

SOUTH CAROLINA

RECREATION & PARKS ASSOCIATION



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On the cover: Photo by Greenville County



Jessica Campbell



Jim Headley

THE ASSOCIATION REPORT

by Jessica Campbell, SCRPA President & Jim Headley, SCRPA Executive Director



What a great year 2023 has been for the Association!

Let's take a look back to see how we are moving forward into 2024.

Many thanks to the players and sponsors of our annual golf tournament that was held in October. The fundraiser was a success, bringing in \$13,900 to support the Association's general operations budget. We had 26 teams, 65 hole sponsors, 7 tent sponsors and a food sponsor. We would like to thank Spartanburg County, Richland County, City of Rock Hill, and Lexington County for their continued support. We also need to thank Churchich Recreation (Jeff, Sue and AJ) as a long-term sponsors for our food. Our tent sponsors this year were Great Southern Recreation, Keck & Wood, McAdams, MUSCO, Playworld Preferred and Woolpert.

Our annual conference is upon us! We are looking forward to a great learning environment and event in Wilmington NC, featuring Sam Glenn as our keynote speaker. We are bringing in several out of state speakers and several folks across the Carolinas who are doing some very unique and creative programming.

The SC Athletic Programs Branch will host the 2014 Sports Management Institute in Florence January 11 & 12. Additionally, the branch has put together an Athletic Grant Fund to support agencies in providing safe equipment and playing conditions for youth sports across the state. Eligibility and applications process and forms can be found on our website under the branches & committees tab, then SC Athletic Programs Branch (SCAP).

Our strategic plan has been approved and we are starting on the implementation phase with defined goals and action steps, which will help lead future boards in the upcoming years. To see the plan please visit our web site under the "About Us" tab.

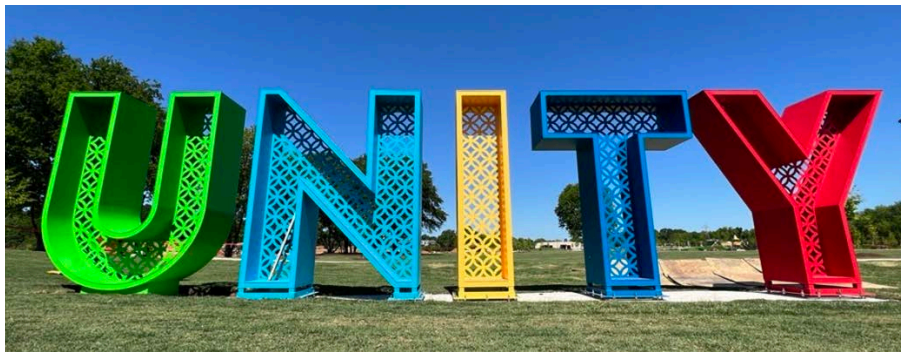
Congratulations to the City of Aiken on receiving their initial agency accreditation at the NRPA Conference in Dallas, and to Spartanburg County, which received its agency reaccreditation. The City of Greenville also

won the Innovative Park Design as well as the Best in Innovation from NRPA for Unity Park! Great job to all!

On the legislative side, we will continue to push for increased funding for PARD, trails and open space. If you should hear of or need anything from the general assembly, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Thank you to everyone for your participation, leadership and unwavering support for our profession. Our Association remains strong because of each of you!

- Jessica & Jim



The City of Greenville won the Innovative Park Design and the Best in Innovation awards from NRPA for Unity Park.



City of Aiken received their initial CAPRA agency accreditation, and Spartanburg County received their reaccreditation, at the 2023 NRPA Conference in Dallas

Upcoming 2023 SCRPA Events

Carolinas Recreation & Park Conference
December 11-13, 2023 • Wilmington, NC

23rd Annual Sports Management Institute
January 11-12, 2024 • Florence, SC

12th Annual Programming Summit
February 21-23, 2024 • Hilton Head Island, SC

For more details and to register for upcoming SCRPA events, visit www.scrpa.org/events.

SCRPA Magazine Deadlines

Spring 2024..... Deadline: January 19, 2024

Summer 2024.....Deadline: April 13, 2024

Fall 2024.....Deadline: June 21, 2024

Winter 2024..... Deadline: September 27, 2024

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Honoring a Legacy of Leadership

BRIAN O. WOFFORD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM HELPS TRAIN FUTURE LEADERS

By Joe Eason, Kim Moultrie and Jim Headley

We want to give our membership an insight into how SCRPA is fulfilling its vision of creating opportunities for all professionals. On May 18, 2012 Brian O. Wofford was tragically killed in an accident. In an effort to honor Brian and his vision of professionalism, SCRPA established the Brian O. Wofford Scholarship. The scholarship is designed to ensure a person of color is selected to be part of our South Carolina Leadership Enhancement & Development Institute (SC LEAD).

“The Beginning”

The start of Brian Wofford’s career in Parks and Recreation was anything but conventional. He was a Clemson grad, but majored in marketing. In 2003, he was thriving in a private sector career but agreed to a mid-week lunch with Joe Eason in Florence County to discuss the possibility of a career in parks and recreation. Joe was seeking to diversify the leadership of Florence County Parks and Recreation. Brian



was hired as the Recreation Superintendent. Joe and Brian both recognized the learning curve would be steep, especially 1 year into a consolidation with the City of Florence, but Brian knew he could do anything he put his mind to.

Brian’s first day on the job was the Monday of a week-long Dixie Youth World Series.

Not the start most would want, but Brian thrived on the big stage. After a successful World Series, Brian was introduced to the training ground of many in our profession – youth sports. Brian had a storied career in football so it would be a cake walk for a former starter at Clemson, right? Not quite. He quickly experienced the challenge of supervising volunteers.

As with all challenges he faced in his all too short life, Brian forged relationships and quickly earned the respect of participants, coaches, community leaders, and his peers.

Brian became involved in our State Association, and Joe quickly realized he would not contain this future leader very long. His network grew stronger with every handshake, hug, and laugh. He took the time to know everyone he met on a personal level. He knew their families, their challenges, and celebrated their successes. He encouraged participation and served as a mentor to Parks and Recreation professionals of all races.

“Going Home”

In 2008, Brian returned home to lead the City of Spartanburg’s Parks and Recreation Department, spearheading the growth still seen throughout the agency today. In Spartanburg, Brian hit the ground running. He helped re-structure the City’s Youth Football Program and Little League Baseball was introduced to youth in the “Center City” because of Brian’s ability to form partnerships. In June of 2009, under Brian’s leadership, the city’s first skate park opened. In effort to address the capital needs in parks and recreation, the city constructed a \$6,000,000 state of the art community and named it the C.C. Woodson

As the head of the City of Spartanburg’s Parks and Recreation Department, Brian had unwavering support for staff and volunteers. He challenged them to expand their professional horizons and grow their capacity to serve.



Community Center. The facility opened on March 17, 2010. All of Brian’s professional abilities were utilized as he displayed his unique way of drawing people together during the sometimes contentious community engagement process. Brian was also instrumental in the revitalization of Stewart Park. He was not, however, able to see its reopening in September of 2012. What you see in the park today, however, is stamped with the Brian Wofford seal of excellence.

As the head of the City of Spartanburg’s Parks and Recreation Department, Brian had unwavering support for staff and volunteers. He challenged them to expand their professional horizons and grow their capacity to serve. He was quickly able to develop a straight and narrow plan to reenergize our department. His charisma



coupled with his “accept only the best” stance brought a fragmented team closer together with a distinct and far reaching purpose.

Brian is honored as a community leader in Spartanburg, due to his ability to listen, interact positively with the public, and follow through with

difficult assignments. His “play to win” spirit was contagious, as he challenged his staff to first know their abilities, grow where needed, and then put those abilities to work for the citizens of Spartanburg and its visitors. City of Spartanburg Parks, Recreation and Special Events is forever grateful for the legacy Brian left for us to Build Community.

Brian’s return to his hometown of Spartanburg was not a surprise. His love of family and community was obvious to all who were privileged to have known him. Kids gravitated to him; peers sought his mentoring; leaders entrusted him with strategic projects. Most importantly, Brian knew it was his obligation to give back to a community that molded him.

Since 2014, SCRPA has honored an individual who best emulates the spirit of Brian by awarding them the Brian O. Wofford Scholarship. The scholarship is given to one of the 12 professionals selected for each LEAD Class.

Wofford Scholarship Recipients to Date

- 2014 – Shane Duncan (Kershaw County)
- 2016 – James Rice (City of Spartanburg)
- 2018 – Tamika Pollard (Spartanburg County)
- 2020 – LaQuan Priest (City of Spartanburg)
- 2022 – Lisa Jackson (Greenville County)
- 2024 – Tandra Cooks (Aiken County)

2024 SCRPA – SC LEAD CLASS

- Joseph Allen, York County
- Andrea Barnette, Rock Hill
- Tandra Cooks, Aiken County
- Keith Eno, Dorchester County
- Rasheka Gaines, Aiken
- Gretchen Haskett, Newberry
- Lisa Lewis-Hutchison, Richland County
- Colby Parnell, Fort Mill
- Kevin Rowland, Charleston County
- Cord Sgaglio, Spartanburg County
- Josh Wall, Greenville County
- Adreanna Wilson, Myrtle Beach

#HeresWhatsHappening

Snapshots from SCRPA member agencies

Neighborhood Teen Lounge in Columbia, SC



The staff at the Katheryn M. Bellfield Booker Washington Cultural Arts Center in Columbia, SC has developed a Teen Lounge, which kicked off on October 3, 2023. The goal is to provide a safe haven for at-risk youth 13-18 years old to not only discuss the daily life challenges they face, but those that come from societal pressures as well. It is our hope to tackle tough conversations such as mental and social health, bullying, etc. In addition to providing a safe space, we provide participants opportunities to visit and seek out higher educational avenues after high school whether collegiate, technical, or vocational. This will help to assist them with becoming productive young leaders as well as helping to choose the correct career path that is just right for them.



Touch-A-Truck



The City of Aiken Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department hosted its 21st Annual Touch-A-Truck event on Saturday, September 16, with an estimated 3,000 in attendance. This free event provides opportunities for children to climb, sit, and explore various vehicles they don't typically get to interact with. This year, we added a 1968 AH-1F Cobra helicopter, a Hummer limo, and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources heritage trailer to our City vehicle collection. We incorporated food trucks, a trackless train, inflatable games, a toddler zone, a PowerWheels Derby, and face painting to make it fun for the whole family. Since 2021, we have offered a Sensory Hour that precedes Touch-A-Truck, asking participants to refrain from honking horns and flashing lights for a sensory-friendly experience.

National Coffee with a Cop Day



The City of Aiken Parks Recreation & Tourism Department hosted the Aiken Department of Public Safety for National Coffee with a Cop Day at the Lessie B. Price Aiken Senior & Youth Center on Wednesday, October 4, 2023. This annual event brings community citizens and local law enforcement together to discuss issues in a relaxed environment. Officers and participants sat together, sharing accomplishments and challenges over coffee and donuts. This low-pressure setting encourages an open dialogue for everyone and increases trust and communication.

Rock Hill PRT Announces Auditorium Renovations

Renovations are underway for McGirt Auditorium at Emmett Scott Recreation Center in Rock Hill. City Councilmembers Derrick Lindsay and Perry Sutton joined Mayor John Gettys to share the plans at a kickoff event in September. The interior and exterior upgrades and expansion projects will help the auditorium continue to serve as a pillar of the community offering a state-of-the-art performance space for events.



The auditorium's history dates back to 1960 when it opened as the auditorium for Emmett Scott High School which served African-American students until 1970. Ms. Josephine Jordan, a graduate of the class of '59 and advocate for the project assisted with the kickoff event. The renovation work is expected to take about a year.

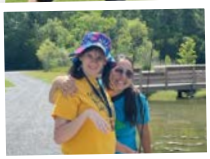
2nd Annual Halloween Food Truck & Treat Event

The Town of Clover took over downtown as they hosted the 2nd Annual Halloween Food Truck & Treat event. On the spooky night of Halloween, Clover converted the parking lots of the Clover Fire Department and Town Hall into the hot spot of trick-or-treating for the Clover community. Over 30 businesses/organizations within the town got creative with impressive tent decorations to hand out thousands of pieces of candy throughout the night.

Clover's goal is to showcase the local businesses and organizations while allowing them to freely promote within the community they live in and love. As this event continues to grow each year, Clover is confident that it will bring our community closer together and create lasting connections between businesses and citizens for years to come. After all, Clover is nicknamed the town with love in the middle.



Adult Life Skills Programming



Recently Dorchester County Parks and Recreation partnered with Beyond Basic Life Skills, a local nonprofit organization in Summerville, SC that offers adult life skills programming and encourages independence for the special needs community. To promote more outdoor/nature experiences, programs, and activities for their teammates, Beyond Basic obtained a Dorchester County Parks and Recreation Park pass. Ashton Johnson, CEO, and founder of Beyond Basic, has worked with park and recreation programming staff who provide structured programs and opportunities for the teammates from Beyond Basic.

In addition to visiting Ashley River Park every week to walk the trails, play on the playground or in the splash pad, enjoy picnic lunches, throw a ball or frisbee around, or just enjoy the outdoors, Beyond Basic teammates are enjoying nature walks, birding programs, bee and pollinator programs, geocaching/scavenger hunts and other structured programs offered by Dorchester County Parks and Recreation. Both organizations have also teamed up with South Carolina Department of Natural Resources to learn all about fishing and could fish in the park. Tom Lindenmayer, local volunteer with DNR, said they are his favorite group to work with out at the park. The group also enjoyed a recent outing to the park to see a presentation from the Birds of Prey. Parks and recreation staff cherish the relationship with Beyond Basic and love having their friends out at the park as much as they love being out here.



AGENCIES: SUBMIT YOUR UPDATES!

Submit a brief for a future issue of SCRPA magazine. Send your text (70 words or less) plus up to three high resolution photos to: Kristen Guilfoos, kguilfoos@spartanburgcounty.org.

MOVING ON UP

HOW SOUTH CAROLINA RECREATION PROGRAMS
ARE GROWING (BOTH LITERALLY IN NUMBERS
AND INTO NEW TERRITORIES).



SMASH PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT KEEPS SMASHING RECORDS

By Rich Dixon, Athletics Program Manager, Greenville County Rec

Each April and October, you can find Greenville County Rec's 12-court Pickleball Complex at Southside Park bustling with the sights and sounds of the Foot Solutions Greenville County Smash Pickleball Tournament presented by Humana and Pelham Medical Center. This once quaint event was initially a part of the SC Senior Sports Classic. Due to overwhelming demand, it became a stand-alone annual event in 2017. In 2020, the county added a fall tournament to address the rapidly-escalating popularity of pickleball in the county and across the region. "This fall Smash is our largest ever, with 550 registered athletes competing," Jeff Poole, Sport District Manager for Greenville County, said. "In fact, we saw a 25% increase from the Spring 2023 to the Fall 2023 tournament," Poole adds. To accommodate the growth, the tournament expanded to a 5-day format, with adult divisions across numerous ages and skill levels in adaptive, women's, men's and mixed divisions.

In addition to the pickleball offered, the tournament leadership team focuses on the overall experience. "We want athletes to feel like they are playing in a high-level tournament by providing real time digital scoring, championship game courts with spectator grandstands, a vendor village, and a Community Family Night complete with free paddle demos. The Community Family Night

is a unique experience with over 20 Community Ambassadors on-hand to introduce and teach the game to both newcomers and experienced players alike. This fall, over 100 people joined us!", Steve Croucher, Recreation Programs Manager-Sports for Greenville County, explains. In addition to Family Night, the Smash also offered non-competitive play opportunities by way of a Special Olympics skills challenge and an adaptive skills clinic.

Word has certainly spread about the Smash. In addition to the local athletes participating, 35% of participants are from outside of Greenville County, and nearly one out of every five players come from out-of-state. "We have had players come from as far south as Alabama and Florida, and as far north as Pennsylvania," Poole said. "It is certainly a sports tourism draw, bringing significant economic impact to Greenville County." With the current growth pattern of the tournament and the 5-day format, the event is able to accommodate 700+ athletes.

If you are interested in the next Foot Solutions Greenville County Smash presented by Humana and Pelham Medical Center, the Spring 2024 tournament will be held April 24-28, 2024 at Southside Park. For more information, visit the Greenville County Rec website: greenvillerec.com/event/greenville-pickleball-spring-2024/.

THE COMMUNITY FAMILY NIGHT IS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE WITH OVER 20 COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS ON-HAND TO INTRODUCE AND TEACH THE GAME TO BOTH NEWCOMERS AND EXPERIENCED PLAYERS ALIKE.



"SO, YOU THINK YOU CAN PUZZLE" - A SPORTING ALTERNATIVE FOR ALL

By: Katrina Page, City of North Charleston

In the world of recreation, where traditional sports have dominated, there's an exciting shift towards diversity and inclusion for all. The City of North Charleston Recreation Department is proud to be at the forefront of this movement as we hosted its inaugural "So, You Think You Can Puzzle Competition" in March 2023.

This competition was created as an exciting alternative for those who may not necessarily want to participate in traditional

sports. This was more than a competition for the attendees; it was a celebration of the endless possibilities within the world of recreation. Participants and families of all ages and abilities were able to come together and compete for prizes.

The "So, You Think You Can Puzzle Competition" consists of 25 teams of four players that race to assemble a 500-piece puzzle. Each team signed up with a different team name and was encouraged to show

their team spirit by wearing fun matching t-shirts or outfits. The teams were given the same wrapped puzzle which they could open at the blow of the start whistle. They then worked as a team to assemble the puzzle as quickly as possible within a 2-hour time period.

The first three teams that completed their puzzles were crowned the North Charleston Puzzle Masters. The winning team from the first competition completed





their puzzle in thirty-nine minutes with the other two winners finishing theirs in under an hour. Everyone who participated still had the opportunity to finish their puzzles even after the three winners were announced. The public competition was so successful that it was decided to implement something similar during Summer Camp. At the end of summer celebration, teams from our three camps competed against one another. The campers were broken into two age groups with teams of four, while the remaining campers cheered on their peers from the sidelines. Since hosting the first competition in March, it has grown in popularity and has become a quarterly event run by the Recreation Department. This program has given us the ability to expand the reach of recreation and provide unique opportunities. We look forward to continuing to invite individuals and families of all abilities to join us in this exciting and fun journey!

IMPRESSIVE PROGRAM GROWTH IN LANCASTER COUNTY

By Natalie Bowers, Lancaster County Parks and Recreation

Lancaster County, home to over 100,000 citizens, is a quaint county nestled in the north-central area of South Carolina approximately 40 miles south of Charlotte, North Carolina, and 60 miles north of Columbia, South Carolina. Lancaster County covers more than 550 square miles and has experienced exponential growth in recent years. With the County elevating in every aspect, how does the Parks and Recreation Department keep up and measure up?

Lancaster County Parks and Recreation has been proudly serving the citizens of Lancaster County for over 48 years. As passionate professionals, we strongly believe that the services and programs provided through parks and recreation are critical to the quality of life in our community. Our department currently manages 348

acres of property – which is comprised of 4 recreation centers, 39 ballfields, 12 playgrounds, 6 picnic shelters, 5 concession stands, 4 walking tracks, 3 walking trails, 1 outdoor swimming pool, 1 fishing pier, and 1 boat landing – dispersed widely throughout the 550 plus square miles that make up Lancaster County.

While the routine maintenance of these properties, our programs, and special events has been enough to keep our staff busy in the past, we are now looking ahead and looking up. We are “moving on up” with increased participation in our youth athletic programs and raising the bar for the experiences and services we provide to the citizens of Lancaster County.

During our athletic seasons, our facilities and staff are operating at max capacity



to host external individuals and groups that utilize/rent our facilities in addition to accommodating our internal athletic programs. This year, our fall season included five programs: tackle football, flag football, cheerleading, volleyball, and soccer. Across these five programs, we had a total of 1,776 participants for the 2023 season, in comparison to the 1,333 participants from 2022. Each of these programs not only





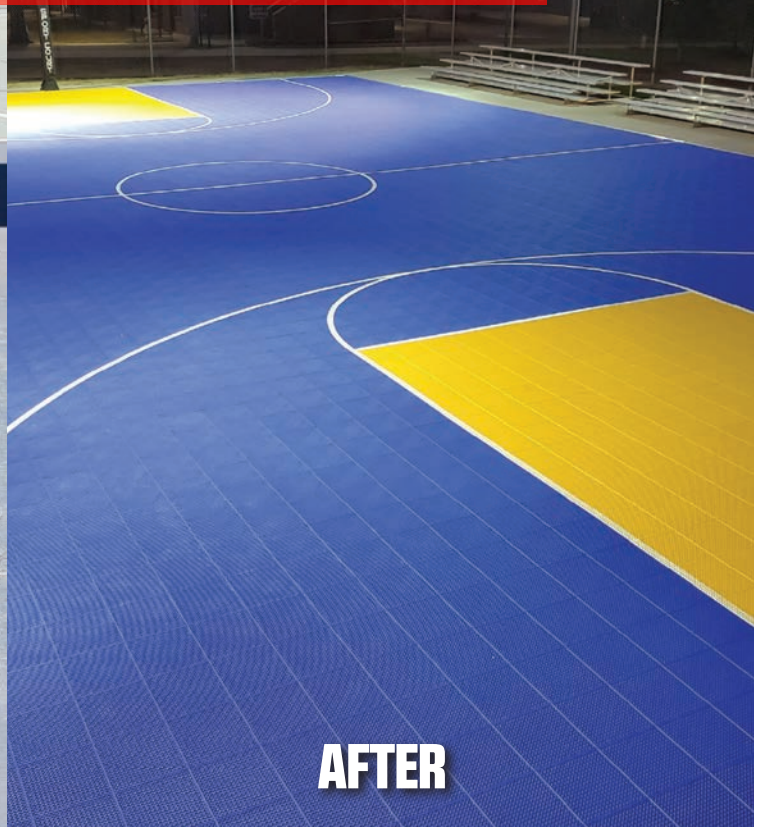
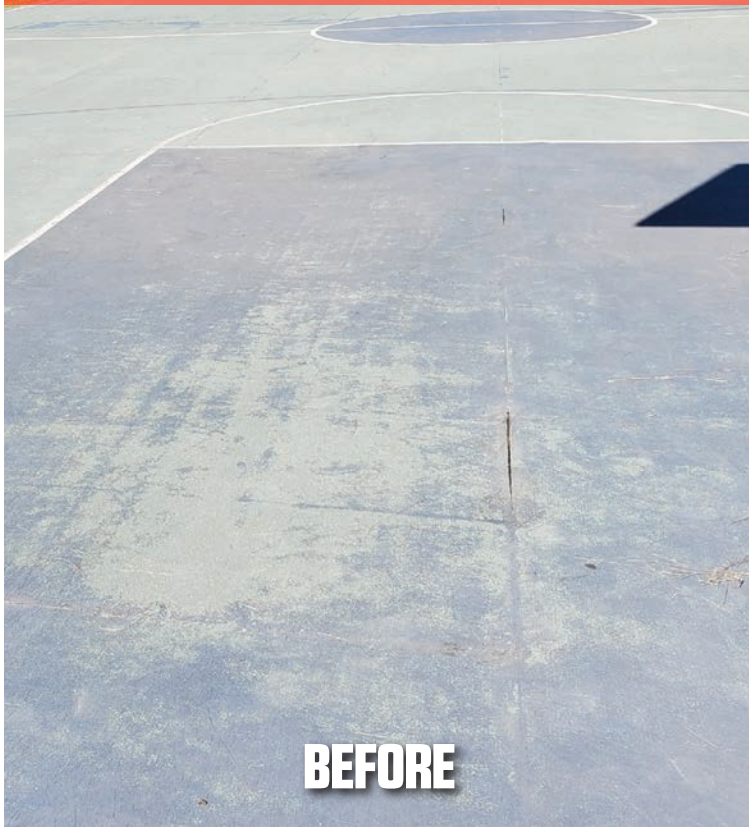
grew to accommodate the addition of several new teams but also had an average of 44 individuals placed on a waitlist, where no waitlists existed in 2022.

In the last year, our department has seen major organizational, operational and leadership changes which have been pivotal in our professional growth and development. Our Director, Chris Clouden, joined Lancaster County just over a year ago, and our Assistant Director, Jason McCray, started with us in March.

According to McCray, this is just the beginning for our department and the pursuit of excellence.

“Our new senior leadership staff has been very methodical in the way that we are implementing our new policies, practices, and procedures,” McCray said. “We are committed to bringing Lancaster County Parks and Recreation Department up to the industry standard and, eventually, we will exceed it.”

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A SPIKE IN VOLLEYBALL IN AIKEN

By Drew Epps, Athletic Program Coordinator, City of Aiken Parks, Recreation, and Tourism

South Carolina is experiencing a remarkable surge in the popularity of recreational volleyball. The sport attracts players of varying abilities and backgrounds, promoting a sense of inclusivity and fostering a welcoming environment.

Volleyball in Aiken, as a whole, has grown tremendously over the last several years. Our Aiken, South Aiken, and North Augusta High School volleyball teams are all currently ranked in the top 10 for the state of South Carolina, with Aiken High School winning the State Championship during the 2022 season, and a local charter middle school volleyball team winning the 2022 AAMSL Championship. With the success of our local school teams, in addition to the existence of a competitive club volleyball organization in the area, we have noticed an increase in interest and competitiveness in our recreation volleyball programs.



THE GROWTH OF RECREATION VOLLEYBALL IN AIKEN AND THROUGHOUT SOUTH CAROLINA IS A TESTAMENT TO THE SPORT'S APPEAL, VERSATILITY, AND POSITIVE IMPACT ON INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES.





Our fall and winter programs, offered to ages 8 – 14, have consistently grown by 10-20 players each season, and we expect this trend to continue in the coming years. Due to the increased interest in recreation volleyball, we have decided to add an additional season in the spring of 2024, and open program registration to the 15-18 age group. We anticipate this group will be just as successful as the other age groups we have been offering. Additionally, we have added grass volleyball nets

throughout various parks to better meet the demands of the sports growing popularity in our community.

The growth of recreation volleyball in Aiken and throughout South Carolina is a testament to the sport's appeal, versatility, and positive impact on individuals and communities. As more people discover the joy and benefits of volleyball, the state's sports landscape continues to evolve, driven by the enthusiasm and passion of its players.

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ROCK HILL SPORTS & EVENT CENTER EXPERIENCES GROWTH

By Laurie Helms, Rock Hill Parks, Recreation & Tourism

Growth has been steady for Rock Hill's Sports & Event Center since the facility opened in 2020, just after the pandemic struck. Strong programming growth, including local and tourism programming, along with new interior signage can be seen at the Center. Growth has also occurred in the surrounding Knowledge Park area, spurred on by the opportunity to provide services to the many visitors.

Rock Hill PRT's leagues for youth and adults have seen good participation numbers. Youth volleyball serves around 240 participants per season and youth basketball serves 320. Adult volleyball had 12 teams in the spring and adult basketball had 7 teams this summer. Weekday facility rentals bring an average of 2,300 people to the Center each month while 545 individuals use the walking track or open gym each month.

PRT continues to build strong relationships and successfully host events including some with ESPN coverage: American Cornhole League (ACL) World Championships and ESPN8: The Ocho. Events held during NCAA live periods include adidas 3SSB Boys

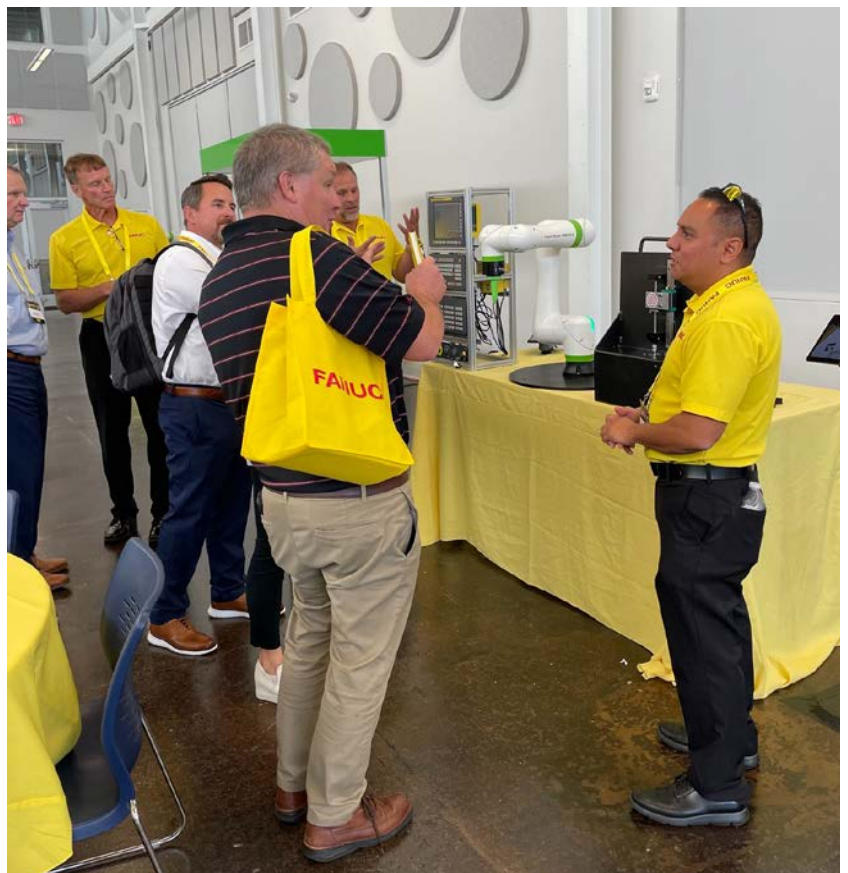
and Girls Basketball Palmetto Road Championships and the Under Armour Association (UAA) Circuit Session II.

To maximize the use and economic impact of the facility, staff are working to recruit conferences and other events such as the recent regional robot workshop for FANUC America Corporation. The Sports and Event Center's direct economic impact from tourism events in FY 2023 was over \$56 million with an average monthly attendance of 57,000 visitors.

New interior signage has recently been installed, helping reinforce the Rock Hill PRT brand for those at the facility and those watching live streams or live tv broadcasts. Outside the Center in Knowledge Park, restaurants, an amphitheater, brewery and an additional parking deck have opened in the past 12 months. This true mixed-use area includes apartments and other businesses with more development planned for the next year or two. The future continues to look bright at the Rock Hill Sports & Event Center.



THE SPORTS AND EVENT CENTER'S DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT FROM TOURISM EVENTS IN FY 2023 WAS OVER \$56 MILLION WITH AN AVERAGE MONTHLY ATTENDANCE OF 57,000 VISITORS.



SPARTANBURG COUNTY'S INTRODUCTION TO TENNIS CAMP

By Cord Sgaglio, Spartanburg County

In 2022 Spartanburg County rolled out our first ever Introduction to Tennis Camp. The goal of this camp was to introduce local children to tennis in a safe & fun environment at an accessible cost.

The camp was made possible by the generous support of the United States Tennis Association (USTA) and the successful application of their Southern Parks and Recreation grant as well as a strategic partnership with Spartanburg Area Tennis Association (SATA). The cost per participant during our first year was \$15 and included 15 hours of instructor-lead tennis and each child got a tennis racquet they could take home at the end of camp. All 40 roster spots filled up very quickly.

Fast forward to summer 2023 and we increased the number of children who could participate to 60. Within just a few days of

registration opening, the roster was filled and 25 people were on the waitlist.

As the interest in the sport and our camp continues to grow, we want to make sure we're able to sustain this growth and continue to offer this in-demand program. Through strategic budgeting, we utilized the USTA grant funding to offset not just the cost of the camp but larger cost items, securing the camp's equipment infrastructure. Through these tactical purchases and our increase in participation price from \$15 to \$25 per child, we are thrilled to announce our Introduction to Tennis Camp is self-sustaining as of 2023.

In addition to this feat, we have been working diligently to improve our offered programming. To accomplish this goal, we have been



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issuing participant surveys at the end of each camp (2022, 2023). The surveys consist of simple yes/no answers with a comment section at the end for additional feedback. Here are a few of the suggestions we received after the camp:

- An email summary of what they learned, tennis rules etc.
- Having a follow up camp to continue instruction.
- Maybe more shade (canopies) near the courts.

These suggestions have already sparked new ideas and conversations amongst our team,

and we look forward to incorporating possible solutions into next years camp. Along with these suggestions we also received the following gracious praise from our participants:

- The camp was so organized. The organizers and teachers were all friendly and very helpful.
- We loved camp & the safety protocols were amazing. We can't wait for more!
- Tennis camp was wonderful! She learned so much. It was well-organized and fun!

It has been our distinct pleasure offering this camp and we look forward to continuing to learn and grow!



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INTRODUCING NEW PROGRAMS & PARKS

DORCHESTER COUNTY FUN FINS

By Austin Zuniga, Dorchester County

For mom Kayla Hiers, her 8 year old daughter's life was important enough to drive over two hours round trip every day to ensure she learned water safety and drowning prevention with the Fun Fins swim program that launched this summer in Colleton and Dorchester Counties. Heirs said her daughter, Sophia, had "no fear" around water but noticed Sophia reached out to other people when she got tired or went underwater. Heirs wanted her daughter to learn what to do when she was tired, overwhelmed, or potentially in a life-threatening situation in the water. In Colleton County, though, there were no swim instructors or programs available.



According to the CDC, every year in the United States there are an estimated 4,000 fatal drownings and 8,000 near-drownings. The CDC rates South Carolina as 9th highest in the United States for pediatric drownings. In recent years, rural communities on the coast of South Carolina have experienced unprecedented pediatric drownings. Each child's death has echoed through our communities as everyone asks the same question: What can we do to help save the lives of our children?

Faced with a very real and growing statistic, Colleton County Parks & Recreation and Dorchester County Parks & Recreation asked themselves the same question. They found in rural areas – a short drive from Charleston beaches and teaming with rivers and other bodies of water - reliable transportation, cost and availability were the biggest barriers for families to sign their children up for swimming lessons.

In summer 2023, Colleton County Parks & Recreation and Dorchester County Parks & Recreation took action. They partnered with the Summerville Family YMCA, Summerville Medical Center, Dorchester County School District 4, Colleton County School District, and Colleton Medical Center, all united with the same mission to teach children water safety to help prevent future drownings.

In a short four weeks, the Fun Fins program launched and changed the lives of 335 children and their families. The program transported a 24 ft long, 16 ft wide, 3 ft deep portable pool holding 7,200 gallons of water to rural communities in Colleton and Dorchester Counties, placing the pool in a central location and charging



just \$1 per lesson to remove the barriers of transportation and cost for families to participate.

Over the course of four weeks (two weeks in Colleton County's Walterboro community followed by two weeks in Dorchester County's St. George community), the program taught 335 children ages 5 to 11 years old about sun safety, life jacket usage, what to know about traveling in a boat, the importance of adult supervision, and most importantly, tips on how to be comfortable and prepared in the water. Each class lasted 30 minutes. The program helped remove equity barriers for minority children in particular, with 56.2% of the participants being African-American, 31.5% Caucasian, 2.7% Hispanic, 1.4% Asian Pacific and 6% unlisted.

It was remarkable to see the mental and emotional changes in the children over the course of their five sessions. Most arrived at the first session petrified of the water to the point, for some, of being unable to get into the pool. In their first session, the incredible Summerville Family YMCA swim instructors calmed their fears and began teaching a critical foundation of water safety. By the end of the second session, the children learned how to roll over and float if they landed face down in the water, and each child was able to swim one complete lap in the pool. In session four the children learned about boat safety – the importance of always wearing a life jacket and how to put it on, how to pull their friend out of the water if they fell in, and how to react if the boat hits choppy water. By the fifth session,





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the children were running and laughing on their way to the pool, completely confident in their new abilities to save themselves in the water.

We said above that the Fun Fins program changed the lives of 335 children, but it is truly unquantifiable the amount of lives impacted. A grandfather who brought his grandchildren to Fun Fins began adult beginner swimming lessons the next week. For the mom who admitted that if her children were drowning in a pool she couldn't save them because she also didn't know how to swim, bringing her children to this program changed their lives and hers for the better. That mom later also signed up for the adult beginner swimming program.

The National Parks & Recreation Association is founded upon the mission to remove equity barriers for local communities and create an environment of health and wellbeing. This summer we saw that mission come alive through the strong partnership between our two Parks & Recreation departments and aligning with local hospitals and school districts to launch a program that will have a lasting impact across our rural communities. We look forward to growing and expanding the Fun Fins program in years to come, and supporting other organizations in their mission to launch similar programs to help save lives.



CITY OF FLORENCE

NEW SPORTS COMPLEX OPENS

by: Timothy Wilson, City of Florence

The City of Florence completely opened the \$19.9 Million Dollar Florence Sports Complex in spring of 2023. The facility was opened in two phases with Carolina Bank Baseball Stadium opening in the summer of 2022 and the remainder of the complex opening in spring 2023. The complex contains Carolina Bank Baseball Stadium, five Little League baseball fields with four batting cages, one high school baseball field with bullpens, and a collegiate level outdoor track – all of which have LED lighting.

The Carolina Bank Baseball Stadium seats 1,372 and is home to the Florence Flamingos, an amateur baseball team in the Coastal Plain League. The City of Florence has had the opportunity to host Florence Darlington-Tech Junior College games as well Division II teams Newberry and Mount Olive. The Athletics/Sports Tourism Department also hosted the first in the Line Drive Concert Series, which featured recording artists David Lee Murphy and George Birge, as well as local talent The Jebb Mac Band.



Spring 2023 saw the first Opening Day for the Florence Little League teams at the Florence Sports Complex. 40 Little League teams participated in the Opening Day ceremonies to kick off a successful spring season with Florence Mayor Teresa Myers Ervin throwing out the ceremonial first pitch. The facility has hosted three large travel baseball tournaments as well as partnering with local middle school and high school baseball teams to host their home games.

The outdoor track at the Florence Sports Complex was host to the USATF South Carolina State Association meet in June 2023. Over 500 athletes from across the state spent three days competing in various track and field events.



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Issue	Primary Theme	Secondary Theme
Spring 2024 Ad deadline: January 19, 2024	No Second Nature Highlighting programs that help protect the earth and conserve resources	Getting Social Effective ways parks and recreation departments have used social media to promote their programs and events
Summer 2024 Ad deadline: April 13, 2024	Theme: TBA	Theme: TBA
Fall 2024 Ad deadline: June 21, 2024	Theme: TBA	Theme: TBA
Winter 2024 Ad deadline: September 27, 2024	Theme: TBA	Theme: Commercial Buyer's Guide

CITY OF CHARLESTON

NEW TO THE AREA, KNOWN TO THE COMMUNITY

By Shania Franklin, Marketing & Special Events Intern, City of Charleston Recreation Department

The City of Charleston introduced the newest addition to its community parks earlier this year: Carr-Richardson Park. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Wednesday, February 22nd, 2023 at 1071 Bender St. in West Ashley.

The park is located in the Maryville/Ashleyville neighborhoods of West Ashley and is open to the West Ashley community and surrounding areas to enjoy. Carr-Richardson Park was built on the Ashley River, allowing guests to enjoy the marsh view while walking and strolling.

Aside from having a scenic view, Carr-Richardson Park has a profound and rich history and was first a chartered town known as Maryville. The park is named after Thomas Tobias Carr, Sr. and Clemon Harold Richardson, Sr.

Carr was the first mayor of the Town of Maryville in 1933 and served in that capacity until 1936. Richardson served as an integral part of bringing organized football and baseball programs for children in the community to Deming Playground. In addition, Richardson lobbied city officials



to further establish this town through the installation of streetlights, access to the city water system, and paving and providing signage for neighborhood streets. The township charter was eventually revoked and became a part of the city of Charleston in 1936.

The park houses 2.9 acres of land, walking trails, a playground, and a small parking lot. Additionally, the property has a 2,000 sq ft. indoor facility that includes a pavilion, porches, restrooms, and catering kitchen.

Since its opening in February, the park and indoor facility have both been used in a variety of ways – birthday parties, family reunions, community recreation programs, neighborhood meetings, and many more.

The city of Charleston has anticipated the introduction of Carr-Richardson Park and has been enjoying it with the West Ashley community and surrounding areas. The hope is Carr-Richardson Park can be of great use to this area and can help foster memories for generations to come, while also bringing the history of the area to life.

THE PARK HOUSES 2.9 ACRES OF LAND, WALKING TRAILS, A PLAYGROUND, AND A SMALL PARKING LOT. ADDITIONALLY, THE PROPERTY HAS A 2,000 SQ FT. INDOOR FACILITY THAT INCLUDES A PAVILION, PORCHES, RESTROOMS, AND CATERING KITCHEN.

CITY OF CHARLESTON

SUSTAINABILITY SIMPLIFIED

By Mez Joseph, Associate + Marketing Coordinator, liollo architecture

This 85-acre park is situated along the headwaters of the Ashley, a tidal river once vital to transportation and agriculture in the South Carolina Lowcountry. After the decline of rice production in the mid 19th century, the site was strip-mined for phosphates and then left to return to woodlands. At the turn of this century, the property was slated for residential development with a suburban, cul-de-sac character. The property was cleared, and utilities installed, but the work was abandoned during the 2008 downturn. The development would have been disastrous, however, as homeowners would have found their properties uninsurable against flood. Much of the site is in a FEMA regulatory floodway, which disallows construction that would impede the floodwaters and worsen flooding upstream.

The property lay fallow for a decade, while a citizen group advocated for the sale of land to the county parks commission.

Citizens saw an opportunity to create the first large-scale public park for a growing, but still rural, part of the state, a use that could be made compatible with the ecological needs of a region beset with flooding.

That citizen effort led to a daring public investment in quality of life for the region. Today, the immensely popular park provides opportunities for free river access, for kayaking, canoeing, and fishing. Extensive playgrounds and splash pads entertain families, with plans to add climbing walls and other low-impact amenities in the future. Since its opening in 2022, the park has hosted over 300,000 visitors and 10,000 dogs.

Several new buildings support the park's operations, but none are sited to dominate the landscape or disrupt the floodway. The buildings also avoid a 100' easement for the Edisto Tunnel, deep underground, which supplies drinking water to the City of



Charleston 23 miles away. Each building sits on concrete piers with open crawlspaces, acknowledging the flood risks.

The architectural palette is deliberately simple, of oiled cypress and corrugated metal. Structure is delineated clearly with steel and timber, and connections between them are imbued with celebratory detail. Deep eaves protect the cypress siding and provide shade. The most public of these structures is an open-air event pavilion, oriented to overlook a festival lawn, with a freshwater fishing pond in the distance. The pavilion provides a much-needed setting for weddings, birthday parties, family reunions, and community movie nights.

The pavilion design adopts a clear parti, careful orientation, simple materials, and a curious distortion of its vernacular, agricultural precedents. It adopts a sly abstraction of a vernacular form, through an arcing gable roof which raises toward the pond. The roof is clad in flat-seamed zinc panels which scale across the compound curvatures. The geometry forces the perspective and plays with the observer's perception of the pavilion's dimensions. The result is something playful, curious, unexpected, but not superficially garish or distracting. On a more practical level, the roof form is oriented to provide deeper shelter at the restroom doors and more midday shade at the covered picnic area.





carr-richardson park

celebrating the city of charleston's newest public park



Photography by Keith Isaacs ©2023

The City of Charleston, Stantec, and Liollo Architecture collaborated on the sustainable design and construction of Carr-Richardson Park in the historic Maryville/Ashleyville neighborhood of West Ashley in Charleston SC. This waterfront property along the Ashley River is approximately 2.86 acres and includes a pavilion facility with porches, restrooms and a catering kitchen, as well as walking trails and a new playground.

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