



Together we will build a world-class city

City of Columbia Press Releases

January 1-31, 2015

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....1-4

City of Columbia Accepting Nominations for the MLK Dream Keeper Scholarship.....5

City Council Meeting Agendas for January 6, 2015.....6

City of Columbia To Hold Walk Bike Columbia Public Meeting.....7

27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration.....8-9

Agenda for Design/Development Review Commission.....10

Pet of the Week: Lola! (ID# A210381).....11

City of Columbia to Host Public Forums for Citizen Input in Five Year Consolidated Plan.....12-13

City Council Meeting Agendas for January 6, 2015.....14

Join the Fun at Main Street ICE.....15-16

City of Columbia To Hold Public Education Forum On Utility Line Tree Trimming.....17

Spirit Communications Park Groundbreaking.....18-21

City of Columbia To Hold Public Education Forum On Utility Line Tree Trimming.....22

Home Heating Safety.....23

The City Urges Citizens to Participate in Public Forums for Five Year Consolidated Plan.....24-25

Advertisement of Vacancies for the City of Columbia Boards & Commissions.....26-27

Loan Committee Meeting Agenda.....28

Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting Agenda.....29

Mayor Benjamin organizes free Selma viewing for local students.....30-31

Pet of the Week: Sam! (ID# A207695).....32

Mayor Steve Benjamin to Deliver Annual State of the City Address.....33

Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine’s Open House Cancelled.....34

The City Urges Citizens to Participate in Public Forums for Five Year Consolidated Plan.....35

City Offices Closed in Observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.....36

City of Columbia To Hold Walk Bike Columbia Public Meeting.....37

Community Development to Hold “How to Purchase a House on a Budget” Workshop.....38

Columbia's Vision Needs Your Voice.....39

City of Columbia To Hold Public Education Forum On Utility Line Tree Trimming.....40

The City Urges Citizens to Participate in Public Forums for Five Year Consolidated Plan.....41

City of Columbia to Hold Public Education Forum on Utility Line Tree Trimming.....42

27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration.....43-44

City Offices Closed in Observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.....45

Mayor Steve Benjamin to Deliver Annual State of the City Address.....46

City Issues Statement Regarding Uber Operations Within the City Limits.....47

27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration.....48

Mayor Steve Benjamin to Deliver Annual State of the City Address.....49

Pet of the Week: Bobbie! (ID# A211265).....50

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Mayor Benjamin Delivers 2015 State of the City Address..... | 51-60 |
| Charles R. Drew Wellness Center Closed Due to Mechanical Repairs..... | 61 |
| City of Columbia To Hold Walk Bike Columbia Public Meeting..... | 62 |
| Commercial Revolving Loan Fund Committee Meeting Agenda..... | 63 |
| City of Columbia To Hold Walk Bike Columbia Public Meeting..... | 64 |
| The City Urges Citizens to Participate in Public Forums for Five Year Consolidated Plan..... | 65 |
| National Wear Red Day - February 6, 2015..... | 66 |
| SCE&G To Perform Tree Trimming Activities As Scheduled for 2015..... | 67-68 |
| Pet of the Week: Sir Locksley! (ID# A211638)..... | 69 |
| City of Columbia to Recognize Winners, Sponsors of Dream Keeper Scholarships Program..... | 70 |
| City’s Office of Business Opportunities to Launch Two Notch Road Façade Improvement Program..... | 71 |
| City Council Revised Agendas for January 27, 2015..... | 72 |
| The City Urges Citizens to Participate in Public Forums for Five Year Consolidated Plan..... | 73 |
| Make Your Voice Heard! Community Development to Hold Stakeholder Meeting for Five Year Consolidated Plan..... | 74 |
| City of Columbia Recognized Winners, Sponsors of Dream Keeper Scholarships Program Donations for Scholarships Reach Record High..... | 75-77 |
| Community Development to Hold “How to Purchase a House on a Budget” Workshop.... | 78 |
| The City Urges Citizens to Participate in Public Forums for Five Year Consolidated Plan..... | 79 |
| City’s Engineering Division Announces the Pre-Capacity Assurance Program Analysis..... | 80-81 |
| City of Columbia Celebrates Twitter Milestone..... | 82 |

Art Center to Offer Spring Break Art Camp.....83

SCE&G To Perform Tree Trimming Activities As Scheduled for 2015.....84-85

Planning Commission Meeting Agenda for Feb. 2.....86

City’s Office of Business Opportunities to Launch Two Notch Road Façade Improvement Program.....87

Community Forum hosted by Councilwoman Leona Plough and Councilman Moe Baddourah.....88



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, January 2, 2015

Contact: Shireese M. Bell at 803-760-9125 or smbell@columbiasc.net

City of Columbia Accepting Nominations for the MLK Dream Keeper Scholarship

The City of Columbia is accepting nominations for the 2015 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dream Keeper Scholarship Awards. **Applications must be returned in person or postmarked by today, January 2, 2015.**

The Dream Keeper Award recognizes exemplary displays of committed service to the tenets of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The ideals of social responsibility, political empowerment, diversity, racial harmony, nonviolence, and unselfish service must be demonstrated voluntarily by the nominee in support of his or her community and fellow citizens.

The nominee **must** be age 18 or younger and enrolled in school with a minimum 2.0 grade point average.

Winners will be announced at the City of Columbia's annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration on Monday, January 19, 2015, at 4 p.m. at the Martin Luther King Jr. Park and Community Center, 2300 Greene Street. **Nominees must attend the celebration.**

Applications are available [online](#) for download or at any community center.

Applications must be returned in person or by mail to the City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department, 1111 Parkside Drive, Columbia, SC 29203.

For more information, contact Shireese M. Bell at 803-545-3100 or smbell@columbiasc.net, or visit www.columbiasc.net.

###

****Please see the attached application.***



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 2, 2015

Contact: Erika Moore at 545-3043

City Council Meeting Agendas for January 6, 2015

The Columbia City Council will conduct a Work Session at 2 p.m. and a Council Meeting at 6 p.m. The agendas are attached for your review.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 5, 2015

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media @ 545-3020

City of Columbia To Hold Walk Bike Columbia Public Meeting

What: The public is invited to a public meeting to see the draft pedestrian and bicycle master plan, share thoughts on the recommendations, and talk one on-one with the planning team. This is an opportunity for citizens to give input on the plan recommendations before City leadership considers formally adopting the plan.

When: Thursday, January 22, 2015

6 P.M. – 7:30 P.M. (Presentation at 6 P.M.)

Where: EdVenture Children’s Museum, 211 Gervais Street

The Canal Room (Lower Level – Entry at Facing Canal)

More Information: Contact the City of Columbia Planning Department at 803-545-0229 or visit www.walkbikecolumbia.org.

###

***Please see the attached flyer**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 05, 2015

Contact: Shireese M. Bell at 803-760-9125 or smbell@columbiasc.net

27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

The City of Columbia and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation announced the 27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration will be held on Monday, January 19, 2015, at 4 p.m. at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Park and Community Center, 2300 Greene Street.

Columbia Urban League President and Chief Executive Officer James T. McLawhorn, Jr. will be the keynote speaker. The celebration will also include performances from A. C. Flora High School Gospel Ensemble, The Brotherhood of First Nazareth Baptist Church and Jonathan Cannon, a Dutch Fork High School junior.

The celebration will also include a Wreath Laying Ceremony to commemorate the historic marker honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at 3:06 p.m. at the corner of Harden and Greene streets. Members of the Alpha Psi Lambda and Omicron Iota Lambda chapters of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. will lead the ceremony.

On Saturday, January 17, 2015, the Omicron Iota Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and Bridging the Gap With Alpha, Inc. will hold the 25th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. 5K Run/Fitness Walk at 9: a.m. at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park located at 2300 Greene Street.

If registering before January 9, 2015, the registration fee is \$25 (includes a commemorative T-shirt) or \$20 (without a T-shirt). After January 9, the fee is \$30 (with T-shirt) or \$25 (without the T-shirt).

Olympic-style medals will be awarded to the first three male and female finishers in 13 age divisions. Proceeds from the race will benefit the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation and The Alpha Academy.

To register, visit www.strictlyrunning.com. Applications are also available by calling 803-254-8070 or emailing kolonel@bellsouth.net.

For more information about the race, contact Willie L. Odom at 803-254-8070 or kolonel@bellsouth.net or visit www.AlphaOIL.org/MLK.

For more information about the 27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration, contact Shireese M. Bell at 803-545-3100 or smbell@columbiasc.net, or visit www.columbiasc.net.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 5, 2015

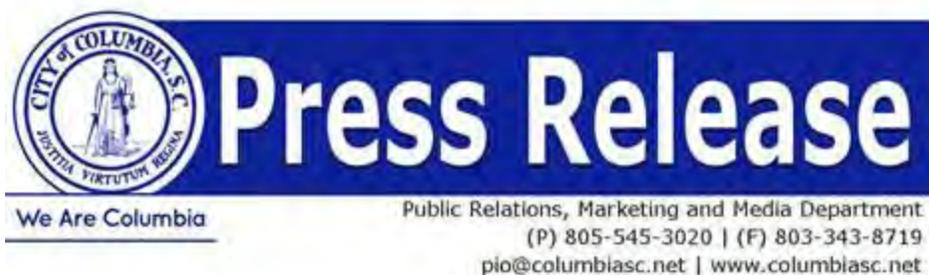
Contact: Planning Division at 803-545-3222

Agenda for Design/Development Review Commission

The Design/Development Review Commission will conduct a meeting on Thursday, January 8, 2015. Please see attached for the agenda.

Past agendas and the approved minutes of previous meetings can also be found here: <http://columbiasc.gov/planning-boards-commissions/ddrc/agendas-minutes>.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 5, 2015

Contact: Marli Drum at 803-776-7387

Pet of the Week: Lola! (ID# A210381)

Lola is a one-year-old Labrador Retriever. She is very friendly and needs a lot of exercise. Lola is spayed, microchipped and ready to take home. Stop by Columbia Animal Shelter to **see if she's the pet for you!**

Visit Duke and other pets available for adoption at the Columbia Animal Shelter, 127 Humane Lane. Visit www.columbiasc.net/animal-services or call 803-776-PETS for more information.

All of our pets need loving homes! To view other animals available for adoption, visit Petfinder.com. Please refer to the ID number listed above when visiting the website.

###

**Please see attached for photo*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday, January 5, 2015

Contact: Dollie Bristow at 545-3371

City of Columbia to Host Public Forums for Citizen Input in Five Year Consolidated Plan

Columbia's Vision needs your voice! The City of Columbia's Community Development department will host public forums for citizen input in the Five Year Consolidated Plan for submission to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). All interested citizens of the City are invited to provide input and comments on community needs by attending one of the four public forums:

Thursday, January 8, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Earlewood Park Community Center, 1111 Parkside Drive

Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 6 p.m.

King Park, 2300 Greene Street

Thursday, January 22, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Edisto Discovery Park, 1914 Wiley Park

Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 6 p.m.

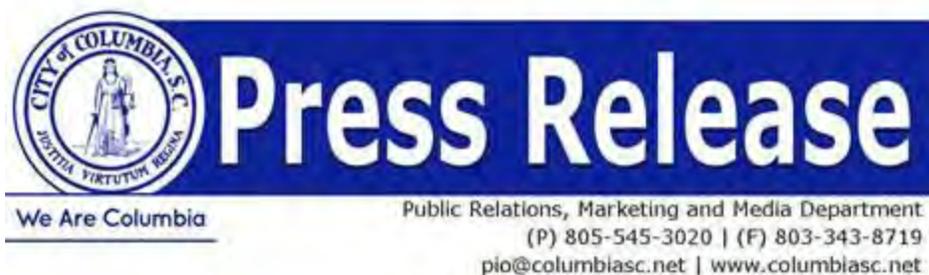
Woodland Park, 6500 Olde Knight Parkway

The Consolidated Plan is the application for federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Partnership Investment Program (HOME) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA) program funding and consists of strategies to address the housing, homeless and community development needs of the City. A summary of citizen comments will be included in the 2015 – 2020 Consolidated Plan submitted to HUD.

For more information, contact Dollie Bristow at 545-3371 or Community Development at 545-3373.

###

**Please see attached flyer*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 5, 2015

Contact: Erika Moore at 545-3043

City Council Meeting Agendas for January 6, 2015

The Columbia City Council will conduct a Work Session at 2 p.m. and a Council Meeting at 6 p.m. The updated agendas are attached for your review.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 05, 2015

Contact: Shireese M. Bell at 803-760-9125 or smbell@columbiasc.net

Join the Fun at Main Street ICE

Grab your family and friends, and head down to Boyd Plaza for some fun at Main Street ICE! The City of Columbia's outdoor ice skating rink, located at the corner of Main and Hampton streets, **will remain open until January 19, 2015.**

The ice rink will be open seven days a week at the following hours of operation:

Monday-Thursday, 4 to 9 p.m.

Friday, 4 to 10 p.m.

Saturday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Sunday, 1 to 9 p.m.

The fee to skate is \$10 for adults, \$8 for children (age 12 and under) and \$8 for active duty military and seniors (55+). The fee includes skate rentals. Group reservations are available for 20 or more only from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday-Thursday.

Skate for \$8 Specials

Mondays

Food Drive Night

Support Harvest Hope Food Bank and bring 3 canned goods or non-perishable food items.

Tuesdays

Government Employee Appreciation Night

Show your employee ID
(Federal, State, City & County)

Wednesdays

Youth Group Night

Bring your youth groups out for fellowship and fun.

Thursdays

College Night

Show your college ID

Represent your school and show your school spirit!

For more information or to reserve your group reservations, please contact the City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department at 803-545-3100.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 5, 2015

Contact: Sara Hollar at 545-3860

**City of Columbia To Hold Public Education Forum
On Utility Line Tree Trimming**

The City of Columbia and SCE&G will hold a public education session on Thursday, January 15, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at The Lourie Center (formerly Capital Senior Center) located at 1650 Park Circle, to discuss upcoming tree trimming activities near utility distribution lines.

Citizens are encouraged to attend this information session to learn more about tree trimming that will be completed in 2015.

Topics covered will include:

- Purpose and Guidelines for Utility Pruning
- ANSI Standards
- Grand Trees
- Protection of Trees
- Columbia's Aging Tree Canopy

Representatives from the City of Columbia and SCE&G will provide educational materials and be available to answer any questions about proper pruning techniques and upcoming activities.

For additional information, please contact the Forestry and Beautification Division of the City of Columbia at 803-545-3860.

###



COLUMBIAPROBALL.COM
@COLUMBIAPROBALL * FACEBOOK.COM/COLUMBIAPROBALL

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: **Abby Naas**

anaas@columbiaprobball.com

260-446-5566

Columbia Professional Baseball

www.ColumbiaProBaseball.com

Tuesday, January 6, 2015

Spirit Communications Park Groundbreaking

Spirit Communications Park Coming to Downtown Columbia

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Professional baseball's return to Columbia took another major step forward this morning. **Mayor Steve Benjamin**, along with **Jason Freier** (CEO, **Hardball Capital**), **Bob Hughes** (President, **Hughes Development**), **Bob Keane** (President and CEO, **Spirit Communications**), and **Greg Hughes** (President, **Contract Construction, Inc.** and Project Manager for **CCEB Venue Partners**) and other City, State and company officials ceremonially broke ground on Spirit Communications Park at Columbia Common in Downtown Columbia.

The state-of-the-art multi-use sports and entertainment venue will be home to an affiliated professional Minor League Baseball team beginning in April, 2016.

"This is a milestone day for our entire city," Mayor Benjamin said. "It's taken hard work by many to make this possible, and more hard work is still in store, but our vision for a more vibrant Columbia is coming closer and closer to fruition. The countdown is now on to Opening Day in 2016."

The team will begin taking reservations for ticket packages on February 2, 2015. Information and pricing will be available online at ColumbiaProBaseball.com and SpiritCommunicationsPark.com on January 27, 2015.

"It's exciting to think about how Spirit Communications Park will add to what is already one of the Southeast's great cities," said Freier, who was at a similar groundbreaking for Parkview

Field in Fort Wayne, Ind., in 2007. Parkview Field has since been named the “No. 1 Ballpark Experience” in Minor League Baseball in three of the past four years.

Spirit Communications Park will anchor development at Columbia Common, the new gateway to Downtown Columbia. The 181-acre Columbia Common, under the guidance of master developer Hughes Development, is primed to become the ultimate live-work-play community in the region.

“We’ve seen this kind of development centered around a ballpark work throughout the country, including not so far away from Columbia,” said Bob Hughes, who has developed in the area around Fluor Field in Greenville’s West End. “Folks in Columbia are in for a treat with Spirit Communications Park.”

More than 900 jobs are expected to be created during the construction of the ballpark. Once complete, **Columbia’s professional baseball team will bring on approximately 35 full-time and 550 part-time employees.**

Construction of Spirit Communications Park is being managed by CCEB Venue Partners, a joint venture among Contract Construction, Construction Dynamics, and EnviroAg Sciences — all local firms — as well as Barton Mallow Construction, national ballpark experts.

“Contract Construction is proud to be part of the CCEB Venue team,” said Greg Hughes. “Our focus will be to involve local companies in the construction of THEIR venue s on Opening Day we will have a facility built FOR the City of Columbia, BY the City of Columbia.”

Spirit Communications Park has been designed by Populous. The world’s premier venue architectural firm also has designed 20 of Major League Baseball’s 30 ballparks, in addition to the University of South Carolina Baseball Stadium.

One aspect that will make Spirit Communications Park unique from so many others around the country is that it will play host to far more than just baseball. The facility will serve as a public gathering place for hundreds of indoor and outdoor non-baseball events each year. From concerts to community events, Spirit Communications Park will welcome thousands. The park will host approximately 8,000 fans for baseball games and 14,000 for concerts.

“Spirit Communications is excited to have our name on this fantastic, multi-use venue,” said Keane. “People from all across the Midlands will make memories at this park that will last a lifetime.”

Said Benjamin: “Today we break ground; In April of 2016, we’ll play ball.”

About the City of Columbia

Founded by the General Assembly in 1786, Columbia was South Carolina's first planned city and among the first planned cities in the nation. Columbia is the largest city in South Carolina with a population of 129,276 (2010 U.S. Census) and a metro workforce of over 375,000 (SC Department of Employment and Workforce) and serves as state capital while **hosting multiple colleges and universities including the state's flagship Carnegie Research 1 facility the University of South Carolina.** Columbia is also home to the nationally renowned **Riverbanks Zoo and Garden, the largest children's museum in the Southeast Edventure** and the largest U.S. Army training facility in the world at Fort Jackson.

The City of Columbia works closely with neighborhood organizations to increase the lines of communications between the community and City Hall and, with approximately 2200 employees on staff, is dedicated to providing the highest quality services to all of our citizens.

About Columbia Professional Baseball

Columbia Professional Baseball is returning professional baseball to Columbia for the first time in a decade. It is partnering with the City of Columbia and Hughes Development to construct a multi-use outdoor venue at the center of the Columbia Common development. Columbia Professional Baseball is owned by Hardball Capital, the owner of the Fort Wayne TinCaps of the Midwest League and the Savannah Sand Gnats of the South Atlantic League. For more information visit www.ColumbiaProBall.com or www.SpiritCommunicationsPark.com.

About Hughes Development Corporation

Hughes Development Corporation is a 76-year old, family owned real estate development firm based in Greenville, SC. It has developed projects across the southeast, from Alabama to Virginia, in virtually all types of real estate. Over the last 15 years, Hughes Development has refined its focus to mixed-use, urban developments, where its expertise and experience can be used to transform districts and make a lasting impact. Hughes Development continues its tradition of broad development expertise, long-term ownership of its projects, and a commitment to adding value to local communities.

About Spirit Communications

Headquartered in Columbia, South Carolina, Spirit Communications provides voice, data, Internet, and fiber optic solutions, along with a full suite of Cloud services to commercial **businesses and government agencies across the Southeast.** The company's ownership group includes Chesnee Communications, Comporium, Farmers Telephone Cooperative, Hargray Telephone Company, Home Telephone Company, Horry Telephone cooperative, Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative, Piedmont Rural Telephone Cooperative, Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, TruVista Communications and West Carolina Rural Telephone

Cooperative. Spirit's mission is to enable customers to transform their operations through fast, stable, and secure offerings that flex with business demand. Ranked among the top 25 privately held firms in South Carolina, Spirit serves thousands of customers in over 150 service locations throughout South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. For more information, visit www.spiritcom.com.

About CCEB Venue Partners

CCEB Venue Partners is a joint venture team consisting of several companies, including **Detroit's Barton Malow Co., along with local companies such as Contract Construction, Inc., Construction Dynamics, Inc. and ENVIRO Ag Science.**

Barton Malow Co. is no stranger to stadium construction, having built Clipper Magazine Stadium, a 6,000-seat baseball park in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and worked on the renovation of the iconic Rose Bowl Stadium in California.

Barton Malow also built BB&T Park, which is the new home of the Charlotte Knights minor league baseball team.

Meanwhile, Contract Construction, Inc. is the company that built the University of South Carolina's **Carolina Stadium. Contract Construction is the managing partner on team.**

High-Resolution renderings are available for download at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/rd4o9fnwb8fcd0h/AABuIVNnkaGzQIIA10hOrcIfa?dl=0>

###

--

Abby Naas | Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations | **Columbia Professional Baseball** |

Mobile 260.446.5566 | Email anaas@columbiaproball.com

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 6, 2015

Contact: Sara Hollar at 545-3860

City of Columbia To Hold Public Education Forum On Utility Line Tree Trimming

The City of Columbia and SCE&G will hold a public education session on Thursday, January 15, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at The Lourie Center (formerly Capital Senior Center) located at 1650 Park Circle, to discuss upcoming tree trimming activities near utility distribution lines.

Citizens are encouraged to attend this information session to learn more about tree trimming that will be completed in 2015.

Topics covered will include:

- Purpose and Guidelines for Utility Pruning
- ANSI Standards
- Grand Trees
- Protection of Trees
- Columbia's Aging Tree Canopy

Representatives from the City of Columbia and SCE&G will provide educational materials and be available to answer any questions about proper pruning techniques and upcoming activities.

For additional information, please contact the Forestry and Beautification Division of the City of Columbia at 803-545-3860.

###

Home Heating Safety

Columbia Fire Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins reminds the citizens of the City of Columbia and Richland County that with the expected freezing temperatures over the next several nights to use caution while heating your homes as some heating sources that comfort us also is a leading cause of home fires and fire fatalities.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), half of all home-heating fires occur during the winter months. NFPA research shows that during 2011 home heating equipment was involved in more than 53,600 reported U.S. home structure fires, with associated loss of more than 400 civilian deaths, more than 1,520 civilian injuries and roughly \$893 million in direct property damage.

Heating Safety

There is something about the winter months and curling up with a good book by the fireplace. But did you know that heating equipment is a leading cause of home fire deaths? With a few simple safety tips and precautions you can prevent most heating fires from happening.

BE WARM AND SAFE THIS WINTER!

- »» Keep anything that can burn at least three-feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- »» Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- »» Never use your oven to heat your home.
- »» Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- »» Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- »» Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- »» Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- »» Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- »» Test smoke alarms monthly.



Heating Equipment Smarts

Install wood burning stoves following manufacturer's instructions or have a professional do the installation. All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Install and maintain CO alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning. If you **smell** gas in your gas heater, do not light the appliance. Leave the home immediately and call your local fire department or gas company.



FACT

Half of home heating fires are reported during the months of **December, January, and February.**



Your Source for SAFETY Information
NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

www.nfpa.org/education



We Are Columbia

www.ColumbiaSC.net



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Contact: Dollie Bristow at 545-3371

The City Urges Citizens to Participate in Public Forums for Five Year Consolidated Plan

Columbia's Vision needs your voice! The City of Columbia's Community Development department urges citizens to participate in the upcoming public forums to give input for the Five Year Consolidated Plan. All interested citizens of the City are invited to provide input and comments on community needs by attending one of the four public forums:

Thursday, January 8, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Earlewood Park Community Center, 1111 Parkside Drive

Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 6 p.m.

King Park, 2300 Greene Street

Thursday, January 22, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Edisto Discovery Park, 1914 Wiley Park

Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Woodland Park, 6500 Olde Knight Parkway

A summary of citizen comments will be included in the 2015 – 2020 Consolidated Plan submitted to HUD. The Consolidated Plan is the application for federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Partnership Investment Program (HOME) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA) program funding and consists of strategies to address the housing, homeless and community development needs of the City.

For more information, contact Dollie Bristow at 545-3371 or Community Development at 545-3373.

###

**Please see attached flyer*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 8, 2015

Contact: Connie Lucius at (803) 545-4268 | cflucius@columbiasc.net

Advertisement of Vacancies for the City of Columbia Boards & Commissions

The City of Columbia is seeking persons to serve on a variety of boards and commissions. Participation is another way city residents can take part in their government. Below is a list of boards and commissions that currently have vacancies.

Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

Seeking one (1) District 1 Applicant.

The purpose of BPAC is to advise the Mayor and City Council Members, the City of Columbia transportation planning staff; community organizations; and partners on bicycling and pedestrian issues facing the city; to work toward development of bicycle/pedestrian master plan; to represent community and constituent interests in transportation planning decisions; and to provide feedback to staff on projects relating to walking and bicycling. Current appointees need to re-apply for consideration. Term - 2 years.

Board of Zoning Appeals Form Based Codes

Seeking one (1) Applicant that is a landscape or urban planner.

Applicants must be residents of the city.

The City of Columbia is accepting applications for the Board of Zoning Appeals Form Based Codes. The purpose of the Board of Zoning Appeals Form Based Codes is to hear and decide appeals when it is alleged that there is an error in any order, requirement, decision or determination made the zoning administrator or the Consolidated Review Committee in the enforcement of the code when the property is governed by a form based code. Term – 3 years.

Citizens Advisory Committee for Community Development

Seeking one (1) At-large and one District 4 Representative for Appointment/Re-Appointment.

Applicants must be residents of the city.

The purpose of this committee is to make important recommendations for the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA), and Columbia Assisting Neighborhood Development Opportunities (CANDO) funds, advises the Mayor and Council on the needs of neighborhoods, reviews amendments and makes appropriate comments on policies. Term – 4 years.

Design/Development Review Commission

Seeking one (1) Architect, one (1) Community Representative, and one (1) Realtor. Applicants must be residents on the city.

The purpose of the Design/Development Review Commission (DDRC) is to review and approve work proposed within the City's historic districts, urban design areas, and upon designated landmarks. Term – 3 years.

Parks and Recreation Foundation

Seeking four (4) Applicants.

Columbia Parks and Recreation Foundation enhances the leisure service opportunities in the City of Columbia by improving the scope and quality of educational and human development programs. It encourages, recruits, receives, and administers gifts, devises, and donations by deed, will or otherwise, for the advancement of the City of Columbia Parks & Recreation Department. Term – 3 years.

Property Maintenance Board of Adjustment and Appeals

Seeking seven (7) Applicants for Appointment/Re-Appointment who are qualified by experience and training (i.e. architect, contractor, engineer, property manager) to pass on matters pertaining to property maintenance.

The purpose of the Property Maintenance Board of Adjustment and Appeals is to hear appeals of notices or decisions issued under the International Property Maintenance Code. Term – 3 years.

Deadline – Applications are due no later than February 13, 2015, 5 p.m.

For applications and more information contact Connie Lucius at (803) 545-4268 or send a request to cflucius@columbiasc.net. You can also visit our website at <https://columbiasc.gov/boards-commissions> to download an application.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, January 9, 2015

Contact: Community Development at 545-3373

Loan Committee Meeting Agenda

The City of Columbia's Housing Division of Community Development is conducting a Loan Committee meeting today at 8:30 a.m. The agenda is attached for your review.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, January 9, 2015

Contact: Zoning Division at 803-545-3333

Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting Agenda

The Board of Zoning Appeals will conduct a meeting on Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at 10 a.m. The agenda is attached for your review.

This agenda, past agendas and the approved minutes of previous meetings can also be found here: <http://columbiasc.net/planning-boards-commissions/boza/agendas-minutes>.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 10, 2015

Contact: Michael Wukela, Office of the Mayor @ 803-413-5052

Mayor Benjamin organizes free Selma viewing for local students

Columbia, SC – Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin announced today that he is partnering with a number of local African-American leaders and organizations including Congressman James Clyburn and Richland One School Commissioner Aaron Bishop to offer free admission to the Golden Globe-nominated film Selma for nearly 100 minority teenagers from across Columbia this Sunday, January 11, at 5:30pm at The Nickelodeon Theatre on Main Street as part of his ongoing “My Brother’s Keeper: Columbia” initiative.

“The civil rights movement represents so much of who we are as a city, as a nation and as a people,” said Mayor Benjamin. “The story of Selma not only chronicles a critical turning point in that historic struggle, but reminds us that when men and women come together in the spirit of non-violence dedicated to the cause of equality, they can truly change the world.”

“That’s a lesson we should be teaching our young people every single day and I’m proud to have this opportunity to do just that.”

“I think the mentality and actions which are displayed during these times are relevant to 50 years ago,” said Commissioner Bishop. “The movie Selma is relevant today. Yesterday’s Civil Right leaders are today’s action figures. Faith without works is dead and Selma was certainly a demonstration of faith and action working together. 50 years is not that far away”

Additional sponsors and partnering organizations include:

- City Councilman Sam Davis
- City Councilman Brian DeQuincey Newman
- Richland County Councilman Paul Livingston
- The Solomon Law Group
- Bethlehem Baptist Church
- St. John Baptist Church
- Brookland Baptist Church
- Brookland Baptist Church Northeast
- Bethel AME Church
- Grace Christian Church
- Greater St. Luke Baptist Church
- New Laurel St Baptist Church
- Concerned Black Men
- 100 Black Men of Greater Columbia
- Word of God Ministries
- SC Black Pages
- Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, Alpha Iota Chapter

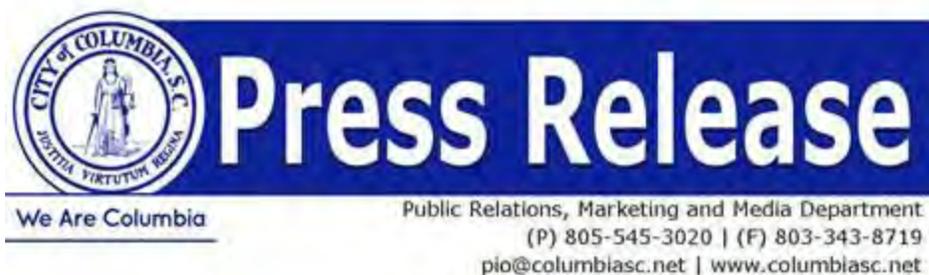
While all seats for Sunday's 5:30pm showing are already reserved, Mayor Benjamin encourages community and business leaders to organize similar viewings across the city and region.

Selma is playing at The Nickelodeon Theater from January 9th – January 29th.

To learn more about the theater, visit www.nickelodeon.org or to learn more about the film, visit www.selmamovie.com.

For more information, contact Michael Wukela at 803-413-5052.

####



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 12, 2015

Contact: Marli Drum at 803-776-7387

Pet of the Week: Sam! (ID# A207695)

Sam is a 10 month old domestic short hair cat. He is very relaxed and extremely curious. Sam is also neutered and microchipped. Meet him today!

Visit Sam and other pets available for adoption at the Columbia Animal Shelter, 127 Humane Lane. Visit www.columbiasc.net/animal-services or call 803-776-PETS for more information.

All of our pets need loving homes! To view other animals available for adoption, visit Petfinder.com. Please refer to the ID number listed above when visiting the website.

###

**Please see attached for photo*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 12, 2015

Contact: Michael Wukela 545-3039 | mcwukela@columbiasc.net

Mayor Steve Benjamin to Deliver Annual State of the City Address

Mayor Steve Benjamin will deliver his Annual State of the City address on January 20, 2015, at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin

WHAT: State of the City Address

WHEN: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at 6 p.m.

WHERE: Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center

The Coble Ballroom

1101 Lincoln Street

Columbia, South Carolina

###

****Please see the attached invitation.***



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, January 13, 2015

Contact: Libby Gober at 803-545-3061

Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine's Open House Cancelled

City Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine's **January** Open House has been cancelled. However, if a citizen has a time sensitive or urgent need, a special appointment can be scheduled by calling 803-545-3061.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, January 13, 2015

Contact: Dollie Bristow at 545-3371

The City Urges Citizens to Participate in Public Forums for Five Year Consolidated Plan

Columbia's Vision needs your voice! The City of Columbia's Community Development department urges citizens to participate in the upcoming public forums to give input for the Five Year Consolidated Plan. All interested citizens of the City are invited to provide input and comments on community needs by attending one of the public forums:

Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 6 p.m.

King Park, 2300 Greene Street

Thursday, January 22, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Edisto Discovery Park, 1914 Wiley Park

Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Woodland Park, 6500 Olde Knight Parkway

A summary of citizen comments will be included in the 2015 – 2020 Consolidated Plan submitted to HUD. The Consolidated Plan is the application for federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Partnership Investment Program (HOME) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA) program funding and consists of strategies to address the housing, homeless and community development needs of the City.

For more information, contact Dollie Bristow at 545-3371 or Community Development at 545-3373.

###

**Please see attached flyer*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 13, 2015

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media @ 545-3020

**City Offices Closed in Observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Holiday**

City of Columbia offices will be closed on Monday, January 19, 2015 in observance of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

All garbage and recycle routes will remain on schedule.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 14, 2015

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media @ 545-3020

City of Columbia To Hold Walk Bike Columbia Public Meeting

What: The public is invited to a public meeting to see the draft pedestrian and bicycle master plan, share thoughts on the recommendations, and talk one on-one with the planning team. This is an opportunity for citizens to give input on the plan recommendations before City leadership considers formally adopting the plan.

When: Thursday, January 22, 2015

6 P.M. – 7:30 P.M. (Presentation at 6 P.M.)

Where: EdVenture Children’s Museum, 211 Gervais Street

The Canal Room (Lower Level – Entry at Facing Canal)

More Information: Contact the City of Columbia Planning Department at 803-545-0229 or visit www.walkbikecolumbia.org.

###

***Please see the attached flyer.**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, January 14, 2015

Contact: Felicia Wilks at 803-545-3373

**Community Development to Hold "How to Purchase a House on a Budget"
Workshop**

Learn about the mortgage process, the benefits of homeownership and what to do after closing at Community Development's "How to Purchase a House on Budget" Workshop.

WHEN: Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015 from 9-11 a.m.

WHERE: Earlewood Park 1119 Parkside Drive, Columbia, SC 29201

For more information or to register, contact Felicia Wilks at 803-545-3373.

###

**Please see attached flyer*

Columbia's Vision Needs Your Voice!

Columbia's Vision Needs Your Voice!



Columbia's Vision needs your voice! The City of Columbia's Community Development Department will host public forums for citizen input in the Five Year Consolidated Plan for submission to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

All interested citizens of the City are invited to provide input and comments on community needs by attending one of the public forums.

Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 6 p.m.

King Park, 2300 Greene Street

Thursday, January 22, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Edisto Discovery Park, 1914 Wiley Park

Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Woodland Park, 6500 Olde Knight Parkway





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 15, 2015

Contact: Sara Hollar at 545-3860

**City of Columbia To Hold Public Education Forum
On Utility Line Tree Trimming**

The City of Columbia and SCE&G will hold a public education session on Thursday, January 15, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at The Lourie Center (formerly Capital Senior Center) located at 1650 Park Circle, to discuss upcoming tree trimming activities near utility distribution lines.

Citizens are encouraged to attend this information session to learn more about tree trimming that will be completed in 2015.

Topics covered will include:

- Purpose and Guidelines for Utility Pruning
- ANSI Standards
- Grand Trees
- Protection of Trees
- Columbia's Aging Tree Canopy

Representatives from the City of Columbia and SCE&G will provide educational materials and be available to answer any questions about proper pruning techniques and upcoming activities.

For additional information, please contact the Forestry and Beautification Division of the City of Columbia at 803-545-3860.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 15, 2015

Contact: Dollie Bristow at 545-3371

The City Urges Citizens to Participate in Public Forums for Five Year Consolidated Plan

Columbia's Vision needs your voice! The City of Columbia's Community Development department urges citizens to participate in the upcoming public forums to give input for the Five Year Consolidated Plan. All interested citizens of the City are invited to provide input and comments on community needs by attending one of the public forums:

Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 6 p.m.

King Park, 2300 Greene Street

Thursday, January 22, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Edisto Discovery Park, 1914 Wiley Park

Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Woodland Park, 6500 Olde Knight Parkway

A summary of citizen comments will be included in the 2015 – 2020 Consolidated Plan submitted to HUD. The Consolidated Plan is the application for federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Partnership Investment Program (HOME) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA) program funding and consists of strategies to address the housing, homeless and community development needs of the City.

For more information, contact Dollie Bristow at 545-3371 or Community Development at 545-3373

###

**Please see attached flyer*

City of Columbia to Hold Public Education Forum on Utility Line Tree Trimming



We Are Columbia

The City of Columbia to Hold Public Education Forum on Utility Line Tree Trimming

The City of Columbia and SCE&G will hold a public education forum for interested parties to discuss upcoming tree trimming activities near the utility distribution lines.

This forum will provide information regarding tree trimming near the utility distribution lines scheduled for 2015. Topics covered will include the Purpose and Guidelines for Utility Pruning, ANSI Standards, Grand Trees, and Columbia's Aging Tree Canopy.



The meeting will be held Thursday, January 15 from 6:00pm to 7:00pm at The Lourie Center (formerly the Capital Senior Center) located at 1650 Park Circle.

Representatives from the City of Columbia and SCE&G will answer questions about proper pruning techniques and upcoming activities.



For additional information, please contact the Forestry and Beautification Division of the City of Columbia at 803-545-3860.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, January 16, 2015

Contact: Shireese M. Bell at 803-760-9125 or smbell@columbiasc.net

27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

The City of Columbia and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation will hold the 27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration on Monday, January 19, 2015, at 4 p.m. at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Park and Community Center, 2300 Greene Street.

Columbia Urban League President and Chief Executive Officer James T. McLawhorn, Jr. will be the keynote speaker. The celebration will also include performances from A. C. Flora High School Gospel Ensemble, The Brotherhood of First Nazareth Baptist Church and Jonathan Cannon, a Dutch Fork High School junior.

Monday's celebration include a Wreath Laying Ceremony to commemorate the historic marker honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at 3:06 p.m. at the corner of Harden and Greene streets. Members of the Alpha Psi Lambda and Omicron Iota Lambda chapters of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. will lead the ceremony.

Tomorrow, January 17, the Omicron Iota Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and Bridging the Gap With Alpha, Inc. will hold the 25th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. 5K Run/Fitness Walk at 9: a.m. at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park located at 2300 Greene Street.

Olympic-style medals will be awarded to the first three male and female finishers in 13 age divisions. Proceeds from the race will benefit the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation and The Alpha Academy.

For more information about the race, contact Willie L. Odom at 803-254-8070 or kolonel@bellsouth.net or visit www.AlphaOIL.org/MLK.

For more information about the 27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration, contact Shireese M. Bell at 803-545-3100 or smbell@columbiasc.net, or visit www.columbiasc.net.

###

****Please see the attached flyer and photo***



We Are Columbia

Shireese M. Bell, Sr. Public Information/Community Relations Specialist

Public Relations, Marketing and Media Department

1737 Main Street, Columbia, SC 29201

Phone: 803-545-3019

Fax: 803-343-8719

ColumbiaSC.net



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 16, 2015

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media @ 545-3020

**City Offices Closed in Observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Holiday**

City of Columbia offices will be closed on Monday, January 19, 2015 in observance of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

All garbage and recycle routes will remain on schedule.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 16, 2015

Contact: Michael Wukela 545-3039 | mcwukela@columbiasc.net

Mayor Steve Benjamin to Deliver Annual State of the City Address

Mayor Steve Benjamin will deliver his Annual State of the City address on January 20, 2015, at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin

WHAT: State of the City Address

WHEN: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at 6 p.m.

WHERE: Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center

The Coble Ballroom

1101 Lincoln Street

Columbia, South Carolina

###

****Please see the attached invitation.***



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, January 16, 2015

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media @ 545-3020

City Issues Statement Regarding Uber Operations Within the City Limits

On January 15, 2015, the South Carolina Public Service Commission (“PSC”) issued an order directing that Rasier, LLC or its related companies and affiliates and/or its network partner drivers to cease and desist operating unless and until the Application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity is approved and a Certificate is issued.

Currently, Columbia permits vehicles for hire compliant with the regulations found in Chapter 24 of the City’s Code. The ride-sharing platform utilized by entities such as Rasier, LLC and/or Uber, does not comply with those regulations and as such is not permitted in the City.

In the City, taxicab companies are required to be approved by the Office of Regulatory Staff (“ORS”) and PSC before a business license can be issued. The City will be unable to license ridesharing services until the PSC and ORS have made a decision on how to regulate ridesharing services and provide the companies with the approvals needed for a City business license.

The City of Columbia Police Department’s officers have the authority to issue citations for any violation of the City of Columbia Code and will act on violations occurring in their presence.

###

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday, January 19 2015

Contact: Shireese M. Bell at 803-760-9125 or smbell@columbiasc.net

27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

The City of Columbia and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation will hold the 27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration **today**, January 19, 2015, at 4 p.m. at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Park and Community Center, 2300 Greene Street.

Columbia Urban League President and Chief Executive Officer James T. McLawhorn, Jr. will be the keynote speaker. The celebration will also include performances from A. C. Flora High School Gospel Ensemble, The Brotherhood of First Nazareth Baptist Church and Jonathan Cannon, a Dutch Fork High School junior.

Monday's celebration includes a Wreath Laying Ceremony to commemorate the historic marker honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at **3:06 p.m.** at the corner of Harden and Greene streets. Members of the Alpha Psi Lambda and Omicron Iota Lambda chapters of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. will lead the ceremony.

For more information about the 27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration, contact Shireese M. Bell at 803-545-3100 or smbell@columbiasc.net, or visit www.columbiasc.net.

###

****Please see the attached photo***



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 20, 2015

Contact: Michael Wukela 545-3039 | mcwukela@columbiasc.net

Mayor Steve Benjamin to Deliver Annual State of the City Address

Mayor Steve Benjamin will deliver his Annual State of the City address on January 20, 2015, at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin

WHAT: State of the City Address

WHEN: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at 6 p.m.

WHERE: Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center

The Coble Ballroom

1101 Lincoln Street

Columbia, South Carolina

###

****Please see the attached invitation.***



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, January 20, 2015

Contact: Marli Drum at 803-776-7387

Pet of the Week: Bobbie! (ID# A211265)

Bobbie is a one-year-old Carolina dog mix. He is very quiet and relaxed. Bobbie is also neutered and microchipped. Meet him today!

Visit Bobbie and other pets available for adoption at the Columbia Animal Shelter, 127 Humane Lane. Visit www.columbiasc.net/animal-services or call 803-776-PETS for more information.

All of our pets need loving homes! To view other animals available for adoption, visit Petfinder.com. Please refer to the ID number listed above when visiting the website.

###

**Please see attached for photo*



NEWS RELEASE

Embargoed until 6:00 PM

January 20, 2015

Contact: Michael Wukela (803) 413-5052

Mayor Benjamin Delivers 2015 State of the City Address

COLUMBIA, SC – Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin delivered his 2015 State of the City address this evening at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

Below are Mayor Benjamin's full remarks as prepared. Also attached are four graphics from the event's program outlining several key milestones and accomplishments in the areas of Public Safety, Budget and Downtown Redevelopment.

2015 State of the City Address

**Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by Mayor Steve Benjamin
January 20, 2015 – Columbia, SC**

Before I begin, I need to take a moment to recognize a colleague without whom this event would be impossible. She organizes it every year.

Chanique Belton first came to us as a student in our Mayor's Fellows program. She was a Veteran of the United States Army and a single mother whose attention to detail, unrivaled work ethic and sincere passion for service quickly made such an impression that, as soon as her fellowship was over, we hired her to serve in the Mayor's Office as my Executive Assistant full-time.

Since then, she has proven herself invaluable to our office. She manages my schedule, despite my best efforts to ruin it, keeps me on task, organizes major events like tonight and was even studying to earn her Masters of Public Administration all while raising five children.

This past November after helping to organize our great breakfast to raise funds for the Palmetto Health Foundation and Bosom Buddies, Chanique was diagnosed with breast cancer – yet she has refused to let her diagnosis define her – meeting her sickness and her treatment with the characteristic determination, honesty and courage that makes her an inspiration to all of us.

Chanique, we just want to say thank you. We love you. And we're here for you.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank my colleagues – Sam Davis, for your experience and wisdom; Tameika Isaac-Devine, for your open mind and open heart; Leona Plough, for your commitment and your courage; Brian DeQuincey Newman, for your energy and vision; Cameron Runyan, for your passion and tenacity; and Moe Baddourah...well, I'll just say thank you.

No. Moe, thank you for your criticism, because we can only make good decisions as a group if we are willing to challenge each other every day through constructive dialogue, discussion and yes disagreement.

We must always be thankful that we live in a Democracy where minority opinions will always be valued and all viewpoints are respected.

Members of Council, Madam City Manager, honored guests, gathered family and friends and my fellow Columbians:

Earlier today a friend of mine gave me some advice: to be charming, to be inspiring and to be brief because even absolute failure in the first two can be redeemed with success in the third.

I also heard that there's a fella in Washington giving a speech later on tonight so, with that in mind, let's get to it.

Dr. Madden, let me thank you for joining us, for your service as our city's first Poet Laureate and for your words this evening. The arts are empowering and our success as a city that values art, culture and history will define us for generations as a phoenix that, 150 years after being burned to the ground, has risen from the ashes to become the most talented, educated and entrepreneurial city in America.

Our poet laureate is absolutely right, there is a story.

For my part, it's a story of blessings because, you see, my life has been touched by God.

I married DeAndrea, the most remarkable woman I've ever known who loves me, supports me and gave me two beautiful children Bethany and Jordan Grace who adore me.

I have a first class education, professional success and the honor to serve the city that I love.

I've never had to struggle with hunger, chronic disease or debilitating injury. I've never slept out in the cold with nowhere to turn. I've never gone to jail and I've never had to fight a war that I didn't believe in.

And if I ever did find myself faced with an obstacle I could not overcome alone, the arms that first bore me are never more than 25 minutes from my front doorstep.

I was raised by Sam and Maggie Benjamin the most wonderful parents a person could ever ask for and a host of loving relatives here today like my in-laws the Gists– who worked harder than any two people, should ever have to so that I could have the kinds of opportunities they could have never dreamed of.

Yes, my life has been blessed and, odds are, if you're here tonight, so has yours.

But what about all of those who couldn't be here tonight, who work two and three jobs just to put a roof over their heads and food on the table and can't take time off to come listen to a speech or speak at a Council meeting or even help their kids with their homework?

What about those men, women and children who have no one to turn to, no one to support them?

What about those families who work hard every single day but never seem to get ahead?

What about the children raised in an environment that teaches them that you'll never be more than dirt poor so you might as well give up now.

You see, in this story, for every one of us blessed with all the benefits of 21st century America –

"My country tis of thee, sweet land of liberty of thee I sing" – there are countless others for whom fortune has been far less kind, whose American Dream will never come true because for far too many of our families a future of economic security and prosperity is simply too far out of reach, mired in a reality of back breaking generational poverty.

So, ladies and gentlemen, I come to you tonight to answer a simple question: Who will stand for them?

I say, ~~We~~ will... We must!"

So let us say it together. Let us make this promise today – Columbia's Promise – that if you're willing to work hard, contribute to your community and respect others you deserve a quality education, a good job and a living wage; that your circumstance should not determine your success and that, regardless of whatever past sins you carry with you, if you're looking to change your life for the better, we will do everything within our power to help you reach your goals.

I'm talking about a bold vision to secure the real needs of ALL Columbians and while this may seem overly ambitious to some, I point to the many great things we have accomplished together already.

We've built dozens of new homes in Burton Heights, completed major infrastructure improvements across the city and funded new park improvements at Hyatt, Hampton, Southeast and Finlay Parks, expanded our youth sports program and committed to a new, state of the art Greenview Park Pool.

We've cut total crime by over 11% and violent crime nearly 33% over the past four years including double digit drops in Motor Vehicle Theft, Burglary and Aggravated Assault this year alone and even when the budget was at its tightest, we found ways to make new, historic investments in Public Safety including \$4.5 million in new funds this year alone put towards hiring additional personnel, putting more patrol cars on the street and completing long term projects like a new burn building, the Busby Street Facility and Resource Center and replacing the old Olympia Fire Station.

We've secured years of budget surpluses, cut the Water & Sewer Fund Transfer by another 5.9% this year, cut the Hospitality Tax Transfer by 14.4% restoring it to the arts as promised, increased Hospitality Tax allocations by more than \$1.4 million and received the ~~Certificate~~ of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting" for the first time in nearly a decade.

Today North Main Plaza is fully occupied for the first time in its history and, if that wasn't enough to get excited about, this past fall we got word that we've received a Department of Transportation T.I.G.E.R. grant which, combined with the Transportation Penny, translates into a \$40 million dollar investment in North Columbia helping bring new infrastructure and economic activity to that area and create a truly seamless city for all.

Right now Metro Unemployment is at 5.9%. That's a nearly 40% decline over the past five years and there are enough jobs available right now to bring us close to 2% Unemployment if not lower.

The State of our City isn't just strong, it's explosive.

Working with partners like Hardball Capital, Hughes Development, Contract Construction, Enviro AgScience, Construction Dynamics, DESA, Barton Malow, Spirit Communications and a diverse team of mentors, protégés and minority contractors, earlier this month we broke ground on Spirit Communications Park, a world-class, state-of-the-art multi-use sports and entertainment venue expected to bring half a million new visitors downtown every year and help generate thousands of new jobs.

Working in partnership with organizations like The Animal Mission, The Humane SPCA, Pawmetto Lifeline and the NOMA Bark Park, our aggressive spay and neuter program has provided over 25,000 spay/neuters vouchers helping cut intake at our Animal Shelter by 14% as we march towards becoming a no-kill shelter.

And thanks to a new partnership with Curbside Value Partnership, I'm proud to say that by this time next year your old blue 18-gallon recycling bin will be replaced with a new 96-gallon roll carts giving us the potential to increase recovered recycling materials by 500%.

We're talking about 100,000 metric tons of CO2 saved over ten years and hundreds of thousands of tax dollars saved every year thanks to Curbside Value Partnership's Recycling Partnership.

So let me take this opportunity to recognize everyone who made this important project possible.

Please stand so we can say thank you.

We've done great things in this city because, time and again, we have chosen to lead, because we believe in Columbia, because we see what is possible and because it is the right thing to do.

We chose to lead in August when we passed our resolution welcoming unaccompanied immigrant and refugee children and calling on local, state and federal officials to enact comprehensive immigration reform because our city was founded in the hope that oppressed of every land might find a refuge under the wings of Columbia.

We chose to lead because it was the right thing to do.

We chose to lead in March when we signed the Civility Pledge because democracy is about respecting each other as citizens, putting the common good before our personal ambitions. It's about recognizing that whether we like it or not we're all in this together and building our collective future is more important than winning an argument.

We chose to lead because it was the right thing to do.

And we chose to lead this past November when we became the first city in South Carolina to extend full employment benefits to same-sex couples because we believe in equality. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere and maybe a piece of paper isn't going to change that but it's a good place to start.

We chose to lead because it was the right thing to do.

We chose to lead and today we have the first Homeless Court in all of South Carolina.

We chose to lead and now the common sense bond reform we fought for is finally the law helping shut the revolving door on repeat violent offenders.

We chose to lead in raising police salaries and we chose to lead with Justice for All because training, diversity, accountability and engagement aren't the exception here, they're the rule.

Nobody told us we had to. Nobody mandated that our officers receive additional training in cultural sensitivity and conflict de-escalation. Nobody told us we had to recruit more minority officers to make our police force as racially and culturally diverse as our city. Nobody forced us to issue body cameras to all uniformed officers, establish a citywide Human Rights Commission, appoint civilian representation to our Internal Affairs Review Board or publicly publish an annual report of all Internal Affairs complaints.

Nobody forced us to record all violent crime suspect interviews. In fact, most law enforcement agencies in this state don't. But we do, not because we have to but because it's the right thing to do...period.

There are no stronger advocates for our police officers than Chief Skip Holbrook and Deputy Chief Melron Kelly. But they also hold their officers to the highest standards of professionalism and respect and they will hold anyone who falls short of that standard accountable. That's what we expect and, with them at the helm, we will continue to lead all American cities in that direction.

You see, great cities aren't born; they're made.

Brick by brick, block by block, great cities are built to become something more than a loose conglomeration of neighborhoods and businesses, something more than the sum of their parts...something great.

In an article last month, Warren Bolton from The State newspaper wrote:

-Columbia doesn't have to be Charlotte or Atlanta or Greenville to become a thriving metropolitan city that competes with any rivals in the Southeast — or even beyond. What it needs is vision, leadership and private investors willing to spend their own money even as local governments and other public entities, led by the city of Columbia, provide reasonable incentives and regulations that foster quality, responsible development.

-If you've been watching in recent years, then you know those pieces have been coming together.

-And if you're among those who've been waiting for Columbia to come into its own, wait no longer. This city is about to explode with growth."

Rev. Bolton is right. The moment we've been waiting for is right now. But waiting didn't get us here.

We're not growing by chance, we're growing by choice. And that makes all the difference.

In less than four years we've seen over \$1 Billion in new downtown investment.

Think about that for a second...over \$1 Billion in less than four years. And that's not even counting Transportation Penny projects expected to generate \$1.2 Billion in total economic impact and open the riverfront for the first time in our city's history.

That's not counting the hundreds of millions of dollars we have invested and continue to invest on restoring and improving our water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure though we must do more to protect our three beautiful rivers and it's time for this Council to step up.

And that's not counting Columbia Commons which right now has 41 signed letters of intent from major retailers and is projected to create over 11,020 new permanent jobs; \$581 million in new annual wages and another \$1.2 Billion in new economic activity.

Over \$1 Billion in less than four years...That's not an accident.

These projects didn't just happen. Working with the private and public sectors in a business friendly environment we made them happen.

Creatively leveraging parking assets helped us close the deal with The Hub worth \$80 million and bring Agape's headquarters to Main Street.

Partnering with the University of South Carolina, IBM and Flour, we were able to secure a new Center for Applied Research and create hundreds of jobs who annual salaries start at \$50,000.

Our façade programs leveraged roughly \$745K in federal CDBG funds to create nearly \$7 million in private investment for Main and North Main Street and now we're ready to expand that effort to Two Notch Road.

Famously Hot New Year and Main Street Ice have coupled with the Soda City Market, Main Street Crit and our expanded Public Art initiative to reintroduce Downtown Columbia to countless families, individuals and potential investors.

Five years ago our outdated zoning laws didn't even allow modern private student housing in the city. But we changed those laws and created new incentives and now we have five private student housing projects right downtown totaling nearly a quarter of a billion dollars in new investment.

Great cities aren't born; they're made and we choose to be great. We choose to lead.

We've done great things in Columbia. Now I ask you to help me do even more.

I ask you to help me fulfill Columbia's Promise because right now in Columbia over 24% of our fellow citizens live in poverty and nearly a quarter of them are children.

Right now a person making minimum wage in Columbia has to work two full-time jobs just to afford the average single bedroom apartment, a single mother making minimum wage spends roughly a third of her annual income just on childcare, and a student at the University of South Carolina working full-time earning minimum wage spends two thirds of his annual gross salary on tuition alone in just two semesters.

Right now 200,000 of our working men and women in South Carolina earning less than 100% of the federal poverty level, including tens of thousands in Columbia, have no access to healthcare because our state refuses to expand Medicaid.

Right now one in four children in our city are at risk for going hungry even though the Community Eligibility Program can help provide free meals to all students. This program reimburses designated low income schools for the cost of these meals and an estimated 37 schools in the Columbia area qualify for that support. We need to make sure they get it.

I'm asking you to help me change that. I'm asking you to help me write a new story because this is America and in the richest, most powerful nation in the history of the world you shouldn't have to work full-time just to raise your kids in poverty.

I'm asking you to help me write a new story for folks like Shakaya McCoy and her family caught in an unwinnable situation.

You see, no matter how hard Kaya's husband works, with two kids at home and a third on the way, it never seems to be enough. And when Kaya tried to help the family get ahead by going back to work herself, she learned the same hard lesson too many of our families have had to learn.

Forty hours a week at \$7.25 an hour doesn't even cover the cost of childcare.

She can't work because she can't afford childcare and she can't afford childcare because she can't work.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have done great things in this city.

We have cut crime and grown the economy, funded public infrastructure and protected public funds.

But if we can secure over \$1 Billion in new downtown investment in less than three years, but can't do something to help folks like Shakaya McCoy and her family, then we don't deserve to be here.

This is why we were elected. It's our job, it's our duty and, most importantly, it's the right thing to do.

So, while the debate over raising the federal minimum wage continues in Washington, we're taking action. Any day now we expect to receive recommendations from our Citywide Comp & Class study to raise wages for our city employees and, in the meantime, I'm asking my colleagues on City Council to support our request to raise the minimum hourly wage for our city employees to exceed the proposed \$10.10 threshold.

Furthermore, today I'm asking local and state leaders throughout the Midlands to join us because roughly 55,000 men and women work for the City, Richland County and Richland School Districts One and Two, state government here in Metro Columbia. Imagine the impact if only a fraction of those men and women, those at the lowest end of the pay scale, saw a meaningful raise this year.

Imagine what that would do for families across our city and beyond.

That is what's possible. That is Columbia's Promise.

Imagine if we took the success we've seen in student housing and applied those same incentives to affordable housing. I'm talking about working with developers, non-profits, contractors and great partners like the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta generating \$100 million in new privately developed affordable housing developments across the city, in all four council districts so that all of our neighborhoods see the benefits.

Imagine the burden that would lift from the shoulders of our working families. Imagine the veteran who went from serving in an Iraqi desert to sleeping in a downtown storefront and being able to help him rebuild his life instead of just trying to survive.

More shelters aren't the answer to homelessness; affordable housing is and it's time we did something about it.

That is Columbia's Promise.

Imagine if we stepped up for folks like Dee Albritton and her program Fast Forward who over the past six months alone placed 50 homeless veterans in new jobs. That's roughly two jobs a week including a 28 year-old soldier home from Afghanistan with nowhere to go and nowhere to turn.

Apart from the Army he'd only ever had one other job and his lack of experience – coupled with the inherent trauma of returning to the real world from a war zone – was just too much for him and when his muster out pay ran out, he ended up on the street.

It was just bad luck, bad timing and a bad situation but when he walked into Fast Forward and met Dee, all of that changed. All it took was a little time, a lot of training and a new focus and she got him a job at the Marriott on Hampton Street where he quickly worked his way from part-time to full-time and now he's been named employee of the month twice.

Now Dee doesn't have a lot of money or a large staff. Most of what she's able to do she does through donations, volunteers and one grant. But she gets her guys Work Keys certified, gets them real world training, transportation, clean clothes and a haircut then she gets on the phone and gets them the interview but, after that, it's up to them.

It's not fancy. It's not expensive. But it works. Time and again we see miracles. There's just no other way to say it.

Now imagine the possibilities if we could get her operating to scale.

Imagine if she had the resources to place 500 vets instead of 50.

Imagine the good we will do by working with all of our partners like Fast Forward, MIRCI, Salvation Army, Transitions, The United Way, Christ Central, the Oliver Gospel Mission and so many others on thoughtful results oriented approaches to meeting the needs of our underserved and cast aside.

That's what we're talking about today. That's Columbia's Promise supporting organizations like Fast Forward that are making a difference in our community. Supporting organizations like the Columbia Urban League whose Summer Work Experience Leadership Program last year helped 250 students, our children, find summer jobs, giving them a vision of the world beyond their neighborhood and giving them the tools and experience they need to build a better life than the one they were born into.

Imagine a public private community partnership that raised that number from 250 to 1,000 jobs this summer.

Imagine the difference that would make to children, some of whom have only ever known poverty and deprivation, kids inches away from a life of gangs and drugs and violence, inches from making the kind of mistake that can turn you into a statistic.

Today I'm also proud to announce a new trial partnership with Spirit Communications to provide free Main Street Wi-Fi access from the State House to Washington Street and, if successful, even further.

Now imagine if we took that initiative citywide. Imagine tearing down the digital divide that separates too many of our children from the combined knowledge of the world's libraries.

Imagine if we made education a true priority in this city, if we embraced the philosophy that you can't be a great city without great schools and invested in initiatives to support Richland One in its efforts to attract and retain the best teachers with low interest home loans if you reside in our city.

Imagine leveraging new apprenticeship initiatives to provide hands-on training in high-tech industries and skilled trades to retrain our existing workforce and give students the head-start they need to thrive in the rapidly changing knowledge economy.

Imagine what's possible. That's Columbia's Promise.

Imagine becoming an entrepreneur without a degree or past experience.

Imagine being equipped with skills and training to make you an effective and fully competent business owner. Skills and training that will give you the leg-up you need to bring yourself and your family out of poverty and into a self-sufficient and independent lifestyle.

Imagine perfecting the craft of owning and operating your business and it becoming your own.

Sound absurd? Not even close.

In cities like ours all across America, visionary business and community leaders have created a cooperative business model that supplies unemployed, underemployed and even undereducated citizens with the necessary skills to not only run a business, but to be successful in doing so.

These co-ops create business ventures in industries specific to the strengths of the city. Areas like construction, laundries, grocery stores and franchise operations are used to grow new businesses and create jobs for those who need them while servicing the needs of the city.

Newly equipped managers are given teams of individuals from similar circumstances and their profits are shared while helping sustain the businesses as well as create new co-ops and new opportunity across the city.

This isn't about giving someone a job. It's about giving them a future. It's about creating new wealth in communities that have only ever known poverty. It's about creating a sense of pride and accomplishment that a parent can pass down to his or her children, creating a tradition of achievement that infects generations to come.

This isn't about giving someone a job; it's about fundamentally changing their lives and the lives of the families.

It's happening all across America and it's time we made it happen here.

That's the story I want to be a part of. That is Columbia's Promise.

We can do it, you know. It's up to us. We just have to choose to do the right thing, choose to lead, choose to be great.

As President Kennedy once said, —~~A~~this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days; nor in the life of this Administration; nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.”

I don't expect this to be easy, nothing worth doing ever is. But let us begin right here, right now.

Because, in this story, there are too many families suffering, too many children going to school hungry, too many mothers for whom breast cancer also means bankruptcy, too many of our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, friends and neighbors living without hope, without a future, without Columbia's Promise.

So let us say it together. Let us make this promise today – Columbia’s Promise – that if you’re willing to work hard, contribute to your community and respect others you deserve a quality education, a good job and a living wage; that your circumstance should not determine your success and that, regardless of whatever past sins you carry with you, if you’re looking to change your life for the better, we will do everything within our power to help you reach your goals.

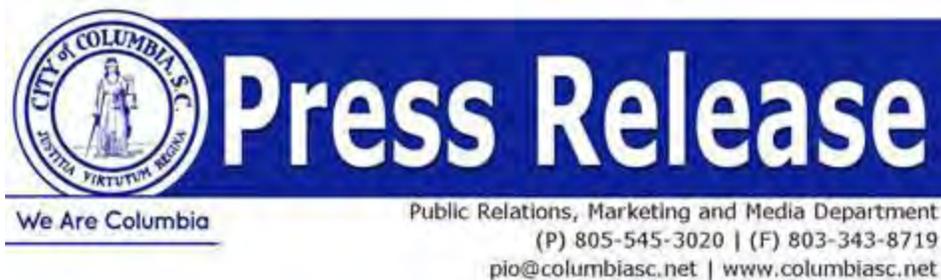
Who will stand for them? I say, “We will.”

150 years ago this city was burned to the ground. But we have risen from the ashes and we will continue to rise.

Because we are a great city. We are Columbia. And our time is now.

Thank you. God bless you. And God bless the great City of Columbia

###

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, January 20, 2015

Contact: Shireese M. Bell at 803-760-9125 or smbell@columbiasc.net

Charles R. Drew Wellness Center Closed Due to Mechanical Repairs

Due to mechanical repairs, the Charles R. Drew Wellness Center will be closed through January 25, 2015. The center will reopen on January 26, 2015 and will resume normal operating hours. In order to ensure the safety of its members, it is necessary to close the wellness center during the construction period.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 21, 2015

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media @ 545-3020

City of Columbia To Hold Walk Bike Columbia Public Meeting

What: The public is invited to a public meeting to see the draft pedestrian and bicycle master plan, share thoughts on the recommendations, and talk one on-one with the planning team. This is an opportunity for citizens to give input on the plan recommendations before City leadership considers formally adopting the plan.

When: Thursday, January 22, 2015

6 P.M. – 7:30 P.M. (Presentation at 6 P.M.)

Where: EdVenture Children’s Museum, 211 Gervais Street
The Canal Room (Lower Level – Entry at Facing Canal)

More Information: Contact the City of Columbia Planning Department at 803-545-0229 or visit www.walkbikecolumbia.org.

###

***Please see the attached flyer.**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 22, 2015

Contact: Community Development at 803-545-3373

Commercial Revolving Loan Fund Committee Meeting Agenda

The Commercial Revolving Loan Fund Committee will conduct a meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 28 at 9 a.m. The agenda is attached for your review.

City of Columbia To Hold Walk Bike Columbia Public Meeting



WALK BIKE COLUMBIA

A PROJECT OF THE CENTRAL MIDLANDS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AND CITY OF COLUMBIA, SC

What will walking, bicycling, and transit in Columbia look like in 10 years?

Join us for a public meeting

to share the draft pedestrian and bicycle master plan for the City of Columbia.



Thursday, January 22nd

6:00 PM to 7:30 PM
(Presentation at 6 PM)

EdVenture Children's Museum
(Canal Room)
211 Gervais St,
Columbia, SC 29201

www.walkbikecolumbia.org

For questions or assistance with special needs, contact: City of Columbia Planning Department at (803) 545-0229.



We Are Columbia

Public Relations

Public Relations, Marketing & Media Department

1737 Main Street, Columbia, SC 29201

Phone: 803-545-3020

Fax: 803-343-8719

ColumbiaSC.net

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, January 22, 2015

Contact: Community Development at 545-3373

The City Urges Citizens to Participate in Public Forums for Five Year Consolidated Plan

Columbia's Vision needs your voice! The City of Columbia's Community Development department urges citizens to participate in the upcoming public forums to give input for the Five Year Consolidated Plan. All interested citizens of the City are invited to provide input and comments on community needs by attending one of the public forums:

Thursday, January 22, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Edisto Discovery Park, 1914 Wiley Park

Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Woodland Park, 6500 Olde Knight Parkway

Citizens can also give input by completing [The City of Columbia 2015 Community Needs Survey](#).

A summary of citizen comments will be included in the 2015 – 2020 Consolidated Plan submitted to HUD. The Consolidated Plan is the application for federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Partnership Investment Program (HOME) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA) program funding and consists of strategies to address the housing, homeless and community development needs of the City.

For more information, contact Community Development at 545-3373.

###

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 23, 2015

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media @ 545-3020

National Wear Red Day - February 6, 2015

Who: Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine, City of Columbia officials, American Heart Association representatives and leaders from local businesses, neighborhoods and civic organizations.

What: The public is invited to recognize **National Wear Red Day** to help honor and support the women affected by heart disease, the number 1 killer of women. The **Go Red For Women** movement encourages awareness of this issue and action to help save lives. A press conference and community photography session will be held and both men and women are encouraged to wear red.

When: Friday, February 6, 2015 at 12 p.m.

Where: City Hall, 1737 Main Street
Council Chambers

###

*Please see the attached flyer.



For Immediate Release

January 23, 2015

Contact: Sara Hollar, Forestry and Beautification at 545-3860

SCE&G To Perform Tree Trimming Activities As Scheduled for 2015

SCE&G will perform tree trimming activities along overhead utility lines in the following neighborhoods for the next two weeks:

Hampton-Wildcat Neighborhood
Crosshill Neighborhood
Hampton Ridge Neighborhood Association
Heyward Park Neighborhood
Hampton Hills Homeowners
Meadowfield Neighborhood Association
Kilbourne Park Neighborhood Association
Heathwood Park Neighborhood
Sherwood Forest Neighborhood
Hampton Leas Neighborhood
St. Marks Woods Neighborhood Association
South Meadowfield Neighborhood Association
Yorkshire Neighborhood Association

The trimming will be completed by SCE&G contractors and work will be closely monitored on a daily basis by the City's 4 Certified Arborists from the Forestry and Beautification Division.

The purpose of the trimming activities is to increase safety and reliability of the electric service. SCE&G reports an 89% improvement in reliability in vegetation related outages in areas where trimming is completed compared to a year ago. The trimming guidelines include removing vegetation within 8-12 feet below and beside the power lines and up to 20 feet above the power lines.

SCE&G and their contractors trim in accordance with International Society of Arboriculture guidelines, using ANSI A300 pruning methods leaving good cuts that will generate new growth.

For more information about SCE&G's tree trimming efforts, including helpful tips and suggestions regarding the planting of trees and other vegetation, visit www.sceg.com/treertrimming.

You can also contact SCE&G's 24 hour Customer Service Center toll-free at 1-800-251-7234 or email SCEGContactUs@SCANA.com

For continued updates from the city of Columbia follow us on Twitter [@cityofcolumbia](https://twitter.com/cityofcolumbia) or "like" the [City of Columbia](#) on Facebook.

###

Related Links:

[Tree Trimming Neighborhood Maps](#)

VIDEO: [Tree Trimming: Safety, Reliability and Healthy Trees](#)



We Are Columbia

Press Release

Public Relations, Marketing and Media Department

(P) 805-545-3020 | (F) 803-343-8719

pio@columbiasc.net | www.columbiasc.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 26, 2015

Contact: Marli Drum at 803-776-7387

Pet of the Week: Sir Locksley! (ID# A211638)

Sir Locksley is a one-year-old domestic shorthair cat. He is very loving and extremely friendly. Sir Locksley is also neutered and microchipped. Visit him at Columbia Animal Shelter to see if he's the pet for you!

Visit Sir Locksley and other pets available for adoption at the Columbia Animal Shelter, 127 Humane Lane. Visit www.columbiasc.net/animal-services or call 803-776-PETS for more information.

All of our pets need loving homes! To view other animals available for adoption, visit Petfinder.com. Please refer to the ID number listed above when visiting the website.

###

**Please see attached for photo*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 26, 2015

Contact: Shireese M. Bell at 803-760-9125 or smbell@columbiasc.net

City of Columbia to Recognize Winners, Sponsors of Dream Keeper Scholarships Program

Columbia City Council will recognize the winners and sponsors of the 2015 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dream Keeper Scholarships during its regular meeting on Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at 6 p.m. at City Hall, 1737 Main Street.

Winners were announced on Monday, January 19, 2015 at the 27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration held at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park located at 2300 Greene Street.

WHAT: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dream Keeper Scholarships Recognition

WHO: Columbia City Council, Dream Keeper winners and sponsors

WHERE: City Hall, 1737 Main Street (Council Chambers, Third Floor)

WHEN: Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at 6 p.m.

For more information, please call Shireese M. Bell at 803-760-9125.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 26, 2015

Contact: Gerry Lynn Hall at 803-545-3381 or glhall@columbiasc.net.

City's Office of Business Opportunities to Launch Two Notch Road Façade Improvement Program

What: The City of Columbia's Office of Business Opportunities (OBO) will launch the Two Notch Road Façade Improvement Program (FIP). The FIP is a five-year, forgivable loan opportunity with funding up to \$20,000. The project cost is split, where the applicant pays 20 percent and the remaining 80 percent is paid by the City. Retail/Commercial property owners and/or their tenants are eligible to apply. Forgivable grants are also available for improvements costing under \$2,000.

When: Monday, Feb. 2, 2015 at 10 a.m.

Where: McDonald's Restaurant, 2911 Two Notch Rd.

For more information, contact Gerry Lynn Hall at 803-545-3381 or glhall@columbiasc.net.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, January 26, 2015

Contact: Office of the City Clerk at 803-545-3045

City Council Revised Agendas for January 27, 2015

Please see attached for the revised City Council agendas for Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015.

###

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Contact: Community Development at 545-3373

The City Urges Citizens to Participate in Public Forums for Five Year Consolidated Plan

Columbia's Vision needs your voice! The City of Columbia's Community Development department urges citizens to participate in the upcoming public forums to give input for the Five Year Consolidated Plan. All interested citizens of the City are invited to provide input and comments on community needs by attending one of the public forums:

Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Woodland Park, 6500 Olde Knight Parkway

Citizens can also give input by completing [The City of Columbia 2015 Community Needs Survey](#).

A summary of citizen comments will be included in the 2015 – 2020 Consolidated Plan submitted to HUD. The Consolidated Plan is the application for federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Partnership Investment Program (HOME) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA) program funding and consists of strategies to address the housing, homeless and community development needs of the City.

For more information, contact Community Development at 545-3373.

###

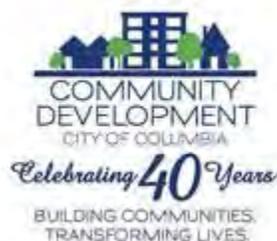
**Please see attached flyer*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Contact: Community Development at 803-545-3373



Make Your Voice Heard!
Community Development to Hold Stakeholder Meeting for Five Year Consolidated Plan

What: Millions of dollars are coming our way, where should this money go? Community Development is seeking input for the Five Year Consolidated Plan from stakeholders to help **prioritize the City of Columbia's needs. The stakeholder meeting will also provide an introduction to the City of Columbia's Five Year Consolidated Plan for 2015-2020.**

Who: Service providers and nonprofits who serve low-to-moderate income beneficiaries

When: Thursday, Feb. 5 at noon

Where: Earlewood Park Community Center, 1111 Parkside Drive, Columbia, SC 29201

Email shgilliard@columbiasc.net to RSVP. For more information, contact Community Development at 803-545-3373.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

Contact: Shireese M. Bell at 803-760-9125 or smbell@columbiasc.net

City of Columbia Recognized Winners, Sponsors of Dream Keeper Scholarships Program

Donations for Scholarships Reach Record High

Columbia City Council recognized the winners and sponsors of the 2015 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dream Keeper Scholarships during its regular meeting on Tuesday, January 27, 2015.

Winners were announced on Monday, January 19, 2015 at the 27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration held at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park located at 2300 Greene Street. Hundreds of people gathered to commemorate the life and legacy of the of late civil rights leader and recognize those who are committed to serving others.

Thirty-three nominations were received for the Dream Keeper Scholarships Program, which recognizes exemplary displays of voluntary service and academic achievement. **A total of \$4,000 was donated to this year's scholarships program, a banner year for scholarship donations.** Last year, \$2,450 was awarded to Dream Keeper recipients. Thanks to an increase in sponsorships, 14 students were able to receive awards.

The winners of the Dream Keeper Scholarships are:

- Ravyn Neosha Cunningham, a student at A. C. Flora High School; **\$1,000** scholarship sponsored by Grace Church of Columbia and David Day
- Kierra Alayah Jackson, a student at Ridge View High School; **\$500** scholarship sponsored by Alpha Psi Lambda Chapter & Omicron Iota Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
- Tykira Smalls, a student at W.J. Keenan High School; **\$500** scholarship sponsored by Councilman Moe Baddourah
- Gabrielle Cummings, a student at Dreher High School; **\$250** scholarship sponsored by Cromartie Law Firm, LLC.
- Eboni Tytiana Georges, a student at Airport High School; **\$250** scholarship sponsored by Troubleshooter A/C Heating and Refrigeration

- Alyssa Brunson, a student at Spring Valley High School; **\$250** scholarship sponsored by Gamma Nu Omega of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
- Taylor Cunningham, a student at A.C. Flora High School; **\$250** scholarship sponsored by Henri Baskins
- JaLyn Nicole Johnson, a student at Blythewood High School; **\$250** scholarship sponsored by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation

The following students received **\$100** awards:

- Princess Anderson, a student at W.G. Sanders Middle School; sponsored by Vincent A. Gatling, Jr.
- Lauren Elizabeth Gantt, a student at Hand Middle School; sponsored by Durham E. Carter
- Imani T. Osborne, a student at W.G. Sanders Middle School; sponsored by S. Allison Baker
- Gregory A. Jackson, a student at East Point Academy; sponsored by Carolyn Gleaton

A new scholarship program was announced at the celebration, **the Josiah Caden Jenkins Memorial Scholarships**. Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins established the scholarship in memory of his great-nephew Josiah Caden Jenkins. The annual scholarship of \$350 will be awarded to two elementary school students.

Recipients of the 2015 Josiah Caden Jenkins Memorial Scholarships are:

- Journei Simmons, a student at Round Top Elementary School; **\$250** scholarship
- Harmonie Jade Frederick, a student at Polo Road Elementary School; **\$100** scholarship

Mayor Steve Benjamin also made a surprise announcement during last Monday's celebration. Twenty-one additional students will receive a \$100 award thanks to donations from the Mayor, City Council and the City Manager. Nineteen of the students were Dream Keeper nominees who did not receive scholarships and two of the students were program participants during **the City's annual celebration**.

Winners of the annual Honor the Dream Food Drive, a collaborative effort between the City and Richland School District One, were also announced during the annual celebration. More than 15,000 pounds of food were collected for Harvest Hope Food Bank. Richland School District One collected more than 12,500 pounds and the City collected 2,558 pounds.

The top winners of the food drive are:

Richland One

First Place (tie): Carver-Lyon and Brennen elementary schools-1,895

City of Columbia

First Place: Martin Luther King, Jr. Park-1,272 pounds

To view photos of the 27th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration, please visit [the City of Columbia's Tumblr page online](#).

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, January 28, 2015

Contact: Felicia Wilks at 803-545-3373

Community Development to Hold "How to Purchase a House on a Budget" Workshop

Learn about the mortgage process, the benefits of homeownership and what to do after closing at Community Development's "How to Purchase a House on Budget" Workshop.

WHEN: Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015 from 9-11 a.m.

WHERE: Earlewood Park 1119 Parkside Drive, Columbia, SC 29201

For more information or to register, contact Felicia Wilks at 803-545-3373.

###

**Please see attached flyer*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, January 29, 2015

Contact: Community Development at 545-3373

The City Urges Citizens to Participate in Public Forums for Five Year Consolidated Plan

Columbia's Vision needs your voice! The City of Columbia's Community Development department urges citizens to participate in the upcoming public forums to give input for the Five Year Consolidated Plan. All interested citizens of the City are invited to provide input and comments on community needs by attending the last public forum:

Thursday, January 29, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Woodland Park, 6500 Olde Knight Parkway

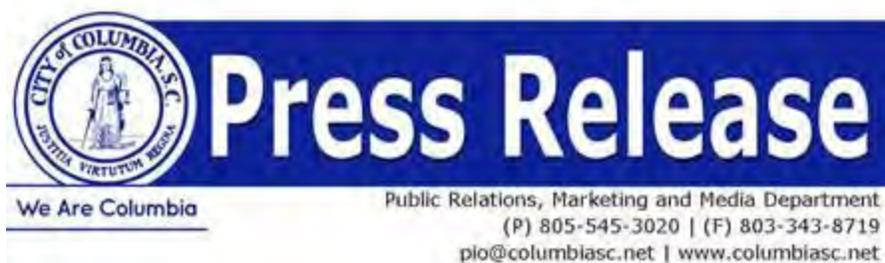
Citizens can also give input by completing [The City of Columbia 2015 Community Needs Survey](#).

A summary of citizen comments will be included in the 2015 – 2020 Consolidated Plan submitted to HUD. The Consolidated Plan is the application for federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Partnership Investment Program (HOME) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA) program funding and consists of strategies to address the housing, homeless and community development needs of the City.

For more information, contact Community Development at 545-3373.

###

**Please see attached flyer*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 29, 2015

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media @ 545-3020

City's Engineering Division Announces the Pre-Capacity Assurance Program Analysis

The City of Columbia's Engineering Division is proud to announce the Pre-Capacity Assurance Program Analysis (Pre-CAP Analysis), a new optional planning level review program for proposed developments that would need new wastewater service. Property owners who choose to have their proposed projects analyzed under this program can determine if current sewer service in the area is capable of handling their project before making a significant investment. While the assessment is non-binding for either the City or the developer—meaning if conditions change, final approval may change—the Pre-CAP Analysis can be a useful tool in helping local developers better plan their investments.

The Pre-CAP is part of the City's ongoing effort to implement a comprehensive sewer assessment and rehabilitation program for its wastewater system. It also supports smart growth both for the City and local developers. By being clear with local developers about where the City's system has capacity before they have even purchased a property, developers can protect their investment while the City protects current sewer customers and the environment. The program also allows the City to work with local developers to prevent sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs)—something which benefits everyone.

The Pre-CAP Analysis is an extension of the current wastewater Capacity Assurance Program (CAP). Under the CAP, all new projects that contribute additional flow are required to undergo review. The City may allow minor connections without a detailed capacity analysis. This review follows specific criteria to determine whether the City's collection, transmission, and treatment system has sufficient capacity to accept new connections and increased flows. For more details on this program, see the [Letter to Local Engineers: City of Columbia Capacity Assurance Program](#).

Currently, the City has identified portions of Northeast Columbia known as the Crane Creek Basin and areas around Lake Katherine as being capacity limited (see [Map of Current Capacity Limited Areas](#) below). Projects are planned or underway and should be completed soon in these areas to address capacity limitations.

To date, the City has completed 15 major capital improvement projects that have relieved or prevented capacity limitations across its wastewater service area (see [Map of Capacity Enhancement Work To Date](#) below), with several more in design or underway. The completed projects have contributed to a 70% reduction in the number of sanitary sewer overflows the City has experienced since the 2008/2009 fiscal year.

###

Please contact Victoria Kramer with the City of Columbia Department of Utilities and Engineering at (803) 545-3227 or Info@CleanWater2020.com if you have questions. If you would like to learn more about improvements to the City of Columbia's wastewater treatment plant and wastewater collection system, visit www.CleanWater2020.com. If you would like to learn more about the City of Columbia's Department of Utilities and Engineering, visit www.columbiasc.net/utilities-engineering.

****Please see the attached Announcement Packet including the following:***

- **Picture Title:** [Map of Current Capacity Limited Areas](#)
- **Picture Caption:** The Crane Creek Basin and areas around Lake Katherine (shown in red) currently are sewer capacity limited. Projects are underway in both areas to address these limitations. The Burnside area (shown in green) had capacity limits lifted after a capacity enhancing project was completed in November, 2014.

- **Picture Title:** [Map of Capacity Enhancement Work To Date](#)
- **Picture Caption:** The City has completed 15 capacity enhancement projects with several more in design or under construction. The completed projects have contributed to a 70% reduction in the number of sanitary sewer overflows since fiscal year 2008/2009.

City of Columbia Celebrates Twitter Milestone

**City of Columbia celebrates 13.4K
Tweets & Followers!**

@CityofColumbia



City of Columbia
@CityofColumbia

| TWEETS | FOLLOWING | FOLLOWERS |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| 13.4K | 475 | 13.4K |

CITY of COLUMBIA, S.C.
JUSTITIA VIRTUTUM REGINA
We Are Columbia

**Thank you Columbia for helping us reach
13.4K followers with 13.4K tweets!**

#WeAreColumbia #TwitterMilestone

Follow @CityofColumbia on Twitter!



We Are Columbia

Public Relations

Public Relations, Marketing & Media Department

1737 Main Street, Columbia, SC 29201

Phone: 803-545-3020

Fax: 803-343-8719

ColumbiaSC.net



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 29, 2015

Contact: Shireese M. Bell at 803-760-9125 or smbell@columbiasc.net

Art Center to Offer Spring Break Art Camp

The Columbia Art Center is offering a 4-day multimedia visual art camp for children ages 6-12 from March 30-April 2.

The Spring Break Art Camp will include lessons on pottery, drawing and painting, and recycle art. **All materials are included in the registration fee of \$60.**

The camp will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Monday through Thursday at the Art Center, 1928 Calhoun Street.

The deadline to register is March 15. The camp size is limited to a maximum of 12 participants.

To download a registration form, visit the [City of Columbia Parks and Recreation's Cultural Arts page online](#).

For more information, please call Brenda Oliver at 803-545-3093.

###

** Please see the attached flyer*



For Immediate Release

January 30, 2015

Contact: Sara Hollar, Forestry and Beautification at 545-3860

SCE&G To Perform Tree Trimming Activities As Scheduled for 2015

SCE&G will perform tree trimming activities along overhead utility lines in the following neighborhoods for the next two weeks:

Hampton-Wildcat Neighborhood
Crosshill Neighborhood
Hampton Ridge Neighborhood Association
Heyward Park Neighborhood
Hampton Hills Homeowners
Meadowfield Neighborhood Association
Kilbourne Park Neighborhood Association
Heathwood Park Neighborhood
Sherwood Forest Neighborhood
Hampton Leas Neighborhood

The trimming will be completed by SCE&G contractors and work will be closely monitored on a daily basis by the City's 4 Certified Arborists from the Forestry and Beautification Division.

The purpose of the trimming activities is to increase safety and reliability of the electric service. SCE&G reports an 89% improvement in reliability in vegetation related outages in areas where trimming is completed compared to a year ago. The trimming guidelines include removing vegetation within 8-12 feet below and beside the power lines and up to 20 feet above the power lines.

SCE&G and their contractors trim in accordance with International Society of Arboriculture guidelines, using ANSI A300 pruning methods leaving good cuts that will generate new growth.

For more information about SCE&G's tree trimming efforts, including helpful tips and suggestions regarding the planting of trees and other vegetation, visit www.sceg.com/treertrimming.

You can also contact SCE&G's 24 hour Customer Service Center toll-free at 1-800-251-7234 or email SCEGContactUs@SCANA.com

For continued updates from the city of Columbia follow us on Twitter [@cityofcolumbia](https://twitter.com/cityofcolumbia) or "like" the [City of Columbia](#) on Facebook.

###

Related Links:

[Tree Trimming Neighborhood Maps](#)

VIDEO: [Tree Trimming: Safety, Reliability and Healthy Trees](#)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, January 30, 2015

Contact: Zoning Division at 803-545-3333

Planning Commission Meeting Agenda for Feb. 2

The Planning Commission will conduct a Land Use Plan Work Session at 4 p.m. and a meeting at 5:15 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 2. The agenda is attached.

This agenda, past agendas and the approved minutes of previous meetings can also be found at www.columbiasc.gov/planning-boards-commissions/pc/agendas.

###

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, January 30, 2015

Contact: Gerry Lynn Hall at 803-545-3381 or glhall@columbiasc.net.

City's Office of Business Opportunities to Launch Two Notch Road Façade Improvement Program

What: The City of Columbia's Office of Business Opportunities (OBO) will launch the Two Notch Road Façade Improvement Program (FIP). The FIP is a five-year, forgivable loan opportunity with funding up to \$20,000. The project cost is split, where the applicant pays 20 percent and the remaining 80 percent is paid by the City. Retail/Commercial property owners and/or their tenants are eligible to apply. Forgivable grants are also available for improvements costing under \$2,000.

When: Monday, Feb. 2, 2015 at 10 a.m.

Where: McDonald's Restaurant, 2911 Two Notch Rd.

For more information, contact Gerry Lynn Hall at 803-545-3381 or glhall@columbiasc.net.

###

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, January 30, 2015

Contact: Libby Gober at 803-545-3061

Community Forum hosted by Councilwoman Leona Plaugh and Councilman Moe Baddourah

Who: Councilwoman Leona Plaugh and Councilman Moe Baddourah to host Community Forum.

What: Presentations and updates about City operations will be given by City Manager Teresa Wilson, Police Chief William Holbrook and City Attorney Teresa Knox.

When: Thursday, Feb. 5, 2015

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Where: Heathwood Park, 800 Abelia Rd.

For more information, contact Libby Gober at 803-545-3061.

###

**flyer attached*