TEAM TRIBUNE
The Newsletter for City of Greer Employees
Summer 2020

Changing of the Guard

Driggers retires after 20 years of service

Ed Driggers concluded a 20-year run as Greer City Administrator on July 24 as friends and co-workers wished him well at a reception in the Cannon Centre.

Driggers joined the City of Greer in 2000 and inherited a City that was in dire financial straits. He skillfully helped guide the City out of those difficulties and leaves the City in its strongest financial situation in history.

His legacy includes construction of the Municipal Complex and Greer City Park, which opened in 2008. In addition to completing phase one of the CenterG project in Greer Station, he also worked to attain funds to completely renovate the City Auditorium on Snow St. and celebrated its grand opening last September.

Greer City Council surprised Driggers by naming that building in his honor. A unanimous vote on July 28 created the Edward R. Driggers City of Greer Center for the Arts.

“I’m a bit overwhelmed, and I don’t get overwhelmed very often,” Driggers remarked about the honor.

Andy Merriman ready to take the helm as City Administrator

The City of Greer concluded its nationwide search for a new City Administrator on June 23, as City Council appointed Andrew Merriman, former Deputy County Administrator for York County, to the post.

Merriman was among 59 applicants and three finalists for the position. His first day of work will be Aug. 3.

A native of Mauldin, Merriman served as City Manager in Bluefield, W.Va, from 2009-12. He returned to South Carolina as Deputy County Administrator for Aiken County from 2012-16 before accepting his most recent position in York County.

Merriman holds a bachelor’s degree in political science and psychology from Tusculum College in Greenville, Tenn., and a master’s in city and regional planning from Clemson University.

He and his wife Kati are the parents of son Jack and daughter Kelsey.

> VIDEO: Andy Merriman’s message to Team Greer
CenterG communications efforts capture MASC Achievement Award

The City of Greer has won the Municipal Association of South Carolina’s 2020 Achievement Award for the area of communications.

The honor was given based on the City of Greer’s communications efforts for the CenterG Streetscape Project. Those measures were enacted by a collaborative effort from marketing professionals from the City of Greer, Greer CPW, Greer Development Association and the Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce, with assistance from R.A. Weston Communications in Greer.

“We made a commitment while planning this project to help promote our downtown businesses and to keep our public aware of such issues as transportation, navigating around construction and the current state of work,” Greer City Administrator Ed Driggers said. “Bringing together communications and marketing professionals from our partner organizations – those who already know and love the City of Greer – was the best way to do that.”

The MASC Achievement Awards have, since 1987, recognized superior and innovative efforts in local government. In addition to four population categories for smaller municipalities, it presents awards in the categories communications, economic development, public safety, public service and public works. Municipalities may enter only one category annually.

The City of Greer was the only winner representing the upstate in the 2020 competition.

The CenterG team’s communications plan for the 18-month project included the FutureGreer.com website as well as a broadcast, print, social media and billboard campaign. It also included special events, promotional giveaways, merchant-relations efforts and news media outreach.

The communications team created all material in-house to allow more to be spent on distribution. A magazine, created in partnership with The Greer Citizen newspaper and supported by advertising from local businesses, captured the project for posterity. The city also used virtual reality goggles to demonstrate what the finished streets would look like.

Communications for CenterG placed a strong emphasis on marketing businesses in the impacted area. The city spent $15,000 on $5 gift cards to encourage shoppers to go downtown during construction. It also implemented a downtown shuttle service to connect parking to businesses during construction.

Team flashes winning smiles

Ed Driggers, Steve Owens, and Greer CPW’s Alison Rauch were among the City of Greer’s delegation that presented the 2020 Achievement Award entry at the MASC office in Columbia. Communications Coordinator Taylor Crouch, who took the photo, joined the team for the presentation.

2020 Municipal Association of SC Achievement Award Winners

Communications: City of Greer
Economic Development: City of W. Columbia
Public Safety: City of Columbia
Public Service: City of Rock Hill
Public Works: City of Camden

Population category winners are: the Town of Edisto Beach, the Town of Seabrook Island, the City of Walterboro and the Town of Lexington.
CenterG wrapup brings economic development news

Trade Street merchants gathered on July 12 to celebrate the completion of CenterG phase one and to witness the new lighting for the first time.

Two days later, upstate news media flocked to The Davenport as City officials shared exciting news about the return on the CenterG investment.

That $25 million investment, which includes the streetscape, Center for the Arts renovation, lighting improvements and the municipal parking deck, was in $2.5 million invested in Greer Station infrastructure by Greer CPW.

At the press conference, Greer native Keith Eades, owner and managing partner of Idea River Development, announced plans for an approximate $32 million investment in a mixed-use development called ParkView Greer.

That project includes a pair of four-story upscale apartments buildings with 226 units at the corners of Main, Jason, and Cannon Streets. A standalone brewery and restaurant is also planned on the corner of Jason and Cannon Streets. The project is adjacent to Greer City Park and includes seven parcels totaling 5.29 acres.

The announcement pushed return on the CenterG investment past $100 million based on the value of renovated properties and new commercial and residential projects.

Another large project is Sycamore Investment Group’s downtown hotel project. The hotel’s 108 rooms will have a significant impact on the downtown economy.

“The Hampton Inn by Hilton Greater Greer is our most anticipated project to date,” said Neetu Patel, vice president of operations for Sycamore Investment Group. “Downtown Greer is a market that we have talked about for the past 10 years and we couldn’t be more excited to be part of this thriving community. The support we have received from the City and the community has been unwavering.”

The City has announced an additional $4.6 Million investment in phase two of the CenterG project. Sossamon Construction will extend its downtown streetscape work north from Poinsett St. and N. Main St. to Arlington Ave.

Team Greer celebrates personal, professional achievements

Chase Raper successfully completed and passed his National Registry Paramedic. This has been a 13-month process that included classroom lecture of 1000 hours, 150 hours of labs, 100 hours of hospital clinical time and 300 hours of ambulance ride time.

Wedding bells were ringing this spring as Julie Hunter married Scotty Burgess on Saturday, March 14th at Skylight Chapel in Taylors. Congratulations to the happy couple!

Congratulations are also in order for members of the Building & Development Standards Department for professional achievements:

• Sam Dobson is now certified as a ICC Commercial Building Inspector.

• Gabe Hannon successfully completed his ICC Certified Residential Plumbing Inspector his ICC Residential Mechanical exams.

• Chanda Kelly passed her exam and is now an ICC Certified Permit Tech.

• Joe Aughtry was elected vice president of the International Association of Electrical Inspectors.

Mayor Rick Danner sent best wishes as Mixon Eldridge retired from the Police Department.
Welcome new Team Greer members

PARKS AND RECREATION

Adriana Diaz
Tanesha Dowling
Karoline Eubanks
John Hickey
Kelly Lynne Jennings
Natasha Lyles
Kyle McCormick
Samuel Merrell
Cody Norris
Sierra Pearson
William Pitts
Walker Redmon
Keanu Ridgill
Galia Rodriguez
James Snow
William Riley Stanton
John Thomas
Steven Thompson
Seth Walker
Nathaniel Wilbanks
Jessica Williams
Jim Young
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19
Century 3 designates City Fire and Police to receive donation of 500 safety masks

Century 3, a global engineering and construction company founded in Greer with offices located in the United States, Germany and Asia, donated 1000 KN95 masks to those on the front lines in Greer and Augusta, Ga.

Lead by Rong He, the 700+ employees working in the Century 3 China operation headquartered in Shanghai, volunteered to source and send these critically needed masks to the United States for immediate distribution.

“Safety and security are core company values and therefore it seems only natural that we do whatever we can to help ensure the safety of those working on the front lines during this global pandemic,” said Greg Hall, president of the Century 3 Greer headquarters.

The Century 3 office in Greer designated its City Fire and Police departments to receive this personal protection equipment, while the Augusta, GA office provided masks to Family Physicians of Evans.

“It’s a privilege for our employees in the United States and around the globe to do our part in helping to protect those who put their lives on the line every day for the greater good,” Hall added.

“We hope these masks make a difference and we remind our neighbors that it’s up to all of us to do whatever we can in the fight against COVID-19. After all, we’re all in this together.”
Tree sculpture is underway at Center for the Arts

Edwin Hutchinson is no stranger to creating ice carvings for special events in the upstate.

Carving an oak tree in late July is about as far from his usual cool job as you can get, but he’s tackling the work at the Center for the Arts all the same.

Hutchinson is one of three artists from Crescent Carvers and ICE AGE Ice Sculptures of Greenville commissioned to create the sculpture from the remaining base of a cut tree outside the center.

The work is being funded by a “Make Greer Great” grant provided by the Partnership for Tomorrow.

“The title is called Emerging. 2020 has been a crazy year for everybody and the emerging kind of lets us say that we’re emerging into the future,” Hutchinson said. “This is a tough time but we can all get through it and we will be born into something even better than it was.”

The City’s Parks and Recreation staff set up scaffolding around the tree early on July 23, allowing Hutchinson and his colleagues to make the first cut that morning.

Much of the work during the first week involved clearing and squaring up the tree to allow the artists to use templates and cut away outlines before beginning the carving process.

The artwork is expected to take approximately three weeks to complete.

**VIDEO:**

Watch the first cut of the tree sculpture