city residents and visitors,” said Ann Cunningham, director of the city’s Parks and Recreation Department. “The success of the grants program was certainly one of our department’s highlights in 2014.”

Grants included $400,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to raze the concession stand and press box at Century Park and to construct an ADA compliant facility (see page 11).

The Parks and Recreation Department received $8,000 in sub-recipient funding from the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority for the Needmore Summer Camp (see page 45).

A $12,000 grant from the Parks and Recreation Development Fund will permit renovations to the second floor area at Victor Gym and make that space more functional.

A downtown bicycle and walking plan will be developed thanks to a $26,000 Greenville Pickens Area Transportation Study Grant.

The BB&T Lighthouse Project provided $8,500 for summer camp activities and equipment for youth athletics.
From Citizens Police Academies to National Night Out events, the City of Greer Police Department works hard to live up to its motto: Policing is a Partnership.

“The Greer Police Department continues to follow the community policing philosophy, which is a collaboration between the department and the community to ensure a safe and secure community in which to live, work and do business,” Police Chief Dan Reynolds said.

Reynolds, who was sworn in as president of the South Carolina Police Chiefs Association in November, said department members are committed to using cutting-edge technology and training opportunities to keep their part of the partnership strong. The department relies on multiple divisions to accomplish its goals.

Operational Support, under the direction of Lt. Marcus Kelley, is responsible for the detention center, communications center, property and evidence, records, court security, and animal control.

The Telecommunications Center staff is at the heart of processing and distributing information. Police calls for service increased by 10.9% in 2014. The staff also handled 16,791 emergency 911 calls and 55,043 non-emergency calls. There were 28,302 dispatched police calls for service along with 2,460 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 2014, the Detention Center processed 1,652 adult inmates and 36 juveniles. The center transported 286 inmates to the Greenville Detention Center and 113 to the Spartanburg Detention Center.

Animal Control Officer Scott Ruttgers responded to 1,472 calls for service in 2014, a 4.5% decrease from 2013. He collected 232 live animals and transported 196 to the county animal shelter.

The Uniform Patrol Division headed by Lt. Cris Varner is responsible for answering all calls for service and working with the community to address quality of life issues. It implemented the Report Beam computer system for completion collision reports (see page 41) with all printers, computers and scanners paid by the state.

Pole mounted speed signs that were purchased with condemned funds have the ability to be moved easily from one location to the other. They are programmable from an officer’s smart phone or laptop computer.

The Traffic Team organized in 2014 includes three officers who vary their work schedules after studying the previous month’s traffic collision data. By the end of the year, the team was handling 78% of collisions in the city.

Promotions rearrange police department command staff

Capt. Jolene Vancil’s retirement from the City of Greer Police Department following 23 years of service left a large vacancy in the department.

An exhaustive search led to the right man to fill that vacancy – Lt. Matt Hamby.

“He’s the perfect fit for the job,” Chief Dan Reynolds said. “He’s risen through the ranks during the past 20 years. He continued to pursue his education and earned his master’s degree, and also attended the FBI Academy. He has excellent knowledge of the processes of this department and is respected by staff.”

As the second in command at the department, Hamby will fill in for Chief Reynolds when he is absent, oversee operational support and handle special projects, making sure the department conducts itself to the highest professional standards.

Hamby joined the city department as a patrol officer in 1993 and worked his way up the chain of command, earning his promotion to lieutenant in 2001. He oversaw the investigative unit and support services.

Hamby’s promotion opened a spot for a lieutenant, which was filled by veteran Marcus Kelley. David Verdier was promoted to sergeant to fill the vacancy left by Kelley.
Two patrol shifts were equipped with body worn cameras in August (see page 16).

Lt. Jim Holcombe supervises the administrative division, which includes personnel, the Community Outreach Division (including School Resource Officers), and the Training Division.

The Community Outreach Team works with both residents and the business community on programs that improve the safety and quality of life for all.

It helped establish three new Neighborhood Crime Watch programs and had a presence at all National Night Out events in the city.

As the local construction boom continued in 2014, the division held meetings with contractors to ensure construction sites are secured and less prone to theft of materials.

One of the team’s high-profile programs is Operation Medicine Cabinet, which collects and destroys expired and unneeded prescription medicines. In addition to public collection events, a metal drop box is available to residents in the department’s lobby. Those efforts yielded 375 pounds of medicines in 2014.

The litter pick up program was re-established in 2014 using community service workers who removed 1,500 gallons of litter from city streets.

The team also manages safe driving programs SIDNE and Alive at 25.

The Training Division offers support to GPD staff and hosts events of state and regional interest.

It hosted 91 total classes in 2014, drawing 1,650 attendees to city facilities. The classes had an estimated impact of more than $21,000 to the local economy.

GPD has host agreements with 10 organizations, including the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy and the U.S. Attorney’s Office, ensuring quality training for not only City of Greer officers, but also those across the southeast.

The renovated firearms range was also a busy facility in 2014 as 300 students trained on the range for a total of 3,383 training hours. The department purchased 15 new patrol rifles in November, allowing officers to qualify with them before the close of the year.

Sgt. Randle Ballenger and Cpl. Roman Wilson were certified as instructors for the AAA Driver Improvement Course and held classes for more than 200 city employees (see page 13).

GPD hosted two sessions of its popular Citizens Police Academy and built on the success of the academy’s alumni association (see page 41). The group volunteered 1,664 hours in 2014.

Under the direction of Lt. Eric Pressley, GPD’s Criminal Investigations Division (CID) was assigned 321 cases in 2014. This figure indicates an 8% decrease in assigned cases from 2013. Investigators were able to successfully clear 24% of all property crimes and 61% of all crimes against persons in 2014. Both statistics remain above the national average of case clearance rates.

CID fully implemented its Offender Analysis Program into the department’s Problem Oriented Policing (POP) approach. Offender Analysis is designed to identify repeat offenders and offer intelligence-based sentencing guidelines to the judge. The program seeks to properly match the sentence to the criminal and reduce the amount of time, effort, and money the police and community suffer at the hands of repeat offenders.

The sentencing recommendations offered by Crime Analyst Pené Ellis have been accepted by the judge in every presented case.

Victim Advocate (VA) Meghan Weibel is assigned an average of 50 new cases each month. She spends countless hours in city, family, and general sessions courts assisting victims. She achieved national victim advocate certification, was named a statewide mentor for new victim advocates (see page 40), and received the Greer Police Department’s 2014 Civilian of the Year Award.

Other departmental award winners in 2014 were: Sgt. Mixon Eldridge (Supervisor of the Year); Officer Lisa Godfrey (Officer of the Year); and Officer Ashley Young (Rookie of the Year).
Lt. Pressley accepts honor from Seventh Circuit Solicitor

Lt. Eric Pressley was honored in October with a distinguished service award from the Spartanburg County Solicitor’s Office.

Pressley, in his 21st year with the Greer Police Department, oversees the Criminal Investigation Division.

The award was given during a dinner at the Cleveland Park Pavilion honoring law enforcement excellence in Spartanburg County. Seventh Circuit Solicitor Barry Barnette hosted the event.

“Police officers and their families richly deserve a night of rest and relaxation for the many sacrifices they make to keep us safe,” Barnette said.

Pressley was one of five finalists for the 2014 Solicitor’s Award for Spartanburg County Law Enforcement Excellence.

Victim Advocate selected to serve as state mentor

Meghan Weibel, victim advocate for the City of Greer Police Department, was selected in 2014 to serve as a victim advocate mentor for those newly-appointed to the position in South Carolina.

Weibel was chosen to serve by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Victim’s Advocate Association (LEVA).

“This selection is an honor and recognition of the dedication and professionalism she exhibits on a daily basis,” Chief Dan Reynolds said.

Established in 1990, LEVA provides a means for victim advocates to gain networking opportunities, training resources, and a forum to discuss common issues and concerns. It also provides a voice for legislative issues pertaining to victims rights.

National Night Out unites police and neighborhoods

The City of Greer Police Department annually joins other city departments at National Night Out celebrations to meet and interact with city residents. Officers handed out wrist bands and safety tips (left) at four events in the city while Det. Ashley Ross Wright helps model custom eye black patches given out by the Parks and Recreation Department at the Needmore Center.
It’s been a good 18 months for Angie Childers, president of the City of Greer Police Department’s Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association.

In 2013 Childers accepted the GPD Chief’s Award and was then named by the National Citizens Police Academy Association (CPAA) as its Alumna of the Year at the association’s annual conference in Orlando.

At the CPAA’s 2014 conference in Tucson, Ariz., Childers was named to represent the City of Greer Police Department as a member of the association’s board of directors. She is the first volunteer from the city to serve as an officer with CPAA.

The city department has become more active in CPAA under the direction of Lt. Jim Holcombe. In fact, four of the seven CPAA members from South Carolina represent the City of Greer Police Department.

That dedication to the GPD’s Citizen’s Police Academy earned Holcombe an honor in March from the Alumni Association, which singled him out for his hard work and outstanding dedication to the program and its volunteers.

The state department was so pleased with the system that it offered the city three computers, 20 scanners, and 20 printers in addition to those the city already received through a state grant.

Now city police cars are equipped with approximately $75,000 in hardware and software to save the traffic team valuable time.

“And it didn’t cost the city a dime,” Ballenger said. “The state was so pleased with the job we were doing. It was a one-signature transfer with no matching fund requirement.”

Scanning a barcode allows static information to automatically be entered on a report.

Another time-saving feature is the graphic report. The reporting officer previously had to draw vehicles and the chain of events that led to a collision and beyond.

The new software allows officers to quickly map the scene and vehicles involved.
From residential trash collection to clearing city streets during winter storms, the Public Services Department is tasked with performing services that many residents won’t notice unless they don’t happen. Department members, however, take pride in keeping the city looking — and operating — at its peak potential.

Ensuring the public’s safety is a departmental goal. It replaced more than 360 feet of sidewalks and added handicap ramps in 2014. Street signs are damaged more often than residents may realize and replacing those signs quickly is the key to making sure traffic moves as intended. Department members replaced 64 street name signs and eight stop signs in addition to 14 damaged sign posts.

The department played a key role in helping to keep trucks driving to and from the S.C. Inland Port on identified routes and away from neighborhoods and the central business district to limit congestion. Engineering and police identified 34 locations to erect signs informing truck drivers of the route. The Public Services staff posted 140 total signs at those locations.

Mowing road right-of-ways on a weekly basis reduces the risk of accidents for all drivers. The task also comes with its own hazards, including traffic and uneven terrain. Four department members attended the Tractor Mower Operations Safety class presented by Clemson University’s T3S Program in April.

Operations safety training includes mounting, dismounting, equipment inspection, proper signage, and proper use of personal protection equipment.

Heavy rainfall brings calls about water problems, mostly ditches, drains and outfalls blocked by debris. Crews cleared debris and repaired storm boxes and grates, when necessary.

They also checked pipes with cameras for broken joints, water jetted lines, and made repairs.

The department maintains the grounds at Mountain View and Edgewood Cemeteries, cutting grass and cutting back overhanging limbs.

It would be difficult to hold an outdoor festival in the city without the department, as staff members hang and remove banners, barricade streets, install and remove drop cords, and 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 spotless.

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.

A brochure with a map and collection dates is mailed to all city residents in October in preparation for leaf collection.

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.

Workers collected nearly 10 tons of solid waste in 2014, the most since 2010, as curbside recycling of paper and cardboard fell decreased and requests for recycle bins dropped.

A record number of residents visited the City Recycling Center on Buncombe St. for the second consecutive year, as 8,775 individuals dropped off paper, cardboard, aluminum, plastic, metal and tires that would have otherwise gone to the landfill. E-waste (electronics that are no longer permitted in county landfills) continues to be collected at the center.

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.

Crews were called in to work just one winter storm in 2014, sanding and plowing 1,285 miles of roadway and using approximately 50 tons of sand.
Record crowd makes Amnesty Day a success

Skipper Burns knew the steady stream of cars entering the Greer Recycling Center for the ninth annual Amnesty Day event in April was a good sign. By 1 p.m., the city’s director of public services realized it was a record-setting crowd.

“It was easily the most items we’ve collected during the nine years we’ve held Amnesty Day,” Burns said. “We probably had more e-waste during the first year we collected it, but we had 269 cars come through (in 2014), which is 111 more than 2013.”

Amnesty Day annually gives City of Greer residents an opportunity to dispose of items that are not collected in weekly curbside collection. It was an opportunity residents did not let pass.

The crew from ACE Environmental, which contracts with the city to collect solid waste and recyclables, collected 1,567 cans of paint during the five-hour event. Residents also brought 209 containers of miscellaneous chemicals, 68 gallons of used motor oil, 61 tires, 31 items of scrap metal, and 155 electrical items that qualified as e-waste.

A shredder was on site for the third consecutive year to destroy personal and confidential papers. That free service brought in 1,376 pounds of paper.

The Greer Police Department collected 105 pounds of expired and unneeded prescription drugs to be incinerated as part of its Operation Medicine Cabinet program. Sgt. Chad Richardson was assisted this year by members of the Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association.

Also new this year was an appearance by members of the city’s Green Team, which helped direct vehicles and distributed magnets, pens, coloring books and crayons promoting the city’s recycling efforts.

“Getting these items to the proper location for disposal is the goal. Our residents did a great job and set the bar high for next year.”

– Skipper Burns
Director of Public Services

Shop keeps city’s auto fleet in top condition

With a fleet of 179 vehicles, the City of Greer has a daily demand for automotive service, repairs and emergency calls.

That’s where the city’s maintenance shop comes in to ensure a long life for the fleet at a reasonable cost.

Taking those vehicles to a commercial mechanic would amount to a substantial bill each year. Staffing the maintenance shop in the city’s Operations Center on Pennsylvania Ave., Ray Shaffer keeps the city’s fleet on a regular maintenance schedule and is available for repairs and emergency road calls, as needed. He also performs minor body work.

In 2014, the shop made 265 repairs, serviced 187 vehicles, replaced 178 tires and made 45 road calls.

“That’s work that would have been substantially more expensive had we taken those vehicles to a commercial mechanic,” said Skipper Burns, director of the city’s Public Services Department. “City departments know Ray will do high quality work that will keep vehicles on the road for a long life.”
Economic development plays a critical role in the City of Greer.

To attract new capital investments, create jobs, and re-vitalize 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.

2014 was a year of tremendous industrial growth in Greer. The list of Greer’s successful projects is a veritable who’s who of South Carolina’s most successful companies:

- Bosch Security Systems and Cardinal Health announced plans to locate distribution facilities at Caliber Ridge.
- Plastic Omnium acquired more than 60 acres in Greer’s Velocity Park.
- Michelin opened its first Greer manufacturing facility in Gateway International Business Park.
- Cott Beverage expanded its facility on Hood Road.

Longtime Greer industries Precorp and Advanced Composite Materials announced additional expansions of their facilities and new, high-tech manufacturing jobs in 2014, and Greer’s Concourse Way saw significant new industrial growth with the relocation of Lumbee Enterprises and the decision Ruhlamat America to open a new facility in 2014.

In all, the GDC facilitated 17 successful projects in 2014 representing total capital investments of more than $59 million and the creation of 300 new jobs.
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.

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.

The latter has been particularly effective in the City of Greer’s Needmore Community — the area for which GCRA staff collaborated with Clemson University to create a master plan. The City of Greer and GCRA submitted an application to the Greenville County Transportation Committee, which approved funding to match the CDBG funds for infrastructure improvement and engineering design for work on Canteen and Tremont Avenues as part of phase one. Rehabilitation and parks are key elements of the next phase.

GCRA has 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 Community project, where new homes are being constructed and sold.

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.

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 remained at $39,000 for five local organizations in 2014.

Fiscal Year 2014 Sub-Recipient Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Helping Hands of Greer, Inc.</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greer Relief and Resources Agency, Inc.</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needmore Summer Camp</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Advancement Centers</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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</tbody>
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Fiscal Year 2014 CDBG and HOME funding for the City of Greer
CDBG: $434,120 • HOME: $100,654 • Total: $534,774

Infrastructure Improvement / Public Works $305,120
New Construction / Housing $100,654
Owner Occupied Rehabilitation $50,000
Sub-Recipients $39,000
Demolition $25,000
Emergency Rehabilitation $15,000

Helping Hands of Greer, Inc.
Gifts-in-kind and food program

Greer Relief and Resources Agency, Inc.
Client mortgage/rent payments and client utilities

Needmore Summer Camp
Operational costs, supplies, and activities

Creative Advancement Centers
Afterschool program personnel and operational cost

Greer Community Ministries, Inc.
Food for mobile meals and senior dining

624 Ruddy Creek Circle is one of three homes GCRA had listed for sale in the City of Greer at the close of 2014.
# WHO TO CONTACT?

## A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abandoned Vehicles</td>
<td>(864) 801-2040</td>
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<td>Accounts Payable</td>
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<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
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<td>Adult Sports Programs</td>
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<td>Advertising</td>
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<td>Alarm Permit</td>
<td>(864) 848-2150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Animal Control</td>
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<td>Annexation</td>
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<td>Arraignments</td>
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<td>Athletics Programs</td>
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<td>Auctions (city items)</td>
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<td>Cemetery (city-owned)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children’s Theater</td>
<td>(864) 848-5383</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Administrator</td>
<td>(864) 848-5387</td>
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<td>City Council</td>
<td>(864) 801-2027</td>
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<td>City Hall Rental Space</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Park Rental Space</td>
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<td>Code Enforcement</td>
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<td>Comprehensive Plan</td>
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<td>Detention Center</td>
<td>(864) 848-5358</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dog License</td>
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<td>Drainage Problems</td>
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<td>Elections (City)</td>
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<td>Emergencies</td>
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<td>Finance</td>
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<td>Fire Department Tours</td>
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<td>Fire Safety Education</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>Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<td>Illegal Dumping</td>
<td>(864) 801-2040</td>
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<td>Immigration</td>
<td>(864) 801-0510</td>
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<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>(864) 416-0123</td>
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<td>Jail (Detention Center)</td>
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<td>Jean Smith Library</td>
<td>(864) 877-8722</td>
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<td>Job Openings</td>
<td>(864) 848-2174</td>
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FROM RESERVING AN EVENT HALL TO PURCHASING A DOG LICENSE, THIS DIRECTORY WILL GUIDE YOU TO THE CORRECT CITY OF GREER OFFICE OR OUTSIDE AGENCY.

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<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>N</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kids Planet .................................... (864) 416-6606</td>
<td>Library ............................................. (864) 877-8722</td>
<td>Maps .............................................. (864) 879-4307</td>
<td>Neighborhood Safety .................... (864) 968-7002</td>
<td>Ordinances (City) .......................... (864) 801-2027</td>
<td>Parks ............................................. (864) 416-6607</td>
<td>Recreation Programs .................... (864) 416-6606</td>
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<td>Litter .............................................. (864) 801-2040</td>
<td>Litter .............................................. (864) 801-2040</td>
<td>Mayor ............................................. (864) 848-5387</td>
<td>News &amp; Media ................................ (864) 416-0121</td>
<td>Overgrown Lots ............................. (864) 801-2040</td>
<td>Planning ........................................ (864) 848-5396</td>
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<td>Police Reports ................................ (864) 848-2194</td>
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<td>Taxi Code Enforcement ............... (864) 877-7906</td>
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<td>Television Channel ....................... (864) 416-0121</td>
<td>Victim Advocacy ........................... (864) 877-7985</td>
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From reserving an event hall to purchasing a dog license, this directory will guide you to the correct City of Greer office or outside agency.
The COOL kids (and adults) are in Greer!

What’s the recipe for a cool city?

Take a patriotic festival like Freedom Blast and add world-class dining and shopping. Add free Moonlight Movies and concerts during the summer and sprinkle in great recreation and athletic programs for both kids and adults. Include a large city park as part of a walkable, hip and historic central business district with something fun for every member of the family. Add a museum that keeps alive the city’s history and culture and include a healthy dose of business and industry that keeps the population vibrant and diverse. Top it all with services and amenities that rank among the best in South Carolina... and you have the City of Greer!

Greer... it’s for cool kids (and cool adults, too).