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**Aug.  
2016**

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# City Manager's Spotlight



**TERESA WILSON**  
**COLUMBIA CITY MANAGER**

## City Receives Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to City of Columbia by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

This recognition marks the third consecutive year the award has been received by the City's Finance team. The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting award presentation took place on Tuesday, Aug. 16 during the City Council meeting.

*"This is a great achievement for the City of Columbia, and I commend our staff in the Finance Department. The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting is the result of a collaborative effort between city leaders, management and staff working together on a common goal of fiscal responsibility."*

*~ City Manager Teresa Wilson*

The CAFR was judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program including demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.



The City's Finance Department was presented with the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting on August 16 during the City Council meeting.

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 17,500 government finance professionals.



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# Columbia Fire Department Celebrates Historic Moment

Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins and the Columbia Fire Department unveiled the first Columbia Fire Department vehicles that will carry the class 1 and class 2 ISO seals. The ISO class ratings were effective as of Monday, August 1. This is the first time in the history that the department has received a class 1 for the city and class 2 for the county.

The City of Columbia's new Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) class 1 rating establishes it with an elite group of less than 1% nationally achieving this rating. The class 2 rating places Richland County in the top 2% nationally and is one of only 73 of the 601 fire-protection areas in the state to reach this significant accomplishment.

Many insurance companies use ISO as one factor of many that go into determining fire protection ratings to further determine homeowner and business insurance premiums. The PPC classification ranges from 1, denoting superior fire protection, to 10, which indicates almost no fire protection is available.



# City Charts Top 3 for Social Media Practices



The City was recently recognized in an article posted by [clearpointstrategy.com](http://clearpointstrategy.com) for its outstanding social media practices.

The article focused on how the City uses the hashtag #WeAreColumbia and placed the @CityofColumbia's Twitter page in the top 3 of 9 cities due to the way that it connects citizens and increases local government transparency.

The City's social media accounts are handled by the Public and Media Relations Department, which keeps its residents informed and in the know. Since the article was published, City Connection has been renamed to City Weekly and the City's Twitter following has increased to over 28,000 followers!

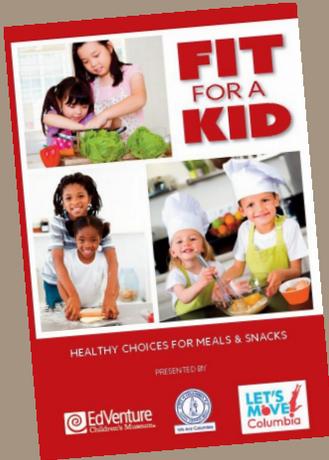
# 7th Annual Summer Celebration of Water Festival

The City of Columbia, Richland County and Lexington County hosted the seventh annual Summer Celebration of Water Festival on Saturday, August 27 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at Riverfront Park, 312 Laurel Street.

This free event salutes National Water Quality Month and emphasizes the importance of clean water in our everyday lives. This year's festivities included free kayaking and paddleboarding on the Columbia Canal, riverfront tours, water slides, face painting and many other family-friendly activities.



## City & EdVenture Unveil New Kid-Friendly Cookbook



The City of Columbia and EdVenture Children's Museum held a press conference on Wednesday, August 17 to unveil a new cookbook featuring kid-friendly recipes.

The press conference included a cooking demo featuring recipes from the cookbook, which will be available to the public for free while limited supplies last at the Parks and Recreation Administration office, located at 1111 Parkside Drive and EdVenture Children's Museum, 211 Gervais St.

The cookbook is being provided free to families to help with preparing quick and easy healthy meals and kid-friendly snacks just in time for the back-to-school season.

For more information, please call the Parks and Recreation Department at 803-545-3100.

## Disaster Relief Public Outreach Meetings

The City of Columbia hosted community outreach meetings in July and August to give residents an opportunity to provide their input on how the City can best use the grant funds it will receive in response to the October 2015 flood. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has allocated \$19.98 million to help the City and its residents recover from the flood. The funds can be used to help resolve unmet needs in the following areas: housing, economic development and infrastructure.

For more information about upcoming meetings, please contact Community Development at (803) 545-3373 or visit [dr.columbiasc.gov](http://dr.columbiasc.gov).



City of Columbia @CityofColumbia

Gloria Saeed, Community Development Interim Director, explains the purpose of the community outreach meeting

## New Business-Friendly Program Announced

Mayor Benjamin, City Manager Wilson and City staff introduced a new initiative to help new and existing small businesses navigate through City requirements during a press conference on Tuesday, August 16, 2016. The goal of the new initiative is to highlight how the City has developed a more streamlined process for business owners and those who need assistance with opening a business in the City of Columbia.

Through a new reoccurring workshop, the City will guide business owners through the municipal and state regulations surrounding the opening and running of a business in Columbia. During the workshop, business owners will hear from representatives of the most common city departments and state agencies that they are required to go through when opening a business, including establishing a new physical location. The workshop will be similar to a one-stop shop where business owners can get accurate information and get any of their questions answered. By attending the workshop, entrepreneurs will save the time of going to or calling every department and agency due to all of the departments/agencies being in one space.



Participants will also be provided with tips to expedite other processes and understand the various resources that are available to them. This program will:

- ◆ Discuss different levels of government authorities and their responsibilities
- ◆ Make business development and regulatory policy a little easier to understand and navigate
- ◆ Inform startups of the importance of business plans, zoning, permits, license, inspections, levels of taxes, locations, and insurance
- ◆ Encourage business readiness
- ◆ Provide an overview of the requirements for starting a business in the City
- ◆ Advise and assist entrepreneurs in the start-up stage
- ◆ Allow for questions and answers

View the press conference on the City's [YouTube](#) channel.

For more information, please call the Office of Business Opportunities at (803) 545-3950.

## Downtown Celebrates Grand Opening of Main Street Public House



Main Street Public House hosted its ribbon cutting and grand opening on Thursday, Aug. 4 at its new location at 1556 Main St.

*"We're excited to welcome our new downtown neighbors," said Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin. "Downtown and the Central Business District have seen exceptional growth and development, and we are excited to see the trend continue."*

*The restaurant specializes in refined casual cuisine and serves lunch, dinner and brunch on Saturday and Sunday. The restaurant owners also developed and own the King Street Public House in Charleston, SC. This new location in downtown Columbia is their second restaurant.*

For more information, visit [mainstreetpublichouse.com](http://mainstreetpublichouse.com).



Photos courtesy of Main Street Public House

# City Announces #LoveColumbia Photo Challenge Winners

The #LoveColumbia Photo Challenge is a City initiative that encourages citizens of Columbia to submit photos via social media of the images they love in the City. Through the photo challenge, citizens are invited to explore our picturesque city.

The following winners unveiled their images on August 16, 2015, during the City Council meeting:



2016 Facebook Winner – Bryan Hall



2016 Twitter Winner – Katia Lee



2016 Instagram Winner – Melanie Matthews

The winning photos and biography for each winner will be featured in the Gallery at City Hall, the city's website and in the Public and Media Relations Department's publications.

The #LoveColumbia Photo Challenge was promoted on the City's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter sites during April 2016, where citizens were tasked with submitting images, which included landscapes, structures, buildings, historical monuments and more. Based on the total number of "likes, favorites, retweets, etc.," there were three photos chosen from each social media account. The voting process was driven by citizen participation, which included the option to vote and comment on the photo of their choice.

The contest provided a way for citizens to positively capture the City through photography and the winning photographs highlight that beauty.

The City of Columbia Photo Challenge, #LoveColumbia, began in 2014 as a way to increase community engagement, expand public knowledge of the City's social media sites and increase the use of technology to interact with citizens.

For more information about the #LoveColumbia Photo Challenge, contact Public and Media Relations at 803-545-4418.



# Free Gardening Workshop Series

The City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department is hosting a series of Gardening Workshops designed to provide participants with the tools needed to start and maintain a healthy garden.

The first workshop in the series, *Preparing Your Winter Garden*, was held on August 27, 2016. Participants learned about vegetables and varieties that work well through the fall and early spring.

The gardening workshops are being led by Clemson Extension horticulturist and master gardener Jacqueline Jordan.



All workshops are free and open to the public, and will be held from 10-11 a.m. on the following Saturdays:

## Community Gardening Workshop Schedule:

### **September 24** - Topic: *Intensive Gardening Techniques*

Participants will learn several different gardening techniques such as keyhole gardening, vertical gardening, straw bale gardening, lasagna gardening, relay planting, and interplanting.

### **October 22** - Topic: *Ending Your Season*

This workshop will teach you how to clean up and prepare for next year's garden. Learn how to cover crops, what to plant and when, and how to terminate them correctly.

### **November 19** – Topic: *Starting Seeds Indoors*

How to care for your seeds and successfully move them outside.

For more information, please call the Parks and Recreation Department at 803-545-3100.

## Healthy Gardening Tips

- a. Plants need healthy soil in the right places. Use a spade to turn your soil at least once a month, if not more, to keep it loose and light. Harder soils, like clay, are likely to become hard and crumbly over time so it's important to give them a little more TLC.
- b. Like a chef values a great knife collection, for gardeners, there is no substitute for the best garden tools. Quality rakes, wheelbarrows, spades and mowers are key to keeping any garden healthy.
- c. Plants can't survive without moisture. Most plants are made up of over 90% water so it's essential to keep them hydrated. Water plants early in the morning when the weather is cooler so less water is lost through evaporation.
- d. For those with less time for daily watering, consider plants like Chrysanthemum, Gardenia or Jasmine that can retain moisture longer and require less watering.
- e. Growing or want to grow vegetables in your garden? Here too, soil and space are important but most vegetables also need to bask in direct sunlight. It's also important to keep them clipped and watered.
- f. Stubborn weeds can be a nightmare to get rid of and prevent from coming back. Japanese knotweed eradication and stubborn wild weeds need to be tackled by a professional both chemically and physically. Ultimately, weeds can't be fully controlled in the soil, so you should aim to prevent them from spreading out of control.

Get more gardening tips online at

<http://www.urbangardensweb.com/2013/02/03/10-tips-for-maintaining-a-healthy-garden>.

# Owens Field Park Groundbreaking Ceremony

The City of Columbia Parks & Recreation Department hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for new construction and renovations at Owens Field Park, 1351 Jim Hamilton Blvd., on Saturday, Aug. 20 at 10 a.m.

The project includes construction of a Miracle League Baseball field and boundless playground, renovations of ball fields, walkways, vehicular round-about and stormwater improvements. The project is a partnership between the City of Columbia, Richland County and the Ray Tanner Foundation.

A Miracle League field is a custom-designed, rubberized turf field that allows children with mental and physical disabilities the opportunity to safely play baseball.



# ICYMI: Lincoln Tunnel Greenway Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

On a new path to run, walk or bike in the city? Come by the Lincoln Tunnel (Vista) Greenway, the first greenway project to be completed under the Transportation Penny Program.

See photos below from the ribbon cutting held on Wednesday, July 13, 2016.



#StayActive   

## About Teresa Wilson

Teresa Wilson is the City Manager for the City of Columbia, SC. For more details on the City Manager, visit [ColumbiaSC.net/City-Manager](http://ColumbiaSC.net/City-Manager). For more information about the City of Columbia, visit [ColumbiaSC.net](http://ColumbiaSC.net).

*Please do not hesitate to contact me with your concerns, suggestions and hopes for our City. I take pleasure in my service to each of you!*

All my best,

*Teresa Wilson*

