

POLICE DEPARTMENT OPENS REGIONAL OFFICES TO BETTER SERVE COMMUNITY

Last summer, the City of Florence police department opened two regional offices, one located in the northern region (Athens Street) and the other in the southern region (Attwood Avenue) of the city limits.

This policing concept decentralized the police department's uniform police services from its City-County Complex headquarters to two fully functional police regional headquarters offices. It is a concept envisioned and directed by Chief Anson Shells who worked as a region commander for the Richland County Sheriffs office immediately prior to coming to Florence.

Police decentralization is an expansion of the community policing concept. This concept ensures that officers, permanently assigned to a specific region, are in a better position to respond to calls for police service more rapidly while providing a more enhanced police presence.

The region concept splits the uniform patrol division of the Police Department in

half and assigns officers to permanent duty on a specific side of the city. Both of these two regions have three separate geographical districts that the officers are assigned to each day. The district lines were drawn by taking into consideration the historic amount of police calls for service and the amount of area the officer would be responsible to cover. Each region headquarters is commanded by a police lieutenant who reports directly to the patrol division commander.

Currently the two region headquarters are open for police officers use 24 hours a day but only occupied full time during normal business hours for the general public. In the future, the police department will staff these offices around the clock, seven days a week,



The City of Florence police department opened two offices in the Florence region, one on Attwood Avenue and the second on Athens Street (pictured above).

with Class III (specific duty) police officers. These officers will be able to handle walk-in complaints or direct an individual to the proper location for the services they request.

Citizens may seek any assistance needed at either of these locations as well as at the Central Headquarters located at the City-County Complex at 180 N. Irby Street.

**Florence
City Council**

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. in Room 604 at the
City-County Complex, 180
North Irby Street, Florence, SC.**

www.cityofflorence.com

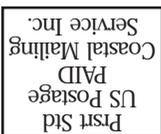
Woodmont drainage improvements in progress.



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City of Florence
180 North Irby Street
Florence, SC 29501-3456
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NEWS & HAPPENINGS FROM THE CITY OF FLORENCE & ITS UTILITY SYSTEMS · WINTER/SPRING 2004

GRANT FUNDED PROJECTS ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE



Infrastructures funded through grants enable the city to attract new industry.

In 2003, the City of Florence was selected to receive grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assist with various projects and ultimately assist with the downtown revitalization effort.

EPA SELECTS FLORENCE TO ASSESS BROWNFIELDS

The U.S. EPA selected the City of Florence to receive a \$200,000 Brownfields assessment grant, which the City intends to use to perform environmental site assessments in seven targeted areas. Grant funds will also be used for community outreach activities, cleanup planning and health monitoring. The overall goal of this project is to promote the revitalization of Florence's downtown area through the redevelopment of brownfields,

which are abandoned and underutilized industrial and commercial properties.

"These downtown vacant buildings detract from redevelopment efforts for the region," said Downtown Development Coordinator LeRoy Adams. "We hope the cleanup and improvements of brownfields properties will boost the economy and attract new business to the region."

In 2001, the City of Florence completed a Downtown Master Plan and City-Wide Structure Plan to make the downtown area the cultural heart of the Pee Dee region. The City of Florence's Brownfields Assessment Project Work Plan includes the environmental consulting services of Concurrent Technologies Corp.

As a part of the Brownfields project, the City was also awarded a \$500,000 grant from the Bruce & Lee Foundation to purchase the majority of the Triangle property. Several reuse options for the property include a park, community center, science center, performing arts theater, a county museum or the Florence Little Theatre. The City will strongly consider all options and will select those that will be most beneficial to all Florence citizens.

The Brownfields Assessment project is an integral part of the City's revitalization and will encourage redevelopment through restoration and preservation methods.

RESERVOIR PROVIDES EMERGENCY WATER STORAGE

In December 2002, the City of Florence completed the construction of the Pee Dee River Regional Water System, a 10 million gallon per day capacity surface water plant which utilizes the Pee Dee River as a source of water, supplementing existing groundwater sources.

Phase II of the project consisted of the construction of a freshwater reservoir capable of storing up to 15 million gallons of surface water from the river, associated pumping equipment, a stand-by generator and ammonia feed equipment at eight existing groundwater plants. Phase II is scheduled for completion in February of 2004.

"We're well prepared for any situation," said City Manager David Williams. "The reservoir increases the reliability of the treatment processes and the quality of finished water

delivered to our customers. The reservoir will also allow continued operation at the plant using stored water in an emergency."

The Phase II project's construction was funded by \$1,840,800 from an EPA grant and by a State Revolving Fund loan of about \$2,517,834.

GRANTS HELP FUND CITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Other projects that were completed during 2003 include:

HIGH HILL / TWO MILE CREEK SEWER INTERCEPTOR

The City of Florence's High Hill / Two Mile Creek Sewer project provides much needed capacity to the I-95/Highway 52 development corridor. The project also represents a significant project in support of a regional sewer system and was funded in part by a grant of \$1.5 million from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). This sewer collection system will provide needed sewer service to the developing Highway 52 corridor within Darlington County.

(continued on page 2)

GREEN SPACE ENCOURAGES ENVIRONMENT, WILDLIFE PROTECTION

The preservation and protection of the environment and its wildlife greatly contributes to a community's character and quality of life. In an effort to provide for urban green space and manage ecological areas within the municipal limits, the City of Florence has implemented a Green Space Plan through the Parks, Beautification and Leisure Services Commission Annual Plan to help beautify and manage ecological areas in the city.

Since 1970, the population in the City of Florence has increased about 42 percent, according to the U.S. Bureau of Census. This trend of rapid growth

can result in urban sprawl, which fragments the landscape in communities and divides animal habitats.

"Through our plan, the City will identify a network of our community's open spaces," said Chuck Pope, Department Manager of Parks and Leisure Services for the City of Florence. "Our vision is to help preserve green spaces in Florence that will maintain vital ecological processes, wildlife populations and human health."

The City is interested in purchasing suitable vacant properties throughout the Florence community to set aside as green space. Green space is important

because it serves many needs; it vastly benefits the community by recognizing and addressing the needs of both people and nature.

City projects through the Green Space Plan include an increase in the tree planting schedule and the continuing development of the Florence Rail Trail. The Florence Rail Trail Committee, a collaborative group of various agencies, businesses and individuals in the Florence community, is continuing to plan development for



Green space in the City of Florence will help to preserve wildlife, such as the white egret pictured here.

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CITY COMPLETES COUNTY WATER AND SEWER CONSOLIDATION

In July 2002, Florence County water and sewer services merged with the City of Florence to allow all residents in the Florence area to benefit from reliable, high-quality service. Essentially all drinking water is now produced by the Florence Water System. This has eliminated all purchases of water from the Darlington County Water and Sewer Authority, except for one small isolated area.

The water system was designed to allow for future expansion and can accommodate the needs of future

population growth in the Florence area. As a result of the consolidation, former county customers received an initial rate reduction of five percent.

This consolidation not only interconnected the water and sewer systems, but also integrated former county utility personnel into the city utility work force. Former county employees retained comparable jobs with no reduction in their existing pay.

The consolidated utility system is being operated by the city with a net reduction of four employees, even though the area served by the city

more than quadrupled. The reduction in employees was accomplished through attrition.

Water service interconnections were completed in November 2002 between the city and county distribution system at eight points in the area. The system is fully integrated hydraulically and all work was completed in-house with an out-of-pocket expense of less than \$20,000.

In order to provide more efficient and cost-effective treatment of wastewater, two small plants obtained from the county are scheduled to be abandoned. Their flow will be

pumped to the City wastewater collection system for the treatment at the main plant. One plant is scheduled to be abandoned in the spring of 2004, with the second to be taken out of service in 2005. The sewer line extensions necessary to consolidate these plants will also provide service to additional areas in Florence County.

The regional consolidation of water and sewer service in Florence County provides a reliable and cost-effective solution to meet the needs of all customers in the area.

PROJECTS ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE (continued from page 1)

S.C. HIGHWAY 327 CORRIDOR SEWER IMPROVEMENTS

S.C. Highway 327 is a prime development corridor and the site of seven industrial sites currently marketed by the Florence County Development Partnership. The highway connects I-95 with U.S. Highway 76/301. In an effort to continue attracting industry and business to this area, the S.C. Department of Commerce awarded the City of Florence a \$3,209,365 grant to fund water and sewer infrastructure. Senator Hugh Leatherman was instrumental in helping to secure grant funds for the City. The project, funded through the S.C. Tobacco Funds, provides sewer service to the Pee Dee Touchstone Energy Commerce City, a significant industrial development project for

Florence and the surrounding counties. It not only provides sewer service to the Commerce City but extends sewer service along Highway 327.

QUINBY SEWER SYSTEM

The Quinby Sewer Collection System completes the City's commitment to provide sewer service for the Town of Quinby, which was previously served by septic tanks. This \$1.9 million project, designed by Davis & Brown Engineering, provides sewer service to the residents and developing areas of Quinby. Existing water system customers in Quinby were exempt from sewer system tap fees. The infrastructure project will provide a means for growth in the Town of Quinby.

GRANTS HELP FUND CITY RECREATION PROJECTS FLORENCE RAIL TRAIL

The City of Florence received two grants, a \$100,000 State Trails Grant from the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism and a \$324,000 Enhancement Grant from the Department of Transportation, for the development of trails within the Florence community. These funds have been instrumental in the development of the Florence Rail Trail which created a walking/biking trail along an abandoned rail corridor with connectors to residential neighborhood, Ebenezer Park and Sneed Middle School.

MIDDLE SWAMP CORRIDOR

The City of Florence, on June 24, 2003, received from Governor Mark Sanford a Recreation Land Trust Fund Grant (RELT) in the amount of \$100,000 to be administered through the South

Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

The City of Florence has put together a plan for the expenditure of these funds and has begun negotiations for the acquisition of property along Middle Swamp corridor. The Middle Swamp corridor runs parallel to the Jeffries Creek corridor but is located more to the southern edge of the City. At this time, there is approximately 160 acres of creek channel and timber along the Middle Swamp corridor that would be available to the City. Not only would this allow for the conservation of green space within the City of Florence but it would also allow opportunities for the City to provide a passive park within newly annexed areas on the south side of the City. The RELT grant is a 50/50 match grant with the City of Florence also contributing \$100,000 in funding.

CITY OF FLORENCE COMMUNITY CENTER HOURS

NOVEMBER 1 THROUGH APRIL 11

Levy Park (Pine Street extension) & Northwest Park (Ingram and Clement Street)

Monday - Thursday 10:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Friday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Maple Park (Alexander Street between Gregg and King Avenue)

Monday - Thursday 3:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Friday 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

APRIL 12 THROUGH OCTOBER 31

Levy Park (Pine Street extension) & Northwest Park (Ingram and Clement Street)

Monday - Thursday 10:00 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Friday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Maple Park (Alexander Street between Gregg and King Avenue)

Monday - Thursday 3:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Friday 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

For more information, contact the City of Florence Parks & Leisure Services at 665-3253.



Parks & Leisure Services

GREEN SPACE (continued from page 1)

a trail system through the City of Florence. The first two phases of the rail trail are approximately 2.5 miles in length connecting McLeod Fitness Center to a County Park located on Ebenezer Road and on to Sneed Middle School. Contributors to this initial phase of trail development include Dr. and Mrs. C. Edward Floyd, Pepsi Cola Bottling Company, McLeod Health, and Vulcraft.

The Florence Rail Trail was the first phase of establishing a multi-purpose trail system that over time, can be developed to link various areas of the Florence community through green space areas and greenway corridors. The trail system, linking communities and existing parks, provides an opportunity

for citizens to enjoy a fun, family activity that promotes health and fitness, as well as allow a safe alternative route from several large residential areas to the Florence urban areas, schools and parks. This trail system development could link existing parks such as McLeod Park, Jeffries Creek Park, Southpark, Timrod Park, Lucas Park, Levy Park and Freedom Florence through a corridor of greenways and trails and existing public sidewalks.

Over the next few years, the Green Space Plan will greatly benefit the Florence area with its protection of natural environments and endangered species while also increasing recreational opportunities, such as walking and biking.

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE DESIGNATES FLORENCE STORMREADY

The next time severe weather threatens, the City of Florence will be ready for the storm. In August 2003, officials from the National Oceanic and



Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) designated the City of Florence as one of the federal agency's StormReady communities. The City joins Florence County and Myrtle Beach in the growing

number of StormReady communities.

"This announcement is clearly the result of the hard work, vision and leadership of the City of Florence Emergency Management, the Project Impact group and the city-wide network of volunteer SkyWarn storm spotters," said Tom Matheson, Warning Coordination Meteorologist of the National Weather Service. "The citizens of the City of Florence should take great pride in having achieved this status. The National Weather Service is proud to have the City as a part of the growing national StormReady family."

The StormReady voluntary program, created in 1998 by the National Weather Service's Tulsa, Oklahoma forecast office, is aimed at preparing communities with the communication and safety tools necessary to save lives and property. This action plan responds to the threat of all types of severe weather - from tornados to tsunamis.

StormReady provides advice to community leaders, emergency managers and media that would help improve their local hazardous weather operations. StormReady communities are better prepared to save lives from the onslaught of severe weather through better planning, education and awareness.

"StormReady encourages our community to take an active approach to strengthen our hazardous weather procedures and public awareness," said City of Florence Project Impact Coordinator Liz Shaw. "While there is no way to prevent such storms, we can be prepared and ready to act immediately after they pass to protect everyone we can."

StormReady Requirements

To be certified as StormReady, the City of Florence has met the following requirements of the preparedness criteria:

- establishing a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center
- having more than one method of receiving severe weather forecasts and warnings and alerting the public
- creating a system that monitors local weather conditions
- promoting the significance of public readiness through community seminars
- developing a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding exercises

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PREVENTS CONSTRUCTION SITE POLLUTION

Polluted stormwater runoff from construction sites often flows into city stormwater systems and ultimately ends up in local rivers and streams. 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 picks up trash, oil and other debris, turning it into stormwater pollution.

Even during a short period, construction sites can contribute many pollutants to our community's water resources. These pollutants can include sediment, sanitary wastes, phosphorus



As pictured above and left, the use of natural systems to help slow stormwater flow and capture pollutants is a part of the conservation design in the implementation of the Construction and Post-Construction measures in the Stormwater Phase II program.

and nitrogen, pesticides, oil and grease, concrete truck washout and construction chemicals/debris. Pollutants and debris from construction sites not only harm water resources, but also create unsightly conditions.

The City of Florence, together with the City's Stormwater Advisory Board, implemented our Stormwater Phase II program to reduce the pollutants from construction and post-construction activities. The Stormwater Phase II program is the next step in the Environmental Protection Agency's effort to preserve, protect and improve the nation's water resources from polluted stormwater. The Stormwater Advisory Board was established to assist the City of Florence in drafting changes to ordinances, codes, regulations and standards impacting future developments in the City.

The goal of the Stormwater Phase II program for cities, such as Florence, is to establish long-term stormwater management activities and projects that fulfill the six National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) 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 Site Runoff Control

6. Pollution Prevention / Good Housekeeping

This part of the program includes meeting the requirements of two of the six minimum control measures as required by the Stormwater Phase II, Measure No. 4 Construction Site Runoff Control and Enforcement and Measure No. 5 Post-Construction Site Runoff Control and Enforcement.

The Construction Site Runoff Control and Enforcement (Measure No. 4) enforces programs to reduce the pollutants from construction activities. In order to meet requirements and reduce stormwater runoff potential, City staff will review construction plans, check erosion and sediment, conduct site inspections and enforce control measures. Recommendations for this measure include land grading, natural vegetation preservation, diversion ridges, silt fences as well as general construction waste management practices.

The Post-Construction Site Runoff Control and Enforcement (Measure No. 5) enforces programs to help reduce the pollutants from past construction runoff. With this measure, the City will be required to update land development standards and educate



targeted groups on the new post-construction management. Recommendations for this measure include conservation design, the reduction of impervious surfaces and residential cluster development. Conservation design is the utilization of natural systems and processes to enhance functionality. These designs, such as riparian buffers and vegetated buffers, help to slow stormwater flow and capture some stormwater pollutants through biofiltration.