

Jerry W. Stewart
Beaufort Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission 50th Anniversary
August 20, 2016

Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. I am Jerry Stewart, Vice Chairman of Beaufort County Council, and it is my pleasure to be here today. On behalf of Beaufort County Council Chairman Paul Sommerville and our colleagues on County Council, we extend our congratulations to all of you for your good work in service to the people of Beaufort and Jasper counties and throughout the Lowcountry region for so many years.

We especially want to convey our sincerest thanks to Mr. Leroy Gilliard, a good friend to Beaufort County and true servant of our community, and to those who have been a part of his team since he joined the Beaufort Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission in 1978. Please join me in giving Mr. Gilliard and the Beaufort Jasper EOC family a round of applause. We also want to thank County Council's appointee to the Beaufort Jasper EOC Board of Directors and former Beaufort County Councilman, Mr. Joseph Kline, and all other Beaufort Jasper EOC board members and distinguished guests and friends with us today.

The mission of the Beaufort Jasper EOC is much aligned to the mission of Beaufort County Council, in that both entities exist to serve people in a manner that they all enjoy a protected quality of life and economic well-being. In fact, we are so close in our dedication to the public that the Beaufort Jasper EOC operates out of the County's Human Services Building very much like a sister department and we are proud to have them present on our campus and working with us.

Together, Beaufort County Council and Beaufort Jasper EOC have partnered for several decades and invested millions in our community to help reduce poverty and its ills and enhance education and training opportunities for all of our neighbors. In the past 12 months alone, the County and Beaufort Jasper EOC worked together to provide assistance to more than 1,200 Beaufort County residents, ranging from energy and rental assistance to water services and emergency assistance for home repairs and medical needs. Our ultimate goal in providing this assistance is to promote self-sufficiency and economic independence.

Also, we are both active partners in the Beaufort County Human Services Alliance and participate together in three local coalitions: the Community Services Organization, the Early Childhood Coalition, and the Affordable Housing Coalition. Our collaboration through these coalitions allows us to pull our resources with other local agencies in the community to promote and sustain activities that improve the quality of life for all Beaufort County residents by creating coordinated, comprehensive, and integrated systems of human services.

We are proud of our relationship and work together and look forward to continuing our efforts and collaboration to improve the lives of our neighbors, making for a better county, a better region, and a better state. Again, congratulations, best wishes, and keep up the good work.

Thank you.