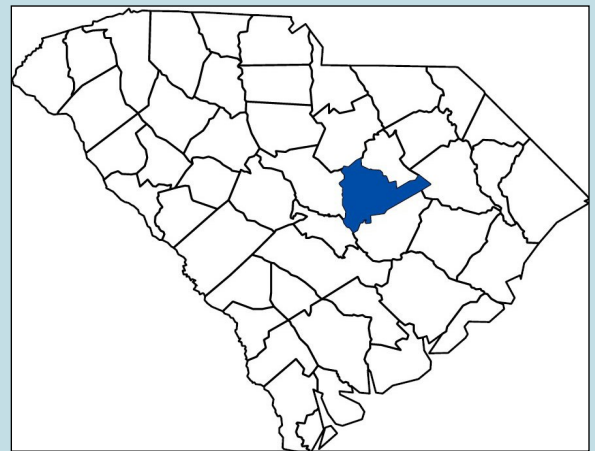




Sumter County,
South Carolina



Progress 2022

Annual Report



Table of Contents

Comments from our County Administrator Page 3

Taxpayer dollars at work Pages 4-6

Council Districts and Council Members Pages 6-8

A Year in Review Pages 9-27

Our Workforce Pages 28-30

A Brief History of Sumter County Pages 31-33



Progress —
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Sumter County Mission Statement

Sumter County Government seeks to create an environment in which partnerships between the private and public sectors are developed for the purpose of improving the quality of life for our citizens. Sumter County will foster a climate conducive to increased economic development and improvement of the educational, social and cultural opportunities for our citizens. Sumter County will provide the leadership to ensure citizen participation in the governance of the County as it works to deliver the highest quality of services in the most cost effective manner.



A message from the County Administrator

It's been another busy year in Sumter County as we moved forward in many areas.

We have a new Litter Program and a City-County Litter Advisory Board, we saw economic development efforts yield concrete results, we had a world-class exhibit of Norman Rockwell's art come to Sumter, we enjoyed seeing the Mary McLeod Bethune statue stop by Mayesville on its way to our nation's capital, we cut the ribbon on several Capital Projects Sales Tax projects and we rocked out to native son Lee Brice for the first ever concert at Patriot Park.



Gary Mixon

This past Fiscal Year saw Team Sumter become stronger than ever. We will continue to work with the City of Sumter, our friends at Shaw Air Force Base serving our nation in the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army, our friends at the Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce, and our Legislative Delegation. When we stand together and work hard, we can accomplish anything.

I'm proud of Sumter County Council and our Finance staff for their diligent and transparent efforts toward shaping our Budget. We take our roles as stewards of Sumter County's finances seriously and will always work as efficiently as we can.

Our future is brighter than ever.

Your taxpayer dollars at work

Sumter County Government relies on an assorted revenue base to finance county operations, as it essential to maintain a balanced revenue mix.

As with most local governments, property taxes – also known as ad valorem taxes – are the major source of revenue.

The Sumter County Assessor’s Office establishes property values using standard appraisal practices for all real property and mobile homes in Sumter County. Industrial and manufacturing properties are valued by the S.C. Department of Revenue, but if you’re a homeowner in Sumter County, you will deal with local appraisers when it comes to your land, buildings, structures or improvements on that land.

Our appraisers are licensed by the South Carolina Real Estate Appraisers Board, and if you have questions about legal residence applications, agricultural use value applications or other discounts for developers or land owners, then you will deal with the Assessor’s Office.

If you own a boat, motorcycle, car, truck, or an airplane, you will pay taxes on those items as well items used in a business, such as furniture, fixtures and equipment.

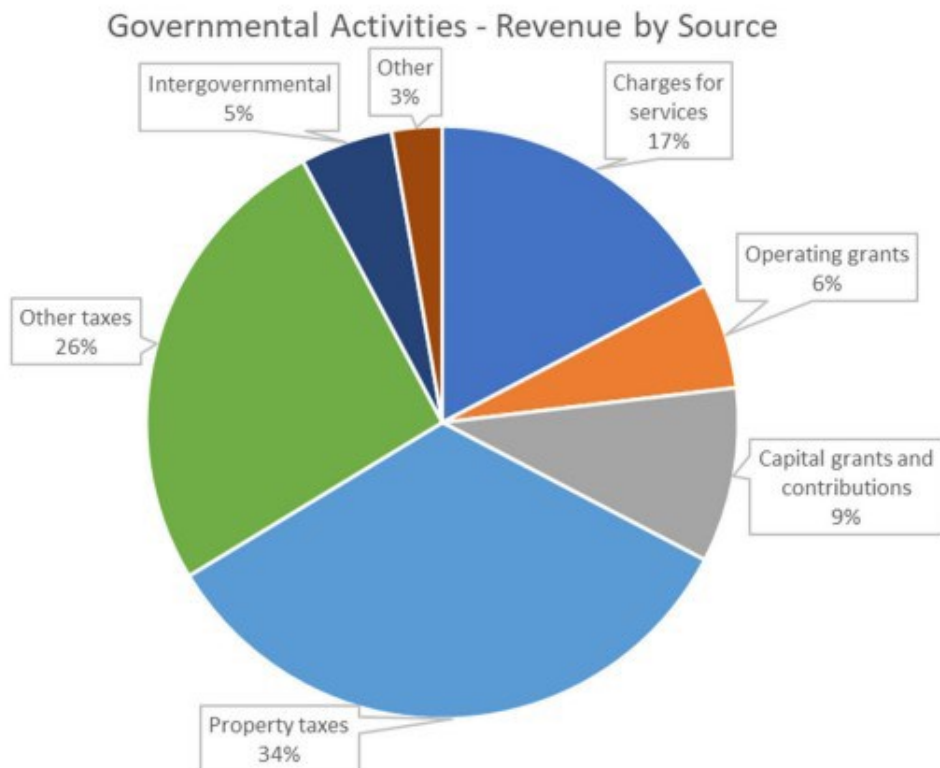
That information is then passed on to the Auditor’s Office, which calculates taxes and sends out bills, which are col-

lected by the Treasurer’s Office.

The General Fund is the main operating fund of County Government and provides the resources for programs and services typical of County Government such as Public Safety and Recreation.

Tax revenue in the General Fund also comes from the Local Option Sales Tax, which is a revenue stream generated by a one-cent tax on retail sales. As per state law, counties are allowed to hold a referendum to ask voters to levy a one-cent sales tax and to apply that revenue stream to lower ad valorem taxes. State law divides the proceeds from the sales tax into two revenue streams: the Property Tax Credit Fund and the County Revenue Fund. Sumter County Government is required by law to use the Property Tax Credit Fund to offset ad valorem taxes while the County Revenue Fund is available for general revenue purposes. When the Local Option Sales Tax was approved, County Government elected to also apply the County Revenue Fund proceeds to tax reduction.

Taxes levied for Education fund the Sumter County School District, Central Carolina Technical College and the University of South Carolina Sumter Campus. Taxes levied for County Operations fund Public Safety, the Sumter County Library, Recreation and General Government Administra-



tion. Taxes levied for Environmental Operations fund the landfill and recycling activities. All property in Sumter County except industrial parks are subject to taxes.

How else is County Government funded?

Business licenses, building permits, marriage licenses, hazardous material permits, cable television franchise fees, intergovernmental revenues such as the Local Government Fund, ambulance transports, water, special recreation programs, sewer service, fees for housing federal prisoners as well as court fees and fines.

Residents also pay an annual fee to support the Solid Waste Fund operations and tipping fees are collected from businesses that utilize the facilities.

A Hospitality Tax is imposed on the gross proceeds of sales of prepared meals and beverages in Sumter County and that revenue is solely dedicated to improving services and facilities for tourists.

All motorized vehicles licensed in Sumter County pay a Road User Fee, which is used to maintain and improve county roads. This is not to be confused with the “C” Funds, which are used to account for the state gasoline tax allocated to Sumter County for roads.

Sumter County also has a Storm Water Fund that funds the operations of the Storm Water Management Program.

WHAT DOES THE COUNTY DO WITH TAXPAYER DOLLARS?

Glad you asked.

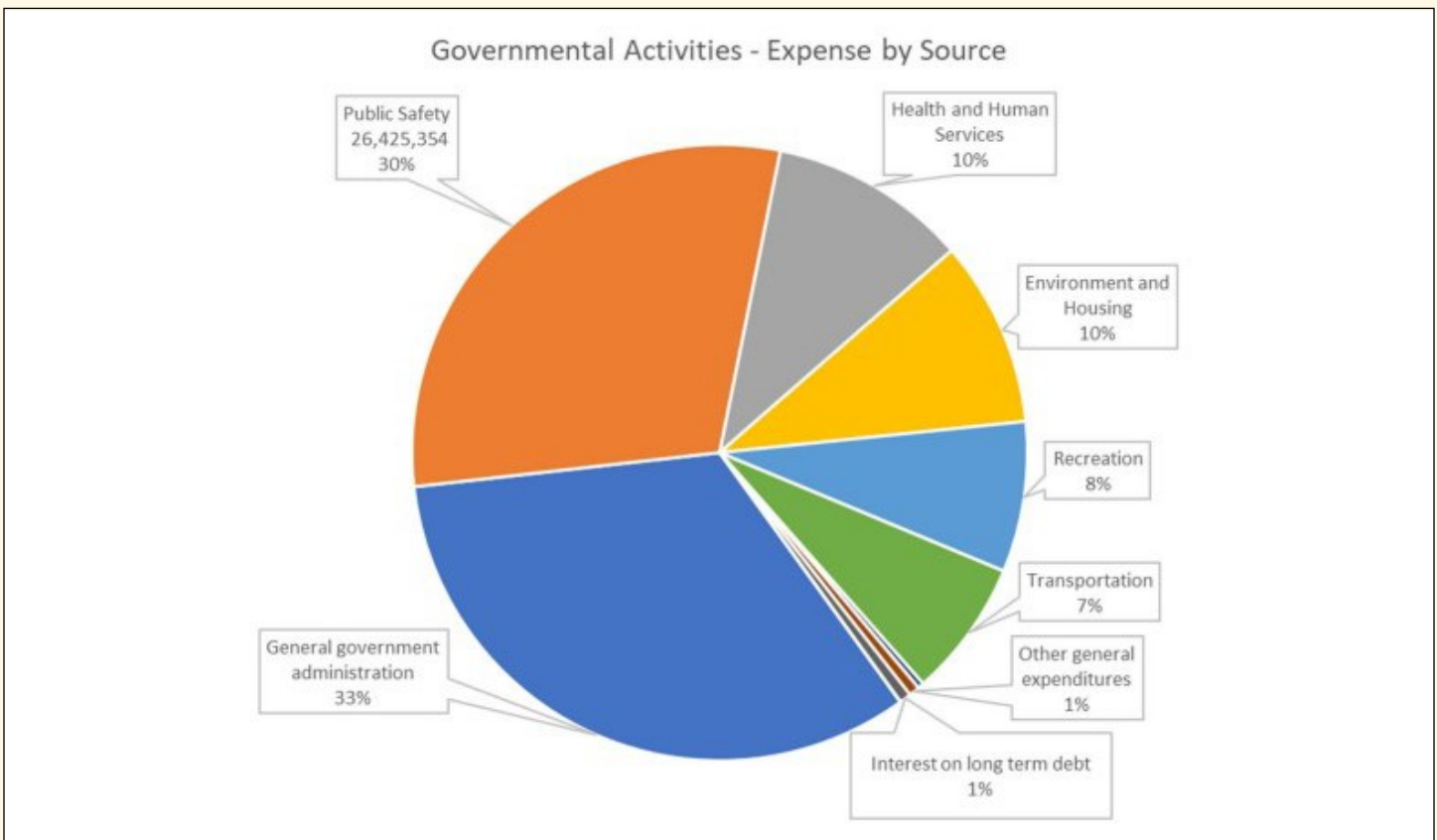
Your taxpayer dollars – ours, too – fund Public Safety services such as the Sumter County Sheriff’s Office, the Sumter-Lee Regional Detention Center, Fire Districts One and Two, Emergency Management and the Sumter County Coroner’s Office.

Recreation programs, our parks and Community Centers, Crystal Lakes Golf Course and Patriot Hall are also funded by taxes.

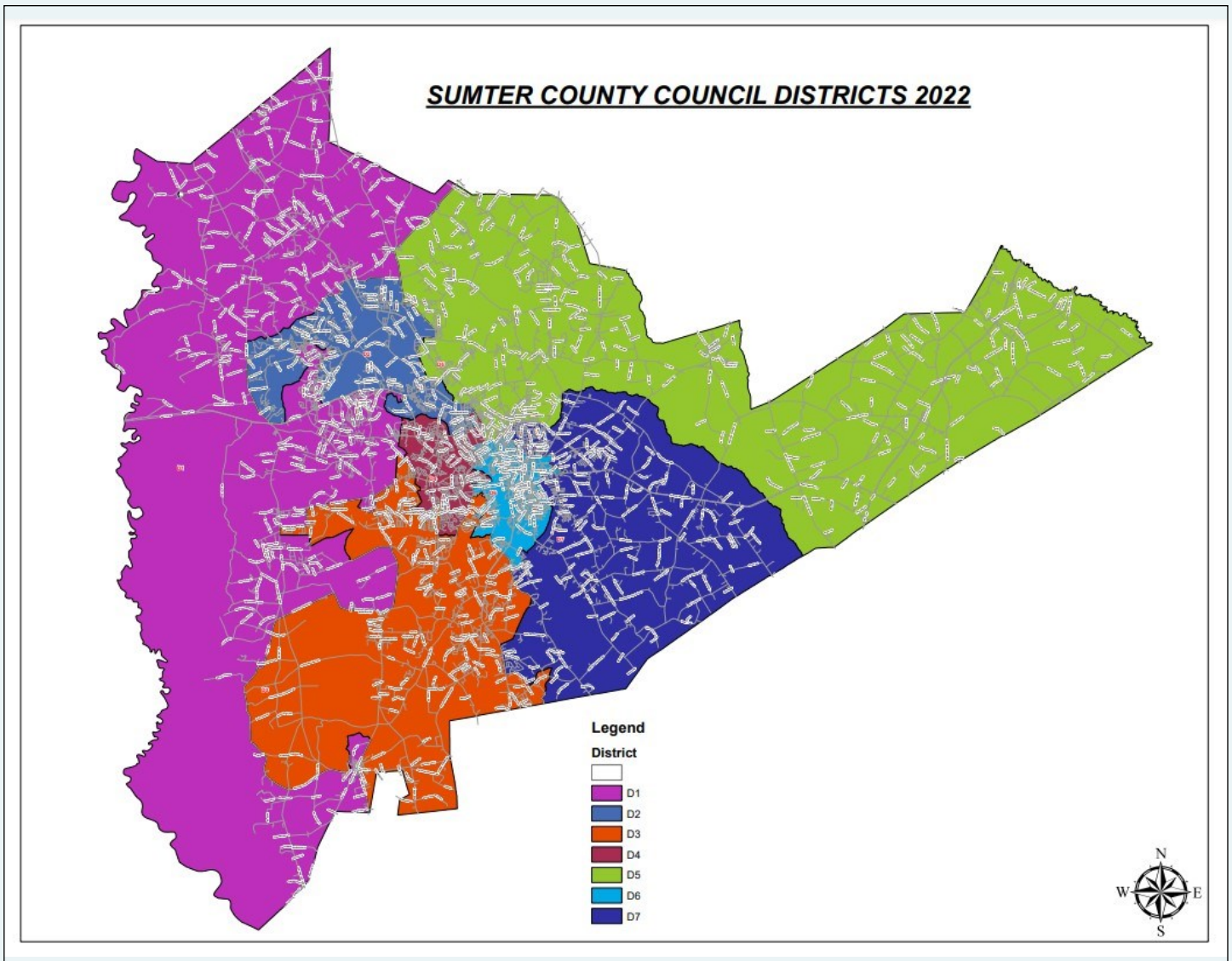
Under the branch of Health and Human Services are Sumter County Emergency Medical Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse services and Mental Health Services comprise the Health and Human Services function.

General Government Administration includes Sumter County Council, Administration, Finance, Treasurer, Auditor, Assessor, Register of Deeds, Clerk of Court, Family, Probate and Summary Courts, Master-in-Equity, Solicitor, Public Defender, Voter Registration/Elections, Veteran’s Affairs, Public Works, Purchasing, Human Resources and Information Technology.

For a deeper dive into County Government’s finances, visit that department online at www.sumtercountysc.gov to review annual financial documents from an external auditing firm.



Sumter County Council Districts



There are 46 counties in South Carolina, and Sumter County is one of 34 counties in the state that operates under the Council-Administrator form of government. Administrative responsibility rests with the County Administrator, who supervises day to day activities of County Government and reports to Council.

Sumter County Council has seven members who are elected under single member districts. The County, by action of Council members, has the power to tax and spend revenue for a wide variety of purposes.

With majority vote, Council can engage in water, sewer, solid waste collection and disposal, transportation, planning, economic development, creation of hospitals and medical care, and public health services. County Council can also authorize referendums to seek citizenry input for utility systems and additional taxes and fees.

Council functions as the governing body with the power to buy and sell property, to enter into contracts, to exercise the power of eminent domain, and to assess and levy ad valorem property taxes and uniform services charges. Council functions as the authority to establish county agencies, departments, boards and commissions, and to appoint the members of such bodies. Council may authorize the development of personnel policies and procedures for county employees except for those officials directly elected by the people.

The Clerk to Council is a full-time employee of Council, along with the Administrator.



Chairman James T. McCain Jr. - District 6

jmccain@sumtercountysc.gov

317 W. Bartlette St., Sumter, S.C. 29150

803-773-2353 (home) 803-607-2777 (mobile)

District 3 - Vice Chairman James (Jimmy) R. Byrd Jr.

jbyrd@sumtercountysc.gov

Post Office Box 1913

803-468-1719 (mobile)

803-436-2108 (fax)



District 2 - Artie Baker

Council@sumtercountysc.gov

3680 Bakersfield Lane

Dalzell, S.C. 29040

803-469-3638 (home)

District 7 - Eugene (Gene) Baten

Council@sumtercountysc.gov

Post Office Box 3193

Sumter, S.C. 29151

803-773-0815 (home)



District 4 - Charles T. Edens

cedens@sumtercountysc.gov

3250 Home Place Road

Sumter, S.C. 29150

803-775-0044 (home) 803-236-5759 (mobile)



District 5 - Vivian Fleming-McGhaney

vmcghaney@sumtercountysc.gov

9770 Lynches River Road, Lynchburg, S.C. 29080

803-437-2797 (home)

803-495-3247 (school)

District 1 - Carlton Washington

cwashington@sumtercountysc.gov

4885 Dennis Road

Rembert, S.C. 29150

803-760-6704



Clerk to Council - Mary W. Blanding

clerk@sumtercountysc.gov

13 East Canal Street

Sumter, S.C. 29150

803-436-2107

Sumter County Council meets at 6 p.m. every second and fourth Tuesday of the month in Council Chambers inside the Administration building at 13 East Canal Street. Special meetings may be called as deemed necessary.

Anyone wishing to place an agenda item on County Council's agenda must give a written request to the Clerk to County Council and provide appropriate supporting documents to the Clerk on the Wednesday before each meeting date prior to 4 p.m. Information can be mailed to 13 E. Canal St., Sumter, S.C. or fax information to 803-436-2108 or e-mail information to clerk@sumtercountysc.gov.

A look back at the past year



Sumter County's Fiscal Year in review: from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, we saw a grant-funded and community-wide litter initiative take shape, we enjoyed a groundbreaking ceremony for new industry, we cut the ribbon on a new gymnasium and much more as Sumter County marked several wins during a busy year.



All eyes were on **Mayesville** on **July 9, 2021**, as a ribbon cutting ceremony was held to celebrate the **grand opening** of that town's One Cent Capital Projects Sales Tax Referendum project.

In addition to the museum and art gallery, there's **public housing**, a medical clinic, a café and **public space** for events.

Mayesville is known as the birthplace of educator and presidential advisor Mary McLeod Bethune.

The **City-County Litter Advisory Board** on **July 26, 2021**, held its inaugural meeting at the Patriot Park Pavilion. The all volunteer board was appointed by the City of Sumter and Sumter County Government with the aim of **ridding Sumter County, South Carolina, of litter**. Education, community cleanups, prevention and enforcement comprise the board's goals. During the LAB's **Sept. 21, 2021**, meeting, the Rev. Ernest Frierson (right, standing) was elected as chairman and Scott Burkett was chosen as Vice Chairman.



The **Sumter County Airport** celebrated **Aviation Week** on **Aug. 18, 2021**, and a ribbon cutting for South Carolina Avionics Services was held to mark the expansion of the airport, which has a **\$17 million annual economic impact**.

The annual economic impact of aviation in South Carolina is about \$16 billion.





Nova Molecular Technologies broke ground on its new Racetrack Road facility on **Aug. 12, 2021**, heralding the creation of **25 jobs** with a **\$15 million investment** at the Pocotaligo Industrial Park. City, County and State officials were on hand to laud the expansion of the **Wisconsin-headquartered private company**, which produces high purity solvents to serve agriculture, biotechnology and pharmaceutical markets, and more.



“Nova Molecular is part of Team Sumter.”
- Council Chairman James T. McCain Jr.



As seen in these **Aug. 26, 2021**, photos, work was underway to accommodate a **Norman Rockwell** exhibit at the Sumter County Gallery of Art, which opened **Sept. 3, 2021**. The exhibit was organized by the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts and saw a large turnout until it closed on Dec. 3, 2021.

The Sumter County Gallery of Art presents
Norman Rockwell
American Chronicles
 Organized by the Norman Rockwell Museum
 Stockbridge, MA
September 3 - December 3

The Sumter County Gallery of Art (SCGA) is proud to present *Norman Rockwell: American Chronicles*, organized by the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts September 3 - December 3, 2021. The exhibition will include fifteen original paintings and 19 prints, magazine tear sheets, and posters. Norman Rockwell was the quintessential American artist - his themes reflecting American life in the decades of the 30s through the 60s. Even people who don't know a lot about art recognize the work of Norman Rockwell. From WWII War Bond Posters to his idyllic *Saturday Evening Post* covers to capturing the Civil Rights era - all will be included in the Sumter exhibition. This is the most exciting, ambitious exhibition SCGA has presented in its 50-year history.



Sumter and Shaw AFB came together on **Sept. 11, 2021**, at the Public Safety Complex, to honor those lost 20 years ago in the terrorist attacks in **New York City and Washington, D.C.**



Donna Dew was officially named as Sumter County's new **Emergency Management Director** at the **Oct. 26, 2021**, County Council meeting by Sumter County Administrator Gary Mixon.

Dew grew up in Sumter and brings two decades of experience to the job, along with practical knowledge of natural disasters.



The **Veterans Day** parade and ceremony at the Sumter County Courthouse returned to **Downtown Sumter** on **Nov. 11, 2021**, after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. Active duty members of our military from Shaw Air Force Base and elected officials **paid homage** to the men and women who served our Nation in uniform.





City, County and State officials gathered on **Oct. 19, 2021**, at **Patriot Park** as a new **playground** was officially unveiled.

Situated close to the Pavilion, the playground was the result of local government working with our **Legislative Delegation** to improve the **quality of life** by creating a space for children to enjoy while their siblings are playing softball, baseball or soccer.

I think it makes it easier on us to have a Mayor and a County Council Chairman that get along, and collaborate and communicate.
- Senator Thomas McElveen



Five meetings were held in **December 2021** to start a community-wide conversation about a proposed third Capital Projects Sales Tax Referendum. The **first two** penny sales tax referendums were approved by a majority of voters in **2008 and 2014** and are on target to raise over **\$150 million**.





One of Sumter's most revered citizens made a symbolic but important stop in her hometown of Mayesville, S.C., on Dec. 17, 2021, when an 11-foot statue of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune was unveiled before a large crowd.

The statue was on its way to Washington, D.C. where it is destined for the National Statuary Hall.





Late on Friday, **Jan. 21**, 2022, Sumterites were greeted with a rare sight when it **snowed several inches**. By midday on Saturday, **the sun** came out and most of the snow was **melted**, having caused only minor disruptions.



One particular area for Palmetto Pride that Lyles emphasized is how her organization works with communities, counties and municipal governments on how to structure litter programs and get support systems in place.



Palmetto Pride Executive Director **Sarah Lyles** spoke on **Jan. 24**, 2022, to members of the **Sumter Litter Advisory Board**. Her group focuses on four areas: Education, enforcement, awareness and litter pickups.



The City of Sumter, Sumter County Government and the Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce on **Feb. 26, 2022**, **cut the ribbon** on the newly renovated gym at Sumter County's **Recreation & Parks Department** complex on Haynsworth Street. As a **Capital Projects Sales Tax project**, the old gym was renovated, a new gym was added along with a Concessions area, meeting space, a commercial kitchen and more.





The Atlanta Chinese Dance Company performed at Patriot Hall on March 19, 2022.

Assistant County Administrator **Lorraine Dennis**, Assistant City Manager **Howie Owens** and Bishopville Mayor **Grady Brown** spoke to a group of high school students on **March 23, 2022**, at the Patriot Park Pavilion about **local government**.

The students were taking part in the Ross McKenzie **Emerging Leaders Program**, which was created by **Sumter Economic Development** and **TheLINK** Economic Development Alliance.

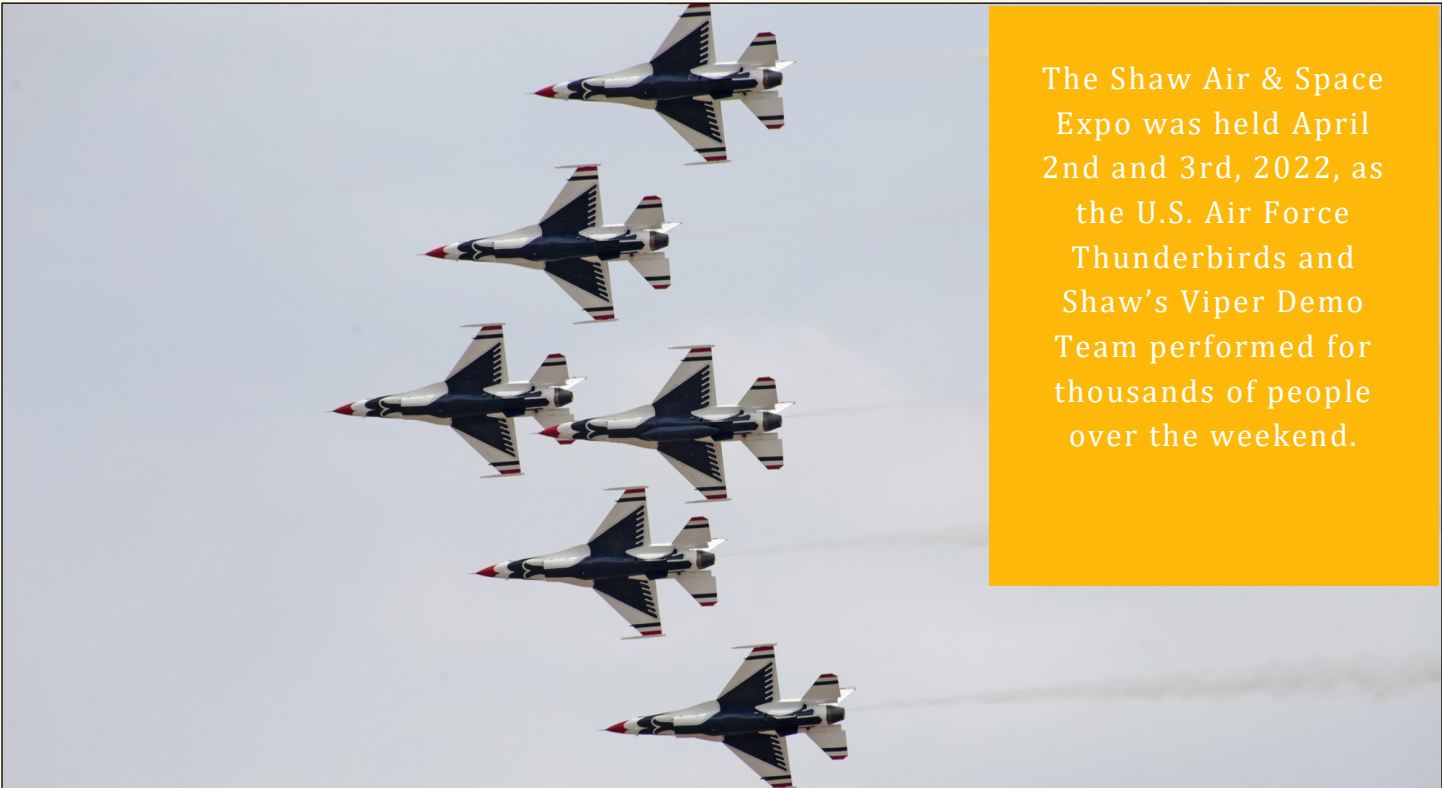


Sumter native **Lee Brice** headlined the first ever concert at **Patriot Park** on **March 31, 2022**, as part of the Inspire! Festival.

His brother Lewis Brice opened the show as the **Brice brothers** paid homage to their Sumter roots before a crowd estimated to be around 5,000 people.



Beginning **April 1, 2022**, Sumter County EMS and **Guardian Ambulance** entered into an agreement to provide additional resources to the County's 911 EMS system. The three-year agreement was put into place due to the short staffing of ambulance services across the country. The Guardian team consists of **licensed EMTs and Paramedics**, just like Sumter County Emergency Medical Services.



The Shaw Air & Space Expo was held April 2nd and 3rd, 2022, as the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds and Shaw's Viper Demo Team performed for thousands of people over the weekend.



Forty two **Sumter County employees** spent the first half of **April 8, 2022**, picking up litter along **Pinewood Road**. Public Works' **Litter Picker** was also used to gather up trash.



Sumter County's Recreation & Parks Department on **April 9, 2022**, hosted an **Easter Egg Hunt** at Dillon Park.



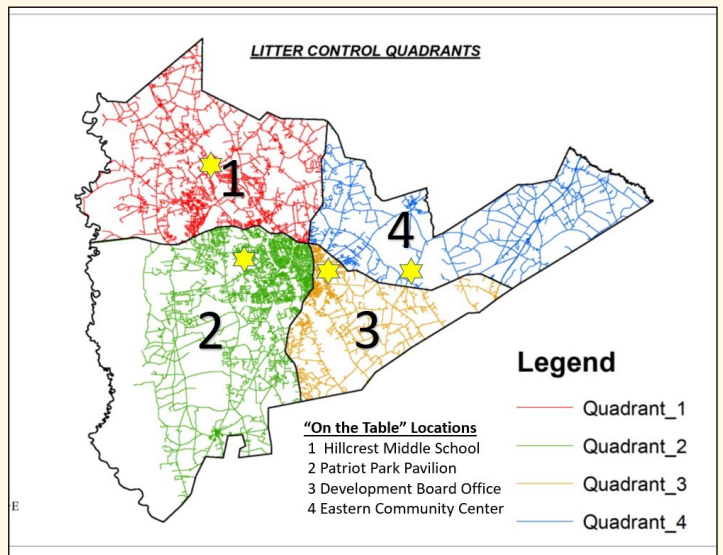
Sumter County Treasurer Carolina Richardson was recognized at the **April 26, 2022**, County Council meeting for being honored with the **L.H. “Sonny” Siau Award of Excellence**, a statewide honor.

Richardson was given the award from the **South Carolina Association of Auditor, Treasurers, and Tax Collectors** during its spring conference.

Richardson has been Treasurer of Sumter County for **21 years**.



A new, **grant-funded initiative** called **‘On The Table’** was held on **April 30, 2022**, as a community-wide discussion about litter was held with **80 participants** taking part in **five locations** in Sumter County. The groups represented were business and industry, our churches, our schools and homeowner/neighborhood associations under the umbrella of communities. **City and County leaders** were integral to the discussion, which was funded by the **Central Carolina Community Foundation**.





Sumter County Council Chairman James T. McCain Jr. on May 10, 2022, read a Proclamation marking May 15-21 as EMS Week in Sumter County. EMS Director Bobby Hingst was on hand as Council showed its support for our EMTs and Paramedics.



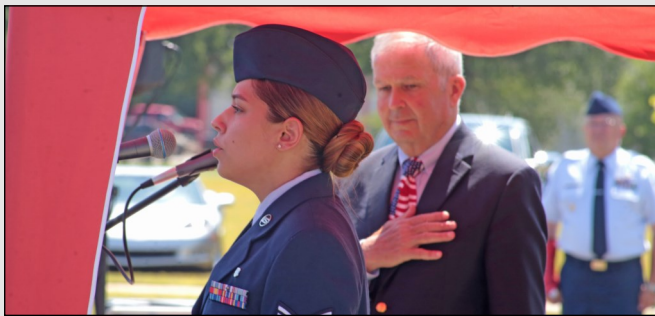
Jordan Sheridan's 'Spellbound' and Thomas the Younger's 'Be One Traveler' opened on **May 12, 2022**, at the **Sumter County Gallery of Art** with an artists' talk and reception.

Dr. Napoleon Wells and Washington spoke about **art, culture and a wide range of topics** before a small crowd.





A **Memorial Day** ceremony was held on **May 30, 2022**, at Sumter Veterans Park as we remembered the men and women **in uniform** who gave their lives for our **Nation**. Col. (Ret.) Alexander Conyers gave the keynote.



Team Sumter showed its love for newly elected **Speaker of the House Murrell Smith**, who has represented District 67 in the S.C. House of Representatives since **2000**.

A **June 9, 2022**, reception at the **Sumter County Civic Center** drew a sizable crowd as Smith and his family heard **well wishes** from fellow Legislators, local officials, and a recorded message from Gov. Henry McMaster.

“It is an honor to be here tonight with you and **more of an honor to celebrate** in my community, **my hometown**, in Sumter, South Carolina,” Smith said.





Sumter County's Emergency Management office was awarded the first week of June a **\$20,000 grant** from Duke Energy.

Donna Dew, Emergency Management Director, said the money will be used for chainsaws for recovery efforts **following a hurricane.**

The grant is part of **Duke Energy's \$500,000 donation** to 34 non-profits and government agencies for storm preparation and recovery.

JAZZ FESTIVAL
AT PATRIOT HALL
 FEATURING SPECIAL GUESTS:
SUMTER COMMUNITY
 JAZZ BAND
 AND
COLAJAZZ
 FEATURING
EBONIRAMM
 FROM COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

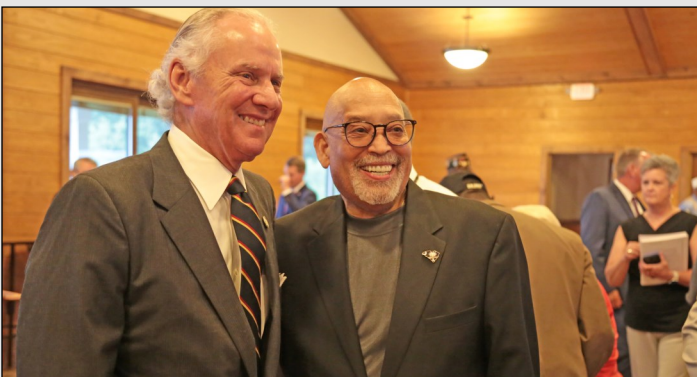


A Jazz Festival at Patriot Hall on June 18, 2022, drew a small crowd as **local and regional** artists performed.





Gov. Henry McMaster came to Sumter on **June 29, 2022**, for a ceremonial bill signing at the Welcome Center at Shaw-Sumter Farm. Known as the **Workforce Enhancement and Military Recognition Act**, the bill provides a full income tax exemption for Veterans' military retirement pay. Joining the Governor were S.C. Veterans Affairs Secretary **Will Grimsley**; Speaker of the House Rep. **Murrell Smith**, District 67; Sen. **Thomas McElveen**, District 35; Rep. **J. David Weeks**, District 51; Sumter County Council Chairman James **T. McCain Jr.**; Sumter Mayor **David Merchant** and dozens of local **Veterans**. Also unveiled were plans to protect **another 1,000 acres of land** bordering **Shaw Air Force Base**.



Sumter County Government's workforce



“He’s got a strong work ethic and problem-solving ability. And his positive attitude leads by example.”

- Sumter County Administrator Gary Mixon, talking about Information Technology Director Les Vandevander

Sumter native Les Vandevander has always been interested in technology but also enjoys time spent outdoors.

Finance Director Uvette Pope-Rogers grew up in Andrews, S.C., graduated from Francis Marion University with a business degree and with an Army Commission. She’s a Certified Public Accountant and a chartered global management accountant.





“Mr. Cooper thrives on going above and beyond in his daily work of maintaining county dirt roads. Not only does he have the skills and knowledge to operate a motor grader, he also has patience and foresight.”

Public Works Director
Karen Hyatt talking
about Willie Cooper



“Susan Howard is a wonderful example of how one person can affect many to be better, work smarter and be helpful to others ... Her professionalism inspires all of us to practice patience and expect excellence in our roles as advocates for victims.”

- Third Circuit Solicitor Ernest “Chip” Finney III

CHIEF DEPUTY CLERK

Kim Geddings was named as Chief Deputy Clerk in August 2021 by Clerk of Court Jamie Campbell.

“Because of Kim’s knowledge, skillset and experience, she was able to transition seamlessly into her new role,” Campbell said of Geddings, a 28-year veteran of the Clerk’s office.



A brief history of Sumter County

Sumter County, South Carolina, is situated in the center of the state with the Wateree River winding down the western border before emptying into Lake Marion at the county's southern tip. Most folks know about our namesake General Thomas Sumter, who earned the nickname of the "Fighting Gamecock" thanks to his pride and tactics as he battled the British during the Revolutionary War.



This portrait of Sumter is currently under restoration.

Before that tumultuous time, the Wateree and Santee Indians lived in an area that came to be known as the "Backcountry" of South Carolina.

After both of those tribes were defeated in the Yamasee War of 1715 and left the area, Scots settlers were expected but never arrived, according to the *South Carolina Encyclopedia*.

Scots-Irish colonists settled along the Black River in the eastern area of the future county in the 1740s. Settlers from Virginia and Pennsylvania settled along the Wateree in the High Hills of Santee in the 1750s.

EARLY YEARS AND REVOLUTION

The Province of South Carolina was divided into seven districts in 1769 following approval of the Circuit Court Act – Beaufort, Camden, Charles Town, Cheraw, Georgetown, Ninety-Six and Orangeburg.

The Revolutionary War interrupted Thomas Sumter's life, according to the *South Carolina Encyclopedia*. He was elected as a delegate to the First and Second Provincial Congress and then took part in the Snow Campaign in December 1775, the Battle of Fort Moultrie on June 28, 1776, and the Cherokee campaign from July to October of 1776. Sumter was involved in engagements in Georgia in 1777 and 1778 and on Sept. 19, 1778, he left the army as a colonel and returned to private life.

Sumter was effectively retired by 1780 when the British made a grave mistake by raiding and then burning his home. He immediately returned to action and organized a local militia, which elected him as their general. In the summer of 1780, it is Sumter's Brigade that is providing the only organized opposition to British forces.

Though several engagements with the British find limited suc-

cess, the Battles of Rocky Mount, Hanging Rock and Fishing Creek in the summer of 1780 energize patriots in the Upstate and Sumter earns his nickname from pure battlefield tenacity.

Thomas Sumter closes his military career in February of 1782 and a year later helps found the town of Stateburg, where he built a home in the High Hills of the Santee.

In 1783, the state sought to establish lower courts with resident magistrates and thus the seven Districts were separated into counties with the Camden District itself divided into seven counties. Named to carry out this task were Thomas Sumter, Richard Richardson, Frederick Kimball, Thomas Taylor, Richard Winn and Edward Lacy. This commission had to recommend a central place for a Courthouse and jail, according to Cassie Nicholes' *Historical Sketches of Sumter County: Its Birth and Growth*.

Two years later, the counties of Chester, Claremont, Clarendon, Fairfield, Lancaster, Richland and York were created. Clarendon and Claremont (the Sumter District) each had two representatives in the General Assembly and one senator.

Between 1776 and 1790, Thomas Sumter serves eight terms in the General Assembly and in 1789 he is elected by Camden District to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. (He would serve five terms until 1801.)

In 1792, the General Assembly creates Salem County from eastern portions of Clarendon and Claremont counties with the boundaries being Kershaw to the north, Georgetown to the south, Lynch Creek to the east and the Scape O'er Swamp to Black River on the west.

Around 1796, the first commercial cotton crops are planted. More and more Sumterites engage in cotton cultivation and fortunes rise and fall with the price of cotton.

The Legislature in 1798 passes an Act to establish a more uniform system of justice under circuit courts. Clarendon, Claremont and Salem counties are joined together and referred to as the Sumter District.

The state Legislature decides to move the capital from Charleston to a more central location. Thomas Sumter tries to have Stateburg named as the capital but loses by one vote, according to local



Thomas Sumter is buried in Stateburg alongside family members.

This postcard is from a collection belonging to the Sumter County Museum.



8001 Dingle's Mill near Sumter, S. C. Scene of Battle, Confederate War.

One of the last skirmishes of the Civil War took place near Sumter even as the Confederacy had surrendered.

legend. Nonetheless, his name is attached to the Sumter District in 1800.

SUMTER DISTRICT GROWS

Mail service in 1801 comes to a place designated as Sumterville by the postmaster general.

On Dec. 15, 1801, Thomas Sumter is elected to the U.S. Senate, where he serves until Dec. 16, 1810.

In 1802 a Courthouse was built in Sumterville at Liberty and Broad Streets – now Main Street – but repairs were needed up until 1806. In 1820 the State Board of Public Works decided to build a new courthouse for the Sumter District. The brick building was designed by Robert Mills, state engineer and architect. Thomas Sumter dies on June 1, 1832, at the age of 97 and as the last surviving general of the Revolutionary War.

The 1840s and 1850s saw railroads change the Sumter District for the better. The town of Manchester had lines running to Camden and Wilmington, N.C., and prospered, as did Sumterville, which reincorporated in 1855 and shortened its name to Sumter. Mayesville grows as a train station fuels its success. It is located near the plantation of Matthew P. Mayes. Lynchburg also grows as a result of a railroad station but soon boasts a school, a carriage and buggy shop and a dry goods store, according to the *South Carolina Encyclopedia*. (Lynchburg is incorporated in

1859.)

In 1855 the Sumter District is divided by the General Assembly with the eastern portion becoming Clarendon District.

The next few years would prove trying for the Sumter District as the price of cotton fell, people lost their property in sheriff sales and to devastating fires in Manchester and Sumter.

In December of 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union and area residents prepared for war. Volunteer organizations and relief associations were set up, along with hospitals for sick and wounded soldiers. Sumter District was primarily a distribution center for the Confederacy during the Civil War due to its central location in the state.

On April 9, 1865, the day of General Robert E. Lee's surrender to General Ulysses S. Grant at the Appomattox Court House in Virginia, Union Gen. Edward E. Potter was still acting on orders to destroy railroads and infrastructure in the area.



The Sumter County Courthouse at 141 North Main Street. These postcards are courtesy of the Sumter County Museum.

Potter's army, which came to be known as "Potter's Raiders," fought Confederate soldiers in the Battle of Dingle's Mill about three miles south of Sumterville even as Lee had surrendered. Potter set up camp here following the defeat of the Confederacy. **SUMTER COUNTY, S.C.**

The district officially became Sumter County in 1868 when the state adopted a new Constitution. A county board of commissioners has jurisdiction over taxes, schools and public works. Charges of malfeasance against the commissioners would result in the county closing some public schools and suspending currency payments in 1873. Sumter County by then had diversified beyond agriculture and industries included seventy-three flour and grist mills, thirty-one lumber mills and ten turpentine companies, according to the *South Carolina Encyclopedia*.

In 1902 Lee County is created from the northeastern portion of Sumter County. A reliable railroad network and busy cotton market keeps Sumter engaged and vibrant. In addition to cotton and tobacco, farmers produce grains, legumes, onions, peaches and dairy products.

The Sumter County Courthouse at 141 North Main Street was built by architects William Augustus Edwards and Frank C. Walter in the Beaux Arts style and opened in 1907.



OAKLAND AVENUE, SUMTER, S.C.



Morris College, a private and historically Black college, is founded in 1908 by the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina. Situated on North Main Street, Morris College was operating with two buildings by 1911 and graduated its first students that year.

Sumter was one of the first counties in the state to undertake a countywide system of hard-surfaced highways, according to Cassie Nicholes' *Historical Sketches of Sumter County: Its Birth and Growth*.

A referendum in 1920 saw the approval of \$2.5 million in bonds to construct paved roads. Additional bond issues in 1923 and 1924 increased the amount to \$4 million, and over the next few years, there were more than a hundred miles of paved roads, according to Nicholes.

Construction of a highway across the Wateree Swamp and a bridge completed in 1923 at Garner's Ferry connected Sumter to Columbia directly.

SHAW AIR FORCE BASE

Shaw Air Force Base is established in 1941 and named after Sumter native Ervin Shaw, a pilot shot down over France in 1918. Originally known as Shaw Airfield, it consisted of three 4,500-foot runways and less than 3,000 acres of land. Today, Shaw AFB is home to the U.S. Air Force's 20th Fighter Wing and headquarters, the Ninth Air Force, U.S Air Forces Central, and U.S. Army Central.

Sumter County's industrial base continues to be a driving force for the local economy as growth of the manufacturing sector fuels the job market in the twenty-first century.

Agriculture in Sumter County is thriving as abundant crops of peanuts, corn, soybeans, winter wheat, broilers, turkey and tobacco keep us ranked high in the state in terms of output.

Sumter's downtown has made great strides in the last twenty years and now boasts new restaurants, a new hotel, and a new brewery.

Poinsett State Park is known for hiking and mountain biking while Manchester State Forest has trails for motocross and horseback riding. Nearby Mill Creek Park offers camping for the equestrian crowd. Five public golf courses and numerous city and county parks are also popular attractions.

In addition to Morris College, Sumter County is home to Central Carolina Technical College, St. Leo College, Troy State University and the University of South Carolina-Sumter.

Arts and culture play an important role with the Sumter Opera House, Sumter County Museum, Sumter Little Theatre and Patriot Hall consistently bringing in well known artists and musicians. In June 2018, the Temple Sinai Jewish History Center opened its doors in partnership with the Sumter County Museum.

Halfway through 2022, Sumter County Government and the City of Sumter are enjoying several capital improvement projects such as a new gymnasium, new animal control facility and a new walking and biking path that will connect Swan Lake-Iris Gardens to Dillon Park.

SOURCES: *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*; *History of Sumter County* by Anne King Gregorie and *Historical Sketches of Sumter County: Its Birth and Growth* by Cassie Nicholes.