

D. Paul Sommerville
August 2, 2016
SCAC 49th Annual Conference

Good Morning! Welcome to Beaufort County and Hilton Head Island! I am Paul Sommerville, Chairman of Beaufort County Council, and on behalf of my colleagues, local elected officials, staff, and residents, I am honored to welcome you to our beautiful home and the South Carolina Association of Counties' 49th Annual Conference.

Beaufort County is proud to be your host and we hope that you have been enjoying the conference and all the great amenities that this area has to offer during your stay. We also have many great attractions at the northern end of our county for you to enjoy, to include Hunting Island State Park with a 5,000 acre park, 3 miles of natural beach, and the only lighthouse open to the public to climb in the state.

Northern Beaufort County is also home to Penn Center, an African-American cultural and educational center located on the National Register, and our new Santa Elena History Center. Just last week after a decade-long search, archaeologists found the 16th century Spanish fort San Marcos of Santa Elena, built on what is now known as Parris Island. This is a major finding not just in our state's history, but in world history, proving that 40 years before the English settled at Jamestown in Virginia, the Spanish established a town and a fort in 1566 on the shores of Port Royal right here in Beaufort County.

Fast forwarding 450 years, some of you may have noticed a new addition to our roadways on your trip onto the island. Just two weeks ago, the Bluffton Parkway "Flyover" opened. Beaufort County Council is proud to have been a part of this \$46 million public safety project, completed in collaboration with the voters of Beaufort County, who supported a 1-percent sales tax, as well as the Federal Highway Administration, the South Carolina Department of Transportation, and many other businesses. The opening of the Flyover marks a significant move forward to Beaufort County's transportation system and defines a community success not just for this county, but also this region and our state.

As county officials, we sometimes become bogged down in what our own county is doing and do not always know what is happening in our sister counties. We all have challenges and success stories. Let's be sure to use this weekend to network and learn about what is happening across our communities, as we continue to build stronger counties for tomorrow, helping one another along the way.

Michael Cone and his team continue to do a great job keeping us all informed and providing us with resources to lead and serve better. Let's give them a deserving round of applause for all the great work they do for us on a daily basis and for organizing this conference.

I also want to thank those staff members here with us today from the Beaufort County Broadcast Services Department. Since 2007, Beaufort County has operated The County Channel, which is recording some of these conference proceedings on behalf of SCAC. Some of you may have noticed one of our live broadcast trucks out front. The County Channel is in its 10th year of broadcasting and currently reaching almost 170 thousand viewers over multiple channels with 3 cable companies.

The Beaufort County Channel has won 9 Telly awards and been nominated for 2 Emmy awards. In addition to broadcasting programming live on television and the County's website, programming is available on-demand. We broadcast live not just Beaufort County Council proceedings, to include regular and committee meetings, but also the proceedings of our advisory boards.

We air meetings for the school district and the Town of Hilton Head Island and hope to have our other municipalities on the air soon. We also air special community events, such as high school and college graduations and local athletic games. This effort is not just important to government transparency, but also to engagement with our constituents and community building.

Last year, we also launched County Channel radio, which streams local favorites online 24-7 and gives our county departments and other local organizations a new forum to present public service announcements. I would like to thank Beaufort County Administrator Gary Kubic for having our County Channel team available to tape this conference and help showcase all of the great work happening across our state.

Again, thank you all and welcome. I hope we all make the most of this opportunity to come together and to learn about what is happening in each other's backyards so we can be of use to one another, with outcomes reflected in our good work for those we serve.

Thank you.