

FLORENCE'S DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT MOVES FORWARD

The plan to transform Florence's downtown area into the cultural and economic center it once was is moving forward under the leadership of the Florence Downtown Development Corporation.

Last year, the Florence 2010 Committee presented a master redevelopment plan for the downtown area. Organized by Mayor Frank Willis, the committee was comprised of several Florence business professionals, educational leaders, public officials, and citizens. The results of that committee's work include the creation of the master plan, the formation of the Downtown Development Corporation, and the establishment of three strategy goals. The goals, which include management, physical, and economic, will help define the tactics to redevelop the downtown area.

The management strategy first got the ball rolling with the hiring of the downtown development coordinator, Roy Adams. He met with downtown business owners, city officials, and financial representatives to get their thoughts on the redevelopment process.

The second strategy, physical, includes the restoration and addition of amenities such as underground utilities, increased landscaping, lighting, and better parking. Other projects include the enhancement of the exterior

buildings of the downtown merchants.

The third strategy, economic, calls for the retention of downtown merchants through support from the Small Business Administration, Francis Marion University, and Florence Darlington Technical College. Over the past decade, downtown retail shops have competed for business against larger discount stores, shopping centers, and shopping malls, which are located outside of the historic downtown center. The goal of the economic strategy includes ways to retain the businesses in the downtown area

through better business skills, training and enhanced marketing efforts.

The redevelopment of the historic downtown will prove to be a community-wide effort that combines resources from both the private and public sectors. With the interest shown by the Downtown Development Corporation and the Merchant's Association there is now in place a vision that, given time and proper resources, will recapture the vitality of the historic Florence downtown.



The redevelopment of downtown Florence is a community-wide effort that combines the resources from both public and private interests.

KEEP FLORENCE BEAUTIFUL

Keep Florence Beautiful is a non-profit volunteer organization of citizens who work to involve the community in responsible solutions for a clean, litter-free and beautiful environment.

Keep Florence Beautiful promotes and encourages community volunteers to take part in litter clean-ups, neighborhood beautification and revitalization projects; as well as educates individuals about the important role each of us can and should play in enhancing and maintaining the quality of life in our communities starting with litter prevention, recycling and responsible solid waste management.

Join good people doing good things for our community. For more information, please contact the Keep Florence Beautiful office at (843) 665-3113 or visit our website at www.cityofflorence.com/kfb.



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NEWS & HAPPENINGS FROM THE CITY OF FLORENCE & ITS UTILITY SYSTEMS • FALL 2002

WATER QUALITY FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW CITY PREPARES FOR START-UP OF NEW REGIONAL WATER SYSTEM

During November, City of Florence officials started-up the new Pee Dee River Regional Water System. The new water system will be able to treat and process 10 million gallons per day (mgd) of surface water from Great Pee Dee River, making it an abundant and viable source for the City of Florence and the Pee Dee Region.

With a larger water processing capacity that has the ability to expand in the future, the new Pee Dee River Regional Water System will be able to accommodate water demands of the Florence area's growing population. Florence, the center of an eight county region called the Pee Dee, continues to attract new residents and businesses to add to its growing population. One of the requirements for healthy community growth is an ample supply of clean water.

"Although the City does have a reliable water supply from the Middendorf and Black Creek aquifers, studies from the U.S. Geological Survey and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources confirmed that these groundwater resources do not have sufficient capacity to meet future water supply needs," said City Public Works Director Drew Griffin.

An extensive series of studies by Camp Dresser & McKee, an engineering firm in Charlotte, N.C., were initiated in 1998. These studies confirmed that raw water from Pee Dee River could be processed to meet the region's future water demands as well as the water quality standards set forth by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). Project authorization and funding by Florence City

Council then led to the development and construction of the Pee Dee River Regional Water System over the past 3 years. The City's groundwater system will not be abandoned, but will be maintained and used at lower production rates, which will allow groundwater levels to recover. It will also be maintained as an emergency backup system in times of drought or other disaster-related situations, such as in the event of a chemical spill or contamination in the river.

The \$35 million water system, located in the Pee Dee Regional Commerce Center just south of I-95, will provide an assured supply of water for future economic and community growth. The 10 mgd water system was designed to allow for future expansion up to 45 mgd and, in addition to supplying the City of Florence,

has the capacity to provide a supply option for other utilities in the region which are experiencing growth as well.

"Economic and community growth will be enhanced as a result of the new water system," said Florence City Manager David Williams. "The new water system is important to the future well being of our children and community."

Camp Dresser & McKee designed the new system and managed the construction phase. Contractors for the project were Crowder Construction Company (water plant, raw water intake) and Hobby Construction Company (water transmission mains).

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CITY OF FLORENCE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Frank E. Willis, Mayor

Billy D. Williams, District 1

Edward Robinson, District 2

Maitland S. Chase, III, District 3

William C. Bradham, Jr.,
Member-At-Large

Robert C. Holland, Jr.,
Member-At-Large

Richard L. Woodard,
Member-At-Large

City Council and the Mayor serve four-year terms. City Council meets the second Monday of every month at 1 p.m. at Room 604 at the City-County Complex, 180 North Irby Street, Florence, SC.

www.cityofflorence.com



The Pee Dee River Regional Water System features a raw water supply intake and pumping station located at the river.

FLORENCE'S DRINKING WATER SUPPLY REMAINS STEADY THROUGH DROUGHT CONDITIONS

With the entire state of South Carolina under a severe status of drought, the Pee Dee region has been the hardest hit by the drought from this past summer. In its fifth year, the drought has adversely affected agriculture, forestry, and some surface water supply conditions.

The National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center forecast continues to call for below normal rainfall for 2002 in the Mid-Atlantic states and southward through North Carolina and northern South Carolina. Hope Mizzell, the statewide drought coordinator for the South Carolina Department of Natural

Resources, emphasizes that even with normal rainfall this fall, October and November are traditionally the driest months with an average of 3.42 inches in October and 3.16 inches in November. The CPC forecast calls for normal to above-normal precipitation for South Carolina from January through April 2003.

Beginning this month, the City of Florence will begin using surface water as a new water source for the Pee Dee River Regional Water System. The system will be able to treat and process 10 million gallons per day (mgd) of raw water from Pee Dee River. The City of Florence and Camp Dresser & McKee, an engineering firm

in Charlotte, N.C., have conducted an evaluation on Pee Dee River and concluded that the raw water intake for the new Pee Dee River Regional Water System will be able to function properly even under expected continued drought conditions in Florence. During September 2002, flow in the river averaged approximately 580 mgd. This is believed to represent the historic, long-term low flow for Pee Dee River. However, the evaluation concludes that even with flow rates as low as 260 mgd the plant's intake screens

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CITY PREPARES FOR STORMWATER PHASE II

Stormwater is rainwater that has traveled across properties through gutters, storm drains, and ditches before emptying into streams and rivers. While flowing across streets and parking lots, stormwater also picks up trash, oil, and other debris, turning it into stormwater pollution. The City of Florence is working to decrease the amount of stormwater pollution in its communities through a national program required by the EPA, called the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II.

The Stormwater Phase II program is the next step in the EPA's effort to preserve, protect, and improve the nation's water resources from polluted stormwater. As one of the regulated municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4), the City of Florence is required to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for Stormwater Phase II from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) by March 10, 2003.

Through the Stormwater Phase II program, the City of Florence will be organizing activities and projects to educate citizens, inform engineers and construction companies, and solve drainage problems associated with stormwater pollution.

In order to prepare for the requirements of the Stormwater Phase II program, the City of Florence

will be working with the engineering firm B.P. Barber & Associates, Inc. (BPB) of Columbia, S.C. to help obtain the NPDES permit. BPB reviewed the City of Florence's current Stormwater Management program and found many existing City activities that can easily be adapted to the permit. In addition, BPB will be making recommendations to the City of Florence related to enhancing and expanding upon these stormwater activities and projects.

The goal of the Stormwater Phase II program for cities, such as Florence, is to establish long-term stormwater activities and projects that fulfill the six permit requirements, which include:

- 1) Public Education and Outreach,
- 2) Public Involvement and Participation,
- 3) Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination,
- 4) Construction Site Runoff Control,
- 5) Post-Construction Runoff Control, and
- 6) Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping.

The City of Florence hopes that the Stormwater Phase II program will encourage people to practice stormwater pollution prevention. To help plan the stormwater program, the City of Florence plans to form a Stormwater Advisory Board that will manage and determine the best activities and projects.

PLAN OUTLINES REGIONAL WATER AND SEWER GOALS

Florence, the center of the Pee Dee, has attracted new residents and businesses over the past several years. To keep up with growth, the City of Florence has been reviewing options to maintain, expand, and vend its water and sewer services regionally. Since 1999, the City of Florence has been evaluating options through the development of a Regional Water and Sewer Master Plan.

CITY FORMS STEERING COMMITTEE

The Florence Pee Dee Regional Water and Sewer Steering Committee, which is composed of leaders in the Pee Dee Region, was formed two years ago by the City of Florence and Mayor Frank Willis. The committee has met to establish a regional planning framework and develop cooperation strategies between various agencies providing water and sewer service in the area.

The committee includes representatives from the City of Florence, Florence County, the City of Darlington, Darlington County Water and Sewer Authority, the City of Hartsville, the City of Marion, Marion County, Marco Rural Water, the City of Dillon, Dillon County, Trico Rural Water, the City of Mullins, and the Town of Timmonsville.

With the Master Plan as a regional concept, entities in the surrounding area have signed memoranda of understanding in support of the regional effort and indicating a desire to purchase water from the City of Florence.

COMMITTEE REVIEWING REGIONAL MASTER PLAN PROPOSALS

The City of Florence recently requested sealed, written proposals from engineering firms to prepare a Water and Sewer Master Plan for the

Pee Dee region. The City of Florence and the Steering Committee are in the process of reviewing these proposals.

DEFINING A REGIONAL MASTER PLAN

The Regional Master Plan will become the vehicle for forming a consensus among the various utilities regarding water supply and wastewater treatment issues in the Pee Dee region.

Through the City of Florence, the development of a Regional Master Plan will help provide cost-effective water and sewer services for the Pee Dee area. The City of Florence and the Steering Committee anticipates that through a Regional Master Plan, area utilities can keep an independent designated service area. These utilities will not be consolidated, but will secure the right to purchase water and receive wastewater treatment services from the City of Florence at mutually acceptable volumes, flow rates, and prices.

As a part of developing this new Regional Master Plan, the Steering Committee has selected and determined that Davis & Brown will be a part of the engineering team and act as one of the coordinating engineers.

PEE DEE RIVER REGIONAL WATER SYSTEM

The Pee Dee River Regional Water System has become the centerpiece of the Regional Master Plan. Based on the design and construction of the water system, the City of Florence has taken the lead in searching for solutions for water and sewer service for the region. For more information regarding the water system, please see the story "City Prepares For Start-Up of New Regional Water System" on the front page.

NEW WATER SYSTEM TO USE CHLORAMINATION

In an effort to maintain water quality during and after the start-up of the Pee Dee River Regional Water System, the City of Florence will begin using chloramines as a disinfectant for drinking water.

Formed when chlorine is combined with small amounts of ammonia, chloramines are a safe, effective, and proven method, which has been used for decades in other parts of South Carolina and the United States. In fact, 20 to 25 percent of the local governments within the United States currently use chloramines in the drinking water disinfection process.

Chloramination was selected as the disinfection method of choice for the new plant because it is the best and most cost-effective way to maintain full compliance under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The use of chloramines reduces the formation of disinfection byproduct compounds regulated under the SDWA. Chloramines are more stable than chlorine and therefore provide a more effective disinfectant residual in the distribution system.

Not only are chloramines four times more stable than chlorine, but they allow a more consistent water quality to be maintained throughout the City's water distribution system. Approximately six to eight months after the start-up of the Pee Dee's new water system, chloramines will also be added to the groundwater system.

City of Florence officials advise that some customers, such as kidney dialysis facilities and residents with home aquariums, may need to take some special steps in preparation for the start-up of the new water system and the addition of chloramines.

Everyone, including kidney dialysis patients, can safely drink, cook, and bathe in chloraminated water. Chloramines are harmful only if they directly enter the bloodstream. Since water comes into contact with the bloodstream during hemodialysis, very strict water purification standards are already followed by the kidney dialysis industry. These standards are set by the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation and specifically address chloramines. Industry standards require that a nurse, technician, or trained caregiver test for both chlorine and chloramines after the purification process to ensure that they have been removed from the water before it is used in dialysis machines.

People who own fresh or saltwater aquariums will also need to prepare for the introduction of chloramines, as they can be harmful when they directly enter the bloodstream of fish and other aquatic animals. A water-conditioning agent specifically designed to remove chloramines or an activated carbon filter should be used according to product instructions. If you are already using one of these products to remove

chlorine, it's possible that the same product may also remove chloramines. Read the product label to be sure and ask your pet supplier for further information.

As the City of Florence moves forward with the start-up of the new Pee Dee River Regional Water System, city officials want to keep customers informed. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the City of Florence Public Works Department at (843) 665-3256.

CHLORAMINE Q & A

IS IT SAFE TO DRINK WATER CONTAINING CHLORAMINES?

Everyone can drink chloraminated water because the digestive process neutralizes chloramines before they reach the bloodstream.

WHAT WILL CHLORAMINES DO TO MY DRINKING WATER?

Chloramines will improve the overall disinfection residual in the distribution system as well as improve the aesthetics of drinking water by minimizing the taste and odor associated with chlorination.

WILL I NOTICE A DIFFERENCE IN TASTE AND ODOR IN MY WATER?

If you notice any difference at all, you may find the water has less of a chlorine odor or taste.

HOW ABOUT WASHING AN OPEN WOUND, SUCH AS A CUT, WITH CHLORAMINATED WATER?

Even large amounts of water used in cleaning a cut would have no effect because virtually no water actually enters the bloodstream.

WILL I HAVE TO CHANGE THE WAY I TREAT MY SWIMMING POOL?

No additional treatment should be necessary related to swimming pools. However, you might find that there is a slight increase in chlorine demand. This means that you may have to add a little more chlorine than usual to get to the level you typically maintain in the pool after you top it off with chloraminated tap water.

WILL MY HOME WATER FAUCET FILTRATION SYSTEM BE AFFECTED IN ANY WAY?

You may find that you have to replace filters, particularly activated charcoal filters, more often.

DOES CHLORAMINATION AFFECT OTHER PETS?

No. Chloraminated water is safe for dogs, cats, and other non-aquatic animals.

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S GAMES

The International Children's Games are an alliance of city organizations and individuals who pursue the common goal of forming nation-linking friendships through sports and the arranging of sports competitions. The goal of the ICG is to enable, develop understanding and friendship of students from different countries, and to advance the Olympic idea. The first organized competition for the International Children's Games took place June 5, 1968 in Celje, Slovenia and was attended by nine European cities. Since that time, the ICG has become much more visible and includes cities from not only Europe, but also Canada and the United States.

The City of Florence sent a delegation of 4 city representatives and 5 athletes to Plock, Poland on June 27 through July 3, 2002 to take

part in the 34th International Children's Games. The Games are Olympic style competitive events for persons ages 12 to 15. The games not only provide Olympic style competition but also promote the understanding and friendship of student athletes from different countries. This year's games were attended by 41 cities from 26 countries. The City of Florence was one of only two United States cities represented in Poland. Athletes representing Florence in the world competition were Tiffany Dargan, Ginny Dias, Gabrielle Jones, Shelle King, and Kiko Wilson. Plans are already being made for a delegation representing Florence to attend the games next summer in Graz, Austria.



The City of Florence was one of only two United States cities represented in the International Children's Games in Poland. Athletes representing Florence included Tiffany Dargan, Ginny Dias, Gabrielle Jones, Shelle King, and Kiko Wilson.

FLORENCE DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

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would continue to deliver a full 10 mgd water supply to the plant.

The City of Florence currently obtains its drinking water supply from groundwater sources. The sources include two underground aquifers, the Middendorf and the Black Creek, which are water-bearing sands that feed water to wells. The groundwater from these two aquifers is pumped out through a system of 29 wells and distributed throughout the city and county.

During drought conditions, the water level of groundwater is lowered. However, the relative depth of the Middendorf and Black Creek aquifers has kept Florence's current groundwater supply steady and unaffected by the drought situation. The statewide drought mainly affects surface water and shallower aquifers. The Middendorf aquifer is about 500 to 700 feet

below ground level and the Black Creek aquifer is about 325 to 450 feet below ground level. The current groundwater supply is sufficient and meets all South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control water quality regulations.

In response to the statewide drought, City of Florence Mayor Frank Willis urges citizens to voluntarily conserve water. "We [the City of Florence] do not intend to impose mandatory water restrictions on our water customers," said Willis, "However, I strongly recommend the voluntary practice of household and outdoor water conservation in light of our current drought situation."

WATER QUALITY TODAY/ TOMORROW

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WATER QUALITY START-UP ISSUES

With the start-up of the new Pee Dee River Regional Water System, some customers may experience temporary issues related to the system's start-up process.

New pumps and transmission mains, which will be utilized to distribute the treated water, will cause changes in pressure and flow patterns throughout the distribution system. These changes may cause a temporary rusty-looking color in water in certain areas. In an effort to minimize these episodes, the City will soon be flushing its water distribution system at fire hydrants. The flushing process will help dislodge and wash away any mineral deposits that may have accumulated in water mains over the years.

Once the flushing process is complete, the City will begin disinfecting its drinking water supplies with chloramines instead of chlorine. Chloramines are a combined form of chlorine that is considered superior to free chlorine due to its more pleasing taste and heightened disinfection properties. Chloramines will help protect against any harmful bacteria from entering treated drinking water as it flows through the City's distribution system. For most customers, the only noticeable change will be an improvement in the taste and odor of our drinking water. Some customers, such as certain medical facilities and customers with home aquariums, may need to take some special steps in preparation for the start-up of the new Pee Dee River Regional Water System and the addition of chloramines. Please see the story, "New Water System To Use Chloramination" on page 3 for more information.

City personnel will make every possible effort to prevent rusty water and pressure fluctuations during the transition period. However, with the addition of a major new source such as the Pee Dee River plant, it is almost inevitable that some water quality and pressure issues will occur. The

understanding and patience of our customers during the plant startup phase will be greatly appreciated. However, if water quality or pressure problems do not clear up in a reasonable time period, please report these issues to the City by calling the Utility Department at (843) 665-3236.

While the City is flushing its water distribution system, customers may want to consider draining their household water heaters. By draining their water heaters, customers can flush out mineral deposits that typically accumulate at the bottom. Most manufacturers recommend draining water heaters at least once a year. Like most household appliances, water heaters operate more efficiently when drained on a regular basis and this will help minimize the amount of water discoloration.

If you have any questions about the startup of the new water system, please contact Forrest Whittington at (843) 665-3236 or Mack Maloch at (843) 665-3271.



The Pee Dee River Regional Water System includes three sedimentation basins that remove particles of sediment from the water before it flows through filters.

URBAN YOUTH CORPS HELPS BEAUTIFY CITY DURING SUMMER



Around the community, the City of Florence's nine youth corps students performed landscaping and beautification projects, including the installation of the parking area at Timrod Park and landscaping along the Rail Trail. Other projects included enhancing the beautification of the city by trimming and pruning Crepe Myrtle trees and azalea bushes along city streets.

South Carolina's



FIRST PROJECT IMPACT COMMUNITY

BUILDING A DISASTER-RESISTANT COMMUNITY

Since becoming South Carolina's first Project Impact community in 1998, the City of Florence has taken many positive steps to make our city and community more resistant to the damaging effects of disasters.

Florence's Project Impact initiative is part of a nationwide effort by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to encourage communities to work together towards one common goal, disaster prevention. FEMA's former director, James Lee Witt, launched Project Impact in 1997 in an effort to minimize the effects of disasters on communities across the nation. At that time, FEMA offered "seed money" to help communities organize mitigation plans and actions. Funding for the

highlights some of the Project Impact activities the City has initiated, completed and is continuing. These projects range from strengthening public buildings and developing warning systems to updating flood maps and initiating ongoing public awareness programs.

Complementing the City's participation in Project Impact, efforts are underway to alleviate the area's stormwater flooding problems. The City of Florence established a \$12.5 million capital improvement program funded by the City's Stormwater Utility. As part of the capital improvement program, the City of Florence is working to decrease the amount of storm water pollution in its communities through a required national program by the EPA, called the National Pollutant Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II. The goal of the Storm Water Phase II program for cities, such as Florence, is to establish long-term storm water activities and projects that fulfill the six permit requirements, which include:

- 1) Public Education and Outreach,
- 2) Public Involvement and Participation,
- 3) Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination,
- 4) Construction Site Runoff Control,
- 5) Post-Construction Runoff Control, and
- 6) Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping.

“MITIGATION MUST BE THE CORNERSTONE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT. IT IS THE BEST WAY FOR US TO SAVE LIVES, PROPERTY, AND TAXPAYER DOLLARS.”

- JOE M. ALLBAUGH, FEMA DIRECTOR

City of Florence's Project Impact came from this "seed money," a \$500,000 Project Impact grant. The grant provides funds to build the public-private partnerships and launch mitigation projects based on the identification of local risks and hazards. In Florence, partnerships were formed with representatives from more than 30 public, private, and non-profit groups and agencies, all enthusiastically supporting and participating in Florence's Project Impact activities.

Since the signing ceremony on June 11, 1999 with Florence Mayor Frank Willis, Florence's Project Impact has taken several steps to improve its disaster preparedness and response capabilities. Equally important has been Florence's community commitment to several mitigation projects designed to reduce the City's vulnerability to damage in future disasters.

In determining the risks in the Florence area, a hazard mitigation plan was developed. Located in a region laced with numerous rivers and streams, Florence is subject to many natural hazards including earthquakes, storm-related flooding, tornadoes, fires, and hazardous material spills. This publication



CONTACT INFORMATION

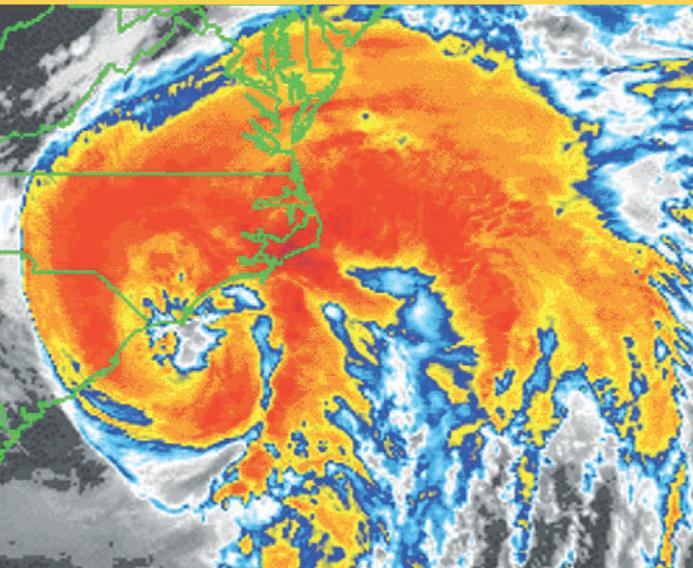
If you would like more information about Florence's Project Impact, please call Liz Shaw, Project Impact Coordinator, at (843) 665-3175 or log on to www.cityofflorence.com.



HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATE IN PROJECT IMPACT

Not only does Project Impact support and host community activities, Project Impact also encourages individuals and their families to be prepared for a disaster. The following includes ways you can prepare in the event of a disaster:

- **Monitor the News** - Monitor the radio, TV, or NOAA Weather radio for weather bulletins.
- **Family Disaster Plan** - Develop a family disaster plan, including evacuation plans, especially if you live in a mobile home.
- **Home Supply Kit** - Maintain a family disaster supply kit in your home. The kit should include plenty of pure water, a first aid kit, and a flashlight with fresh batteries, non-perishable food items, and a battery-operated radio.
- **Full Gas Tank** - Keep your car full of gas and have plenty of spare cash. Gas pumps and ATMs won't work without power.
- **Flood Insurance** - Your homeowner's insurance does not cover flood damage, purchase flood insurance to cover your home and its contents from your insurance agent. Through the National Flood Insurance Program, City residents are entitled to a 10% flood insurance premium reduction and you can buy flood insurance even if you are not in a floodplain.





MITIGATION PROJECTS SUCCESSFULLY TAKE ACTION

The City and our residents realize that being prepared before a disaster occurs makes plenty of sense. Committed to disaster prevention, Florence's Project Impact has successfully taken action on the following projects through public-private partnerships and community activities.

PUBLIC AWARENESS PROJECTS

- **City of Florence Hazard Awareness 2001 Calendar (completed)**

A calendar with an emphasis on disaster preparedness was distributed to over 13,000 households in the City. Each month highlighted a different topic on preparedness and other helpful tips, such as first-aid, emergency phone numbers, and home safety.

- **Employee Hazard Awareness Events (ongoing)**

Local businesses and companies are encouraged to provide emergency preparedness information to their employees. A display booth is available at no cost for such events.

- **American Red Cross Checklist (completed)**

In cooperation with the Red Cross, a storm preparedness checklist was designed and distributed to approximately 22,000 water and sewer account customers. For additional copies, please call (843) 665-3175.

- **Hurricane Awareness Events and Displays (ongoing)**

In cooperation with Lowe's Home Improvement Stores, Hurricane Awareness events have been held for the past three years. Several local agencies are involved in distributing hurricane preparedness information to the general public during these Saturday events.

- **Hurricane Hunter Aircraft Exhibit (May 10, 2001)**

In cooperation with the Florence County Emergency Preparedness, the National Weather Service, and the Pee Dee Electric Cooperative, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Hurricane Hunter team flew into Florence on May 10, 2001 to draw attention to the threat of inland flooding associated with hurricanes. Hundreds of local school children visited the aircraft and learned about how hurricanes are formed and how to be prepared.

- **Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days (ongoing)**

Safely disposing of household hazardous wastes is a popular annual event first organized by the Project Impact committee and funded by Project Impact, City of Florence, Florence County, and the Keep Florence Beautiful Committee. Removal of these potentially harmful items helps towards the goal of keeping Florence and its citizens resistant to disasters.

- **Flood Insurance Community Rating (ongoing)**

There will be continued participation in the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System. As a current Class 8 community, City residents are entitled to a 10% flood insurance premium reduction and efforts continue to improve the rating through a variety of flood related mitigation activities.

TECHNICAL PROJECTS

- **Digitizing and Updating Flood Maps (ongoing)**

Digitized flood maps of the Florence area have been prepared and submitted to FEMA for official approval. Floodplains have been digitized to reflect local topography, new streets, and new developments. Once approved by FEMA these updated flood maps will provide more accurate data for local floodplain management.

- **Inventory of Private Dam Information (completed)**

There are several privately owned dams in the Florence area which were evaluated by an engineering report to determine if any action was necessary to reduce flooding risks. The resulting report identified the dams, their location and current condition.

- **Inventory of Flood Prone Buildings (completed)**

Over 100 structures in the City and surrounding flood prone areas have been surveyed and Elevation Certificates prepared for each location. These certificates along with flood insurance and flood protection information will be mailed to each property owner.

- **GIS Development (ongoing)**

Project Impact will help with continued development of the Geographic Information System (GIS), a computer mapping system which provides an invaluable tool for local floodplain management, the stormwater utility and many other city activities.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

- **Strengthened Critical Public Buildings (completed)**

In every City, the fire stations, water treatment facilities, and public works buildings are all critical to residents and businesses. After a hazard evaluation in 2001 and using funds from the Project Impact grant, the public buildings were wind retrofitted with storm shutters to make them better able to withstand high winds associated with tornadoes and hurricanes. New bay doors, designed to meet the wind load requirements of the International Building Code, were also installed at the main fire station on East Palmetto Street.

- **Upgraded Utility Connections and Monitoring (completed)**

Storms and flooding may cause interruptions to the power supply to the City of Florence's utilities and, in turn, affect service to customers. A study of ways to minimize the effects of power outages resulted in two major projects funded through the Project Impact grant. Service connections to critical pump stations have been modified to accept generator hookups, so they can operate in the event of extended power outages. Funding is also being allocated for a major expansion to the System Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, which is a computerized system, which automatically monitors lift stations and alerts personnel in the event of failures and malfunctions. Quicker identification and notification of problems increases response time and the prevention of system failure.

- **Installing Weather Monitoring Systems (ongoing)**

In cooperation with Florence County Emergency Management and WPDE-TV, Channel 15, six freestanding weather stations will be installed throughout the Florence area. These high-tech stations have the ability to measure wind speed and direction, solar radiation, outside air temperatures, relative humidity, barometric pressure, wind-chill, heat index, and dew point, among other features. They will also provide real-time weather data accessible via the Internet to local emergency management agencies and to Channel 15's meteorologists. Horry and Georgetown counties are also participating in this project giving extensive coverage of the region.

- **Installing Warning Systems (ongoing)**

The Cheves Street Underpass is prone to flooding during heavy rainfalls and inevitably motorists are stranded under the bridge. A warning system has been designed which will activate flashing lights automatically when excessive amounts of water collect in the underpass.

FLORENCE STEPS UP EFFORT AGAINST WEST NILE THROUGH MOSQUITO CONTROL PROGRAM

In an effort to reduce the mosquito population and as a citywide precaution against the West Nile Virus, the City of Florence has boosted its year-round mosquito spraying operation.

Comprised of two trucks utilizing ultra low volume sprayers, the operation is divided into four routes around the city with each route being sprayed once per week. Consistent spraying is conducted in the evening from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. when mosquito activity is high and weather conditions are favorable.

The insecticide, Aqua-Reslin with the active ingredient permethrin, is used in the mosquito spraying and is colorless, odorless, and environmentally sensitive. Although the insecticide's mosquito kill is not total, the goal of the spraying operation is to significantly reduce the population to a more tolerable level.

Another major effort of the city's mosquito control program is the application of larvicide in ditches with standing water located throughout the city. These chemical briquettes remain active for up to 150 days and kill mosquito larvae as they develop. This application helps to significantly reduce the number of mosquitoes before they mature.

Although spraying and chemical briquettes help reduce the mosquito population, the best way to prevent the spread of the West Nile Virus in our region is to eliminate the areas where mosquitoes breed. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) recommends getting rid of stagnant water to control mosquito breeding.

Residents can take an active role in this process by inspecting their yards and homes for any items that could collect water including birdbaths, wheelbarrows, pots, tires, and tree holes. Methods of removal include emptying containers that hold water, keeping ditches free of trash so water will continue to flow, and regularly cleaning out leaves and trash from gutters.

ABOUT THE WEST NILE VIRUS

The West Nile Virus, commonly found in Africa, West Asia, and the Middle East, can infect humans, birds, mosquitoes, horses, and some other mammals. Scientists from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) believe the virus has probably been in the eastern United States since 1999.

According to the CDC, the chance of becoming infected with the West Nile Virus is low, as less than 1 percent of mosquitoes in infested areas actually carry the disease, and less than one in a hundred bite victims will ever experience illness.

While there is no vaccine for West Nile, the South Carolina DHEC recommends wearing insect repellent that contains the ingredient DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), which can further reduce the risk of being bitten. The EPA has noted that individuals of all ages (age 2 and up) can use DEET-based repellents with confidence in any concentration as long as label directions are followed.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS OF THE WEST NILE VIRUS, CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ABOVE TOPICS VISIT THE FOLLOWING LINKS:

**DEET-BASED REPELLENTS:
WWW.DEETONLINE.COM**

WEST NILE VIRUS:

**SOUTH CAROLINA DHEC:
WWW.SCDHEC.NET/HS/WESTNILE**

**CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL:
WWW.CDC.GOV**

**CITY OF FLORENCE SPRAYING:
WWW.CITYOFFLORENCE.COM**



TENNIS ANYONE? CITY SERVES UP NEW TENNIS COURTS AT TWO PARKS

Mayor Frank Willis, members of City Council, and members of the Florence Tennis Association officially opened sixteen new tennis courts in the City of Florence during a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 13th at Timrod Park.

Over the past eight months, through a subcommittee chaired by Councilman Billy Williams, the City of Florence worked to improve the tennis recreational facilities at Timrod and Lucas Parks.

The project included the construction of 14 regulation size tennis courts at the 18-acre Timrod Park on Timrod Park Drive and two regulation size tennis courts at the 12-acre Lucas Park between Park Avenue and Santee Drive. New vinyl-coated fencing was added for all courts and existing lighting was appropriately relocated with additional lighting for the new courts at Timrod. The project also included a paved parking area with 18 spaces between the

tennis courts and Timrod Park Drive, and reconstruction and paving of the parking area of 25 spaces next to the Jeffers Center at Timrod Park.

The Florence Tennis Association, a volunteer, non-profit organization, played an instrumental role in the construction process and worked closely with the City of Florence staff in an effort to secure high-quality tennis facilities in the community. The association, which strives for the promotion of the sport of tennis in the Florence community, plans to purchase court amenities such as benches, canopies, and a hitting wall for the new courts at Timrod at a cost of about \$16,000.

The project was also made possible with help from the Urban Youth Corps Summer recruits. The youth constructed a new linear parking area at Timrod Park, with the installation of a 300-foot timber border and the installation of a steel slag-parking surface.

Future plans for Timrod Park include the construction of outdoor restrooms, which can be utilized by both tennis players and other park visitors. The restroom facility project will be constructed with grant monies received from the Dr. Bruce and Lee Foundation of Florence, a private foundation that provides grants for projects related to health, human services, youth, education, cultural, historical and environmental preservation.

Total cost of the project, including the future completion of the restroom facilities, will be about \$485,000. The Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation provided a \$90,000 grant and the City of Florence funded the rest of the project. Palmetto Paving Corporation of Conway and Florence constructed the tennis court construction project at Timrod and Lucas Parks.



CITIZENS SAFELY DISPOSING OF UNWANTED HAZARDOUS WASTES

Household hazardous waste materials when improperly disposed can be a potential danger to your health and the environment. Check your product label for more information on how to properly dispose of such hazardous products. Certain household chemicals can become potential hazardous waste when left unused for a long period of time or when mixed with other household chemicals.

Hazardous waste materials can be categorized as corrosive, ignitable, reactive, or toxic. Corrosive means that the chemical is capable of dissolving or wearing away surfaces gradually and examples include drain cleaners that contain sulfuric acid. Ignitable materials, such as gasoline and matches, pose a fire hazard and such items indicate that they shouldn't be stored near heat, but rather a cool, dry place. Reactive materials are unstable, toxic materials that tend to react spontaneously, such as reacting vigorously with air or water or when exposed to shock or heat. Reactive materials include some drain cleaners and bleach. Toxic materials, such as household cleaners, are known to be poisonous when ingested or inhaled and can be a potential threat to human health.

To help residents properly dispose of their household hazardous waste, the City of Florence recently held a Household Hazardous Waste

Collection Day at the South Florence High School. The day was organized by Keep Florence Beautiful with joint funding provided by the City of Florence, Project Impact, and Florence County. The following organizations provided support: South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Florence County Emergency Management, Florence County Environmental Services, the City of Florence Project Impact, the City of Florence Public Works, and VULCRAFT.

From about 300 participants, 15,000 lbs. of paint, 2,500 lbs. of mixed solvents, 2,500 lbs. of lead acid batteries, and 1,856 lbs. of pesticides were collected on Household Hazardous Waste Day on September 7, 2002. The hazardous waste management and disposal was performed by ECOFLO, an environmental waste services company, of Greensboro, N.C. The most common hazardous materials disposed of included old tires and paint.

Although the collection day has passed, there are still a number of ways you can continue to properly dispose of hazardous waste. The City of Florence provides waste oil collection for your used motor oil at three locations, which include Marion Street Fire Station on East Marion Street, Ben Dozier Fire Station on West Palmetto Street,



The City of Florence helps its residents collect and properly dispose of unwanted hazardous wastes at Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days and with waste oil collection sites, such as this one at the James McLaughlin Fire Station on South Edisto Drive.

and James McLaughlin Fire Station on South Edisto Drive. Location operating hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Other household hazardous waste, such as lead-acid batteries, can be properly disposed at the following Florence County Recycling Centers: Greenwood School off Highway 51 and Carnell Street, Stadium Drive off McCurdy Road behind the National Guard Armory, Quinby at the intersection of Highway 24 and 358, and Ebenezer Road near ESAB. Location operating

hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

For information on disposing of other household hazardous waste, please read the product label on proper disposing techniques or try to give away leftover chemicals to someone who could use them.

RAIL TRAIL PRESERVES ROADBED OF ABANDONED RAILROAD LINE

CITY OF FLORENCE RAIL TRAIL

The City of Florence's Rail Trail is one of 12 located in the state. It utilizes an abandoned railroad bed that was donated to the City by Dr. Edward C. Floyd. The trail, which opened on June 1, National Trails Day, runs from Sneed Middle School to McLeod Fitness Center, and provides opportunities for walking, biking, and rollerblading among other physical fitness activities.

In March 1999, the Palmetto Conservation Foundation, a non-profit organization for the protection and conservation of natural, cultural, and historic resources, approached the City of Florence with plans for the development of trails in the Florence community. The Foundation was specifically interested in plans for the development of a trail using the abandoned rail corridor running parallel to West Palmetto Street (Highway 76) towards Old Ebenezer Road and Sneed Middle School. A portion of McLeod Regional Hospital property located at McLeod Fitness Center was also developed as a link for the trail.

The city has completed work on the initial phase of the roadbed of the abandoned railroad line from the beginning of the trail at Old Ebenezer Road to McLeod Fitness Center. This work included clearing debris, grading, drainage, and placement of a stone base on the trail. Bridge railings have been installed along the sides of the 200-foot trestle that spans Jeffries Creek. City staff also constructed a natural trail and installed about 175 feet of boardwalk through the wooded portion of McLeod Fitness property. Asphalt was laid on the stone base run of the trail, approximately 1.5 miles along the old rail corridor. The City also constructed an entrance at the Old Ebenezer Road location, which includes landscaping and a railroad-crossing gate.

Over the next several months, plans include a sidewalk and pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Ebenezer and Pine Needles roads. Another sidewalk is planned from Old Ebenezer Road to Sneed Middle School, as improvements are completed by the S.C. Department of Transportation.

To make this project a reality, the City of Florence collaborated with various agencies including the Palmetto Conservation Foundation, the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control, Florence School District #1, McLeod Hospital, Clemson Extension Services, Florence County Recreation, and the S.C. Department of Transportation.



DIRECTIONS: The Rail Trail is located at the sharp curve of Old Ebenezer Road, across from Sneed Middle School.

HOURS: Dawn to Dusk

LENGTH: 2 miles

PARKING: Parking is at the post and rail fence, but additional parking is available at the McLeod Fitness Center.

RESTROOMS: Restrooms are available at Ebenezer Park.

COST: Free

TRAIL RULES:

Leashed pets are permitted. No camping. No motorized vehicles, but motorized wheelchairs can be used on the paved portion.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

City of Florence Recreation Department,
400 Timrod Park Drive, Florence, SC 29503
(843) 665-3253