

D. Paul Sommerville
August 4, 2014
SCAC 47th Annual Conference

Good Morning! Welcome to Paradise! I would like to officially welcome my fellow Council members from around the state, government officials and members of the South Carolina Association of Counties to Beaufort County and Hilton Head Island. Over the last few days, I had a chance to meet many of you and catch up with those I have met in the past. For those who may not know me, I am Beaufort County Council Chairman Paul Sommerville, and I am pleased to be able to welcome everyone here to the South Carolina Association of Counties 47th annual conference. It is always a pleasure to have this annual conference in my own backyard. I do not have to drive very far from Beaufort and, I get to show all of you the beauty of my home county where my family has lived for over 150 years.

As always, SCAC has provided us with an abundance of information over the last few days and there is still more to come. The guest speakers, leading the workshops, have been extremely helpful. They have been able to explain the topics very well, allowing us to go back to our home counties with lots of useful knowledge and practices. I believe all of us who are able to come to this annual conference are very lucky because the South Carolina Association of Counties always puts on a four-day conference from which everyone in this room can benefit. From the Institute of Government courses that for some, began Saturday, to the overview of the 2014 Legislative Session to the Federal Issues Update that affects all 46 counties in our state. Our constituents look to us for guidance. They look to us for answers. I truly believe this conference helps all of us in those and many other ways. It is also nice for us to get together and learn from each other. So often, we become bogged down in what our own county is doing, and do not always know what is happening even in our neighboring counties. It is important that we know other counties experiences because that is how we will learn to lead and serve better. Something that works really well in one place might also work great in your county. This conference allows ideas and experiences to be shared. From those conversations, improvements can be made even if you do not think improvements are necessary. Two minds are always better than one.

If you can believe it, more than 1,000 county officials—representing South Carolina's 46 counties—gather at this conference to discuss challenges and opportunities, share best practices and attend training sessions. I am proud to say I am one of them.

Thank you very much and enjoy the rest of the conference.