



FULL LIFE. FULL FORWARD.  
**FLORENCE**  
SOUTH CAROLINA

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## **City of Florence Awarded the Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Award for Economic Development at the Municipal Association of South Carolina Annual Meeting**

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**FLORENCE, SC** – Today at the Municipal Association of South Carolina's (MASC) Annual Meeting, the City of Florence was honored with the Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Award for Economic Development. Mayor Teresa Myers Ervin accepted the award on behalf of the city, recognizing the city's leadership in fostering economic growth through innovative sports tourism initiatives.

The City of Florence embarked on this path recognizing a dual objective: promoting community wellness through enhanced recreational facilities and positioning itself as a premier sports tourism destination. By strategically expanding its recreational infrastructure, Florence has created a dynamic that not only benefits residents but also attracts visitors, spurring economic growth across various sectors.

A unique aspect of Florence's approach has been the intentional integration of facilities within the community, strategically placing them for accessibility via Interstates 20 and 95, and extending the existing trail system to better accommodate bikers and pedestrians. This strategy not only enhances visitor access but also strengthens connectivity with local neighborhoods, businesses, and popular destinations.

Central to the success of this initiative has been strong collaboration with various stakeholders. The City Council's forward-thinking funding allocations, coupled with support from partners like the Drs. Bruce & Lee Foundation and local recreation associations, have been instrumental. These partnerships have not only facilitated the development of state-of-the-art facilities but also fostered a welcoming environment for tournament attendees and residents alike.

Looking ahead, Florence remains committed to advancing its role in the Sports Tourism Industry. Plans include the development of a new four-field multi-purpose complex and the expansion of the Pearl Moore Basketball Center to include an arena-style basketball facility. These expansions aim not only to elevate Florence as a top sporting events destination but also to promote economic prosperity through increased tourism and hospitality revenues.

The economic impact of these efforts has been substantial, exceeding \$10.6 million for the 2023-2024 fiscal year alone, driven by over 37,000 visitors to Florence. With a projected return on investment expected within six years, Florence is positioned to reinvest in future projects that will foster long-term growth and enrich the community.

Through these initiatives, Florence exemplifies its dedication to enhancing the quality of life for all residents, promoting inclusivity, accessibility, and fostering community engagement. The city's ongoing commitment to youth and healthy living underscores its vision for a vibrant and prosperous future.

Mayor Teresa Myers Ervin stated, "We are incredibly honored to receive the Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Award for Economic Development. This recognition from the MASC highlights Florence's commitment to innovation and community-driven growth. We are excited for Florence's ongoing development in the sports tourism industry to further drive Florence Full Life, Full forward."

City Manager Scotty Davis added, "We look forward to leveraging this momentum to further elevate Florence as a destination of choice, while also enhancing the quality of life for our citizens. None of this would have been possible without a supportive council, dedicated staff, and our incredible partnerships."

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