



We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, November 01, 2013

Contact: Tezra Haire, (803) 413-9165

Congressman James E. Clyburn Visited Columbia to Show Support for Local First Tee Program

Sixth District Congressman and Assistant Democratic Leader James E. Clyburn presented a \$2,500 check to the First Tee Program at the James E. Clyburn Golf Center yesterday, Thursday, October 31.

Congressman Clyburn was there on behalf of his research and scholarship foundation, which benefits educational institutions and related activities, focusing specifically on scholarships, student financial aid services and awards programs.

First Tee of Columbia is a not-for-profit outreach organization designed to teach youth the game of golf. The program strives to impact the lives of young people by providing educational programs that build character, instill life-enhancing values and promote healthy choices through the game of golf.

For more information, call City of Columbia Parks and Recreation at (803) 545-3100.



We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, November 01, 2013

Contact: Wanda Austin at 803.545.3111

Re-opening of Katheryn M. Bellfield Booker Washington Heights Cultural Arts Center Tomorrow

The City of Columbia Parks & Recreation Department is proud to announce the re-opening of the Katheryn M. Bellfield Booker Washington Heights Cultural Arts Center. The center will offer services and programs to citizens of all ages. The 29203 area has a disproportionate rate of health disparities in which the center will be a focal point for resources and services that they otherwise would not have immediate access.

WHAT: Grand re-opening celebration will feature games for children, program demonstrations, a bike parade, a farmer's market and door prizes.

WHO: City leaders, City staff and community members.

WHEN: Saturday, November 2, 2013 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

WHERE: Katheryn M. Bellfield Booker Washington Heights Cultural Arts Center
2611 Grant St.
Columbia, SC 29203

The center will focus on the whole family in an effort to reduce health disparities and cultivate a variety of cultural experiences, as well as introducing them with a variety of cultural experience. The City Of Columbia is working to foster a healthier community by reaching one family at a time.

For more information about the center or the re-opening event, call Parks and Recreation at 803-255-8166.

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We Are Columbia

For Immediate Release

Friday, November 01, 2013

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

SCE&G To Perform Tree Trimming Activities As Scheduled for 2013

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

Grove Park Neighborhood Association
Druid Hills
Bradley Community Council

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/treetrimming.

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](https://www.facebook.com/cityofcolumbia) on Facebook.

Related Links:

MAPS: [2013 SCE&G Utility Distribution Line Trimming Locations](#)



We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, November 04, 2013

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media, 803.545.3020

City Of Columbia to Hold Cell Phone Donation Presentation to Sistercare

Throughout the month of October, the City Of Columbia has been collecting old and unused cell phones at City Hall to donate to domestic violence survivors through Sistercare and Verizon Wireless Hopeline. The City has collected over 100 cell phones and chargers for Sistercare.

WHAT: Donation presentation of collected cell phones to Sistercare.

WHO: Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine, Sistercare Executive Director Nancy Barton, City staff and others.

WHERE: City Hall, Council Chambers
1737 Main St.

WHEN: Today, November 4, 2013 at 1:45 p.m.

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We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, November 4, 2013

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media @ 803-545-3020

City Manager Announces General Obligation Credit Rating Increase

The City of Columbia's general obligation bond (GO) rating from Standard & Poor's has been upgraded from "AA" to "AA+."

Standard & Poor's assessment of the City's credit worthiness encompassed a variety of factors including:

- Institutional framework
- Area economy
- Management structure and practices
- Budgetary flexibility and performance
- Liquidity
- Debt Management
- Contingent liabilities

Among the most heavily weighted of these factors is management and the decisions, policies and practices that apply to the financial position and operations of the City. This represents 20% of the total credit score. The significance of the City Manager's first appointment of the recently created Chief Financial Officer position, held by Jeff Palen, and the essential role he played during this rating process, establishes a cohesion that brings efficiencies to the overall operation of the entire organization. The credit process entailed City management and staff presenting current financial information to Standard & Poor's as well as a series of phone calls with the rating agency to address trends and forecasts.

"We are very proud of the increased general obligation rating from Standard & Poor's and we will remain diligent in our work to continue to build on the strong financial foundation that we have established for the City of Columbia. This rating will yield a solid fiscal position for Columbia as we navigate our future opportunities within the financial industry," stated City Manager Teresa Wilson.

Standard & Poor's was able to accurately assess the City's strengths and challenges that lay ahead. While room for improvement exists within the finances of any local government, Standard & Poor's upgrade stands as acknowledgement that the City of Columbia is on the right path. Credit ratings are a key consideration among municipal bond investors; the City's very high ratings will result in a lower cost of funds for the City and its taxpayers.

In addition to the announcement of the GO credit rating increase, please also see attached the City Manager's month in review for October 2013.

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We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, November 05, 2013

Contact: Marsheika Martin at 803-545-3767

City of Columbia Accepting Applications for Work It Up Job Training Program

The City Of Columbia is currently accepting applications for the Work It Up job training program for citizens who are unemployed or underemployed.

Citizens who are eligible for the program must be unemployed or underemployed, defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as total household income is 80 percent or below the Area Median Income (AMI), and must reside within city limits or in the incorporated areas of the City of Columbia.

To apply for the program, please visit <http://columbia.sc.gov/jobtraining> or call the TN Development Corporation at 803-545-3767. All applicants will be subject to an interview, criminal background checks, drug testing and a WorkKeys assessment.

The program launched in April 2013 and is a grant funded program designed to help individuals gain job training through the Midlands Technical College QuickJob Courses.

For more information about Work It Up, please contact Marsheika Martin at 803-545-3767 or visit www.columbiasc.net.

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Wednesday, November 06, 2013

Contact: Carrie Deaton, (803) 799-1970 – office; (803) 586-1473 – mobile

Mayor Steve Benjamin to Unveil 2013 Official City Ornament

Each year, the Mayor of Columbia unveils the Babcock Center Foundation’s “Ornament of Opportunity” and proclaims the ornament the “Official City Ornament.”

WHAT: Unveiling and proclamation of the 2013 “Official City Ornament”

WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin and Babcock Center Foundation

WHEN: Monday, November 18, 2013 at 3 p.m.

WHERE: Columbia Museum of Art
1515 Main Street Columbia, SC

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We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, November 7, 2013

Contact: Tezra Haire,
803.413.9165

CITY'S OUTDOOR ICE SKATING RINK RETURNS

The City of Columbia will once again transform Boyd Plaza into a winter wonderland when Main Street ICE returns for its second year. The rink is slated to open November 28, 2013 (Thanksgiving Day) from 5 to 9 p.m. and will remain open until January 20, 2014.

Main Street ICE opened last year on Thanksgiving Day and quickly became a popular recreational activity over the holiday season, drawing more than 15,000 skaters from across the Midlands and from neighboring cities and states. Main Street ICE brought eight weeks of energy, excitement and eager customers to downtown Columbia.

City of Columbia has partnered with The Plex and Coca-Cola Bottling Company Consolidated to host a number of special events over the season as well as to host exciting one price skate nights each week.

Skating fees will remain the same as last year: \$10 for adults and \$8 for children ages 12 and under as well as for seniors (55+) and active duty military. Fees include skate rentals. Reservations are available Monday – Thursday only, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for groups of twenty or more.

The rink will be open seven days a week with the following operating hours:

Monday –Thursday, 4 - 9:00 p.m.
Friday, 4 -10:00 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Sunday, 1:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

The rink will have special operating hours December 16 through January 3, opening at 12 p.m., Monday – Friday to coincide with local school districts' winter break schedules.

The rink will be closed on Christmas Day and open until 12 a.m. on New Year's Eve.

For more information on Main Street ICE or for group reservations, contact City of Columbia Parks and Recreation at (803) 545-3100.

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We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, November 7, 2013

Contact: Erika Moore, City Clerk at (803)545.3043

MUNICIPAL BOARD OF CANVASSERS

The City of Columbia Municipal Board of Canvassers (*Municipal Election Commission*) met on Thursday, November 7, 2013 at 10:08 a.m. to conduct a Provisional Ballot Hearing.

- There were twenty (20) Provisional Ballots; four (4) were accepted; and sixteen (16) were rejected.
- There were eleven (11) Failsafe Ballots and eleven (11) were accepted.

The City of Columbia Municipal Board of Canvassers (*Municipal Election Commission*) also certified the results of the City of Columbia 2013 Municipal Election held on Tuesday, November 5, 2013.

The successful candidates were:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| ▪ Stephen K. Benjamin | Mayor |
| ▪ Sam Davis | City Council District One |
| ▪ Tameika Isaac Devine | City Council At-Large |
| ▪ Leona K. Plough | City Council District Four |

This meeting was noticed in the State Newspaper on Sunday, July 21, 2013 and August 4, 2013.

Please visit <https://columbiasc.gov/elections> for the official results.

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We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, November 08, 2013

Contact: Tezra Haire, 803.413-9165

CITY OF COLUMBIA HOSTS ANNUAL VETERANS DAY PARADE

Veterans from across the state will gather in downtown Columbia on Monday, November 11, 2013 for the City of Columbia's 35th Annual Veterans Day Parade, one of the Southeast's largest Veterans Day parades.

Brigadier General, Bradley A. Becker, the 46th commanding general at Fort Jackson, will be this year's grand marshal for the parade and will lead over 80 participants from various national guard units, veterans' groups, boys and girls scout troops, high school ROTC groups and marching bands from across the state. The parade kicks off at 11 a.m. from the intersection of Sumter and Laurel Streets and travels northbound on Sumter Street, ending at Pendleton Street near the State House.

Free parking will be offered by the City of Columbia at the Sumter Street parking garage until 3 p.m.

The Veterans Day Parade is hosted by City of Columbia Parks and Recreation and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Carolina.

For more information on the 2013 Veterans Day Parade, contact City of Columbia Parks and Recreation at (803) 545-3100.



We Are Columbia

MEDIA ADVISORY

Friday, November 08, 2013

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media, 803.545.3020

City Manager Teresa Wilson to Receive Achievement Award

WHAT: The Omicron Phi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. annual Achievement Week Program.

WHO: City Manager Teresa Wilson, members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., community leaders and others.

WHERE: Eau Claire Print Building
3907 Ensor Ave.
Columbia, SC

WHEN: Sunday, November 10, 2013 from 6-8 p.m.

During this program, the Omicron Phi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. will recognize the brothers who have contributed to the education, legal, ministry and government fields and will also recognize Melvin Malone, Jr. as Omega Man of the Year and Ms. Teresa Wilson, Columbia City Manager, as the Citizen of the Year. The theme for this year is "Advancing Omega's Through Leadership, Vision, and Excellence."

This event is open to the public and light refreshments will be served.

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We Are Columbia

**MEDIA ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, November 8, 2013

Contact: Erika Moore at 803-545-3043

Educational Forum on Forms of Government

The Municipal Election Commission of the City of Columbia has announced a special election on the question of a change in the form of municipal government for the City of Columbia to be held on Tuesday, December 3, 2013.

What: The Municipal Association of South Carolina will share valuable information and answer any questions regarding the forms of local government.

Who: Scott Slatton, Legislative and Public Policy Advocate for the Municipal Association of South Carolina

Where: City Hall - 1737 Main Street - 3rd Floor - Council Chambers

When: Wednesday, November 13, 2013 at 6 p.m.

For more information, contact Erika Moore at 803-545-3043, email edmoore@columbiasc.net or visit www.columbiasc.net/elections.

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We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, November 12, 2013

Contact: Pamela Benjamin, Human Resources Director, at 545-3008

City of Columbia Begins Nationwide Search for Police Chief

City Manager Teresa Wilson announced today that the City of Columbia has begun the official search process for the police chief position at the Columbia Police Department. "We have posted the police chief position and will be conducting an extensive nationwide search, which includes working with multiple public safety entities to increase distribution of the job posting among law enforcement professionals," Wilson commented.

According to Human Resources Director Pamela Benjamin, the police chief position will be posted until December 11, 2013. A timeline regarding the hiring process has been attached for information purposes. In addition to the timeline, the attached document also includes details regarding the criteria for candidates who wish to apply for the position.

City Manager Wilson stated, "We are working expeditiously, while also implementing a very thorough hiring process that will include involvement and input from law enforcement officials, neighborhood leaders, representatives from local business associations and hospitality districts. We have heard the needs and concerns of our citizens and we are moving forward with this process in the best interest of the community."

The Columbia Police Department has over 460 staff members, of which 385 positions are sworn officers.

For questions regarding the search process, please contact Pamela Benjamin, Human Resources Director, at 545-3008.

NOTE: Please see the attached document for additional details.

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For Immediate Release

November 13, 2013

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media, 803-545-3020

City of Columbia Awarded Recreational Trails Program Grant

The City of Columbia was awarded a \$98,850 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant from the SC Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (SCPRT) for the Taylor Street Trail.

With this grant, the City plans to construct a 2-city-block trail that begins at Taylor Street and extends north to Laurel Street. The Taylor Street Trail, which ties into the Vista Greenway, will take pedestrians and cyclists from the Vista through Finlay Park to historic Arsenal Hill. The requested funds would be used for construction of the trail surface, lights for the trail and the tunnel at Finlay Park, and renovations to the tunnel so that it is safer and more welcoming for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Vista Greenway Project is a proposed trail along the former Seaboard Air Line Railroad from Lady Street to Elmwood Avenue. The City is working to transform this old rail bed into a 14-foot-wide, lighted asphalt trail for biking and pedestrian use. The development of the Vista Greenway will facilitate and encourage tourism in the Columbia area by linking two major destination areas - the Vista and Finlay Park. The project will also transform underused and blighted areas and enhance the quality of life in the City.

The SCPRT administers the RTP under the approval of the Federal Highway Administration. This federal-aid assistance program is designed to help states provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use.

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We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, November 13, 2013

Contact: Tezra Haire,
803.413.9165

City Of Columbia and Richland One School District to Host Annual "Honor the Dream" Food Drive

Harvest Hope donation boxes will soon be popping up across the city as the City of Columbia, Richland One School District and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation kick off their annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Honor the Dream Food Drive on Monday, December 2, 2013.

The public is invited to drop off their non-perishable food items at the following locations:

- City Hall, 1737 Main Street
- Charles R. Drew Wellness Center, 2101 Walker Solomon Way
- City Water Customer Service, Washington Square, 1339 Main Street
- City Human Resources Office, 1225 Lady Street
- James E. Clyburn Golf Center, 2091 Slighs Avenue
- Columbia Tennis Center, 1635 Whaley Street
- City Parks and Recreation sites (visit www.columbiasc.gov/parks-recreation/facilities for facility names and addresses)

Donations will be accepted throughout the holiday season, ending on January 3, 2014.

The food drive is held annually to honor Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy of community service and helping others. Donations will be presented to the Harvest Hope Food Bank and will aide those in need in and around the Midlands.

For more information on the food drive, contact City of Columbia Parks and Recreation at (803) 545-3100.

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We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, November 13, 2013

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media at 803.545.3020

City Of Columbia and Richland County Announces the Launch of Columbia-Richland Alerts

The City Of Columbia and Richland County have partnered to launch a new alerts system called Columbia-Richland Alerts, also known as C.R.A.

The new system is designed to provide citizens with time-sensitive information for public safety and community awareness. Alerts citizens can choose from include:

- Public safety
- Power outages
- Missing persons
- Road closures
- Traffic safety
- Community events
- Public meetings or hearings
- Water and sewer notifications

Citizens can create a customized online profile and have the ability to choose which alerts they would like and choose where the alerts are sent. At any time, citizens can modify their alert preferences through their online profile. Alerts can be sent to:

- Home phone
- Business phone
- Cell phone
- Text message
- Email
- Hearing impaired receiving devices
- And more!

To register for C.R.A., visit <http://www.columbiasc.net/911/citizens-alerts> or call 803-545-3300.

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We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 14, 2013

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media, 803-545-3020

City Offices To Close For Thanksgiving Holiday

City of Columbia offices will be closed on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 28, 2013 and Friday, November 29, 2013.

Garbage and recyclables regularly scheduled to be picked up on Thursday, November 28th will be picked up on Wednesday, November 27th. Normal schedule will resume on Friday, November 29th.

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For Immediate Release

November 15, 2013

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

SCE&G To Perform Tree Trimming Activities As Scheduled for 2013

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

Historic Trenholm Buchanan
Kilbourne Park

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/treetrimming.

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:

MAPS: [2013 SCE&G Utility Distribution Line Trimming Locations](#)

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

###



We Are Columbia

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 15, 2013

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

Ameris Bank donates to feed city's homeless

Columbia, SC – At-Large Councilman Cameron Runyan today thanked Ameris Bank for generously donating 100,000 food items collected through its 4th Annual "Helping Fight Hunger" initiative, to Christ Central Ministries for use in the city's Emergency Homeless Shelter calling it an "shining example of leadership from one of our most prominent downtown businesses."

"We are truly grateful for this remarkable act of kindness and civic service," said Councilman Runyan. "By stepping up like this and helping provide a way forward for so many who desperately need it, Ameris Bank has clearly demonstrated its commitment to this city and to all the people of Columbia."

Ameris Bank launched its 4th Annual "Helping Fight Hunger" initiative during the month of October. The Ameris Bank Midlands locations collected over 288,800 non-perishable food items, and over 500,000 non-perishable food items collected Company-wide. Ameris Bancorp collectively donated \$75,000, with the donation distributed amongst all local food banks receiving the locally collected items. In addition to Christ Central, other groups receiving donations collected in the Midlands include Palmetto Project (Snack Pack – Richland 1), McGregor Presbyterian Church (Snack Pack), Sharing God's Love, and Lexington Interfaith Community Services (LICS).

Regional President, Richard Sturm stated, "I am so proud of the results of our efforts and I am extremely thankful for the support from our employees, customers and the community. We all know that one food drive won't completely eliminate the need, but we hope it brought attention to a growing issue and provided help to our local food bank. Additionally, we thank our business partners who graciously agreed to display a collection box in their business – their partnership made the initiative even more successful."

According to FeedingAmerica.org, hunger in America exists for over 50 million people, which is 1 in 6 of the US population, including more than 1 in 5 children.

For additional information about the Ameris Bank Helping Fight Hunger food drive initiative, please visit

https://www.amerisbank.com/community/helping_fight_hunger/about_project. Ameris Bank is headquartered in Moultrie, Georgia, and has locations in Florida, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina. The parent Company, Ameris Bancorp, is listed on NASDAQ under the symbol ABCB.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 16, 2013
Contact: Michael Wukela @ 803.413.5052

Mayor Benjamin responds to overnight shootings

COLUMBIA, SC – Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin released this statement today following the news of deadly shootings on Martha Street and Bailey Street overnight:

"I want to encourage anyone who knows anything about these senseless acts of violence and can help identify those involved to please come forward immediately. With your help, I am confident that Chief Santiago and the Columbia Police Department will find those responsible for these crimes and bring them to justice.

"Still, I cannot ignore the fact that last night's incidents are only latest chapters in the all too familiar story here in Columbia and across America. We must do more to combat the scourge of gangs, guns and violent crime.

"The people of this city are fed up and so am I and it is simply not enough to voice our frustration and outrage. We must act.

"We must implement gang injunctions in our city.

"We must demand that the revolving door for repeat violent offenders be shut.

"And we must, as a great community, invest heavily in our youth and programs that help them live up to their God given potential.

"So let us take this opportunity to stand together and demonstrate to those who would intimidate and divide us with fear that we are one city and one people. From Greenview to Gregg Park, the Colony to Cottontown, we are One Columbia and we are stronger than they could possibly imagine."

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We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, November 18, 2013

Contact: Marli Drum at 803.776.7387

Columbia Animal Services to Host 12 Hour Adoption Special

On Monday, December 2, Columbia Animal Services will host the Fall in Love Fur-Ever Adoption Special from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. at the animal shelter.

Citizens interested in adopting a pet can spin the Wheel of FURtune to win anything from a discounted rate to a free adoption. No matter where the wheel lands, there will be a winner. This special applies to all pets in the shelter.

The Columbia Animal Services shelter is located at 127 Humane Lane, Columbia, SC 29209 and can be reached by calling 803-776-7387.

To view adoptable pets, visit www.petfinder.com. Give a shelter pet a new home for the new season.

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**MEDIA ADVISORY
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November 18, 2013

Contact: Erika Moore at 803-545-3043

Educational Forum on Forms of Government

The Municipal Election Commission of the City of Columbia has announced a special election on the question of a change in the form of municipal government for the City of Columbia to be held on Tuesday, December 3, 2013.

What: The Municipal Association of South Carolina will share valuable information and answer any questions regarding the forms of local government.

Who: Scott Slatton, Legislative and Public Policy Advocate for the Municipal Association of South Carolina

Where: St. Andrews Middle School Theatre – 1231 Bluefield Road, Columbia, SC 29210

When: Monday, November 18, 2013 at 6 p.m.

For more information, contact Erika Moore at 803-545-3043, email edmoore@columbiasc.net or visit www.columbiasc.net/elections.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, November 18, 2013

Contact: Virginia Bedford, (803) 546-1482

Columbia's Riverfront Lights Up for the Holidays

Columbia Parks and Recreation Foundation along with City of Columbia Parks and Recreation will celebrate the holiday season with **Christmas on the Congaree**. This spectacular display of lighted Christmas trees will be at the new Coble Plaza at Riverfront Park, 211 Gervais St., behind EdVenture Children's Museum, December 2 through the 31, from 6 to 10 p.m. nightly.

Visitors can expect to see an array of wonderfully decorated Green Giant Cedar Arborvitae trees along the Columbia Canal and the Congaree River. **Christmas on the Congaree** is open to the public. Admission is free.

This festive community event is being supported by local contributions made to the Columbia Parks and Recreation Foundation. These contributions are designed to provide funding for inner-city youth to participate in summer programs being offered by City of Columbia Parks and Recreation. Programs offered will allow youth to take advantage of skill-building opportunities to include reading, math, and science enrichment, as well as, cultural arts and outdoor experiences (i.e., kayaking, fishing at Riverfront Park and horseback riding).

Columbia Parks and Recreation Foundation (CPRF) is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization.

For more information on this event, call Virginia Bedford at (803) 546-1482.

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We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, November 18, 2013

Contact: Public Relations, Marketing & Media at 803.545.3020

City Of Columbia and Richland County Partner for New Alerts System

The City Of Columbia and Richland County have partnered to launch a new alerts system called Columbia-Richland Alerts, also known as C.R.A.

"There are times when critical incidents, and emergencies arise. In the event of a critical incident or emergency in our area, it is crucial that we be able to quickly and reliably alert our citizens. Columbia Richland Alerts will allow us the ability to do that. This will be an invaluable tool in helping to ensure the safety of our citizens and communities," Columbia-Richland 911 Communications Director Kim Gathers said.

The new system is designed to provide citizens with time-sensitive information for public safety and community awareness. Alerts citizens can choose from include:

- Public safety
- Power outages
- Missing persons
- Road closures
- Traffic safety
- Community events
- Public meetings or hearings
- Water and sewer notifications

Citizens can create a customized online profile and have the ability to choose which alerts they would like and choose where the alerts are sent. At any time, citizens can modify their alert preferences through their online profile. Alerts can be sent to:

- Home phone
- Business phone
- Cell phone
- Text message
- Email
- Hearing impaired receiving devices
- And more!

To register for C.R.A., visit <http://www.columbiasc.net/911/citizens-alerts> or call 803-545-3300.

###



For Immediate Release

November 18, 2013

Contact: Forestry & Beautification @ 545-3860

Winners of 2013 Columbia Choice Awards Announced For Landscaping and Beautification

Columbia Green and Columbia Tree & Appearance Commission have announced the winners of the 2013 Columbia Choice Awards.

The awards recognize the prolific and creative landscape design of businesses, neighborhoods and public groups that enhance the quality of life in the City of Columbia.

Columbia Choice Awards were awarded in the following categories:

- **First Citizens Cafe**
 - **Renovation/Reuse** - Recognizes excellence in restoration, renovation or adaptive reuse of an existing property. Selection criteria include creativity of use of existing site; adaptation to current building codes and standards; quality of landscape design; and innovative treatment of signage, utilities and infrastructure.

- **Midlands Orthopaedics, P.A.**
 - **Site Beautification Management** - Recognizes property that has, over time and in all seasons, demonstrated a commitment to excellence in maintenance, landscape design, consistency of visual appeal and enhancement of our surroundings.

- **Heathwood Hall Edible Forest**
 - **Education** - Recognizes any individual, school or organization which promotes attention to our urban environment, its beautification, maintenance and preservation. Selection criteria include overall visual enhancement, educational value, and/or heightened awareness of the environment.

- **Bradley Elementary School Entrance Garden**
 - **Neighborhood/Community** - Recognizes a civic, community or neighborhood organization whose effort has significantly added to the quality of life and beautification of a portion of Columbia. Selection criteria include overall visual effect, community participation, and perceived quality of life enhancement.

- **1214 Pulaski Street**
 - **New Construction/Site Development** - Recognizes new construction and site development projects that exemplify development excellence. Selection criteria include suitability for and enhancement of surrounding area; overall appearance and design; quality of landscaping; creative site planning; environmental stewardship; and innovative treatment of signage, utilities and infrastructure.

For more information please contact Forestry & Beautification 545-3860.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 14, 2013

Contact: Public Relations at 803-545-3020

**City of Columbia Recognized for Trailblazing Efforts to Prevent Childhood Obesity
Through *Let's Move!* Cities, Towns and Counties**

Columbia, SC – On Thursday, November 14, the National League of Cities (NLC) recognized the efforts of nearly 400 mayors, city council members, county commissioners, and other local elected officials nationwide for their commitment to achieving health and wellness goals for Let's Move! Cities, Towns and Counties (LMCTC). More than 60 million Americans are now living in LMCTC communities that are dedicated to helping young people eat healthy foods and be physically active. LMCTC is a major component of First Lady Michelle Obama's comprehensive Let's Move! initiative, which is dedicated to solving childhood obesity within a generation.

"Local officials around the country are committed to taking action in their communities to help their residents be healthy," said NLC President Marie Lopez Rogers, mayor of Avondale, Ariz. "We've seen recent signs of progress, with childhood obesity rates declining in some cities, counties, and states, and we hope to see continued progress thanks to the efforts of the local leaders being recognized today."

As part of the announcement, NLC President Rogers also recognized Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine along with other city officials representing the 18 communities that have made the most progress to date in completing the five goals. The 18 communities being recognized are:

- Columbia, S.C.; Beaumont, Texas; Knoxville, Tenn.; Norfolk, Va.; Orlando, Fla.; and Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., for sites with populations between 100,000 and 249,999.
- Hawaiian Gardens, Calif.; Kenmore, Wash.; and Selma, Ala., for sites with populations less than 25,000.
- Annapolis, Md., and Casa Grande, Ariz., for sites with populations between 25,000 and 49,999.
- Davenport, Iowa; Jackson, Tenn.; Meriden, Conn.; Revere, Mass.; and Somerville, Mass., for sites with populations between 50,000 and 99,999.
- Columbus, Ohio, and Knox County, Tenn., for sites with populations of more than 250,000.

The accomplishments Columbia has made include having one of the highest overall medal achievements for Let's Move! In addition, Columbia earned four gold medals in Goals I, II, IV, and V, and a silver medal in Goal III. The National League of Cities recognized Columbia for completion of key health and wellness goals for LMCTC.

“Let’s Move! is focused on putting children on the path to a healthy future during their earliest months and years. As a Let’s Move! city, Columbia has committed to implementing programs and procedures to ensure our children have a healthy start in life. We have made great strides in increasing wellness programs and physical fitness activities for our community’s children. Being recognized as one of the top cities participating in the Let’s Move! initiative is amazing and it only motivates us to do even more to make our city healthier,” stated Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine, Co-Chair for Let’s Move! Columbia.

LMCTC calls upon local elected officials to adopt sustainable and holistic policies that improve communities’ access to healthy affordable foods and opportunities for physical activity through five goal areas:

- **Goal I: Start Early, Start Smart:** Promoting best practices for nutrition, physical activity, and screen time in early care and education settings
- **Goal II: My Plate, Your Place:** Prominently displaying MyPlate in all municipal or county venues where food is served
- **Goal III: Smart Servings for Students:** Increasing participation in school breakfast and lunch programs
- **Goal IV: Model Food Service:** Implementing healthy and sustainable food service guidelines that are aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- **Goal V: Active Kids at Play:** Increasing opportunities for physical activity

Columbia is ranked as the #2 Let’s Move! city and received 4 gold medals and 1 silver medal for action taken to improve access to healthy affordable food and increase opportunities for physical activity. Beaumont, Texas is the only city to outrank Columbia by receiving 5 gold medals for all five of LMCTC goal areas. Since July 2012, NLC has awarded 1,274 bronze, silver, and gold medals to local elected officials who represent LMCTC communities across the country for their progress in these areas.

NLC is working in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and with the support of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the National Association of Counties and other nonprofit organizations, to assist local elected officials who join LMCTC as they implement policy and environmental changes to prevent childhood obesity. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded a grant to NLC to provide technical assistance to local elected officials working to create healthier communities and prevent childhood obesity, including those participating in LMCTC.

For more information about LMCTC and Columbia’s accomplishments, visit www.HealthyCommunitiesHealthyFuture.org.

NLC is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. NLC is a resource and advocate for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million Americans.

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Monday, November 18, 2013

Contact: Carrie Deaton, (803) 799-1970 – office; (803) 586-1473 – mobile

Mayor Steve Benjamin Unveils 2013 Official City Ornament

Today at a press conference held at the Columbia Museum of Art, Mayor Steve Benjamin unveiled the Babcock Center Foundation's "Ornament of Opportunity" and proclaimed it as the "Official City Ornament."

The 2013 "Official City Ornament" depicts the Columbia Museum of Art. This is the 21st ornament in the collectors series. Each ornament is 24-karat gold on brass and comes in a felt case. All proceeds from the sales of the ornament benefit the Babcock Center Foundation.

Ornaments cost \$14 and may be purchased at the Babcock Center Foundation Office at 2725 Banny Jones Ave., West Columbia, at the Columbia Visitor's Center, the Columbia Museum of Art Gift Shop or by calling 803-799-1970. Order forms are also available online to be mailed to the Foundation at PO Box 3608 West Columbia, SC 29171.

For more information, visit the Babcock Center's website at <http://www.babcockcenter.org/>.

###



We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 18, 2013

Contact: Michael Wukela @ 803.413.5052

Mayor Benjamin to host follow-up forum on crime and violence in the city

COLUMBIA, SC – Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin is set to hold a second Public Safety Town Hall on Wednesday, November 20 in City Council Chambers at City Hall in order to continue the public discussion on crime and violence in Columbia.

Wednesday's meeting, scheduled to begin promptly at 4:00 PM, is a follow-up to the community forum hosted by Mayor Benjamin last month in the wake of the shooting of University of South Carolina freshman, Martha Childress. The forum gave citizens an opportunity to voice concerns, discuss solutions, and offer suggestions for preventing crime and violence in Five Points.

Wednesday's meeting will have the same purpose and structure as last month's forum, but will focus more on addressing crime and justice issues affecting all of Columbia.

WHAT: Public Safety Town Hall

**WHERE: City Hall
(City Council Chambers)
1737 Main Street
Columbia, SC**

WHEN: 4:00 PM on Wednesday, November 20

This important meeting will be open to the public and everyone is invited to bring their ideas and have their voices heard on how we can make Columbia safer.

For additional information, please contact the Michael Wukela at 803.413.5052.

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We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, November 19, 2013
Contact: Tezra Haire, 803.413-9165

**CITY HOSTS ANNUAL HOLIDAY ART SALE & SILENT AUCTION TO BENEFIT
WOUNDED WARRIORS**

The Art Center will host its annual Holiday Art Sale and Silent Auction on Saturday, November 23, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Earlewood Community Center, 1113 Parkside Dr., in Earlewood Park.

Shoppers are invited to come out browse a wide variety of different art styles and creations and purchase unique pieces made by some of Columbia's most talented artists. The event will also feature artwork from participants in the Creative Journey program from the Wounded Warrior Project at Fort Jackson. Proceeds will benefit the Creative Journey program at the Art Center, 1928 Calhoun St.

For more information, call City of Columbia Parks and Recreation at (803) 545-3093.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 19, 2013

Contact: Victoria Kramer (vlkramer@columbiasc.net) at 545-3227

Property Owners Can Get Schooled on Flood Insurance at City-hosted Information Session

Columbia, SC –With recent changes to the Federal laws governing the National Flood Insurance Program, the City of Columbia will hold the first of two public information sessions on flood insurance this Thursday, November 21st from 6-8 PM at the Eau Claire Print Building at 3907 Ensor Ave.

Homeowners and commercial property owners who have or are considering flood insurance should attend.

The City of Columbia's Floodplain Manager will be on hand to inform the public about:

- Recent changes to the Federal laws governing the NFIP,
- How property owners can learn more about flood insurance premiums through the NFIP,
- And how property owners may be able to save on their NFIP premiums by getting an elevation certification.

The City of Columbia participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. This allows qualified property owners in the City to purchase this federally-backed flood insurance and potentially qualify for disaster relief following severe flooding. For more information on the City of Columbia's Floodplain Management Program, visit www.ColumbiaSC.Gov/Floodplain. For more information on the federal National Flood Insurance Program, visit www.FloodSmart.gov.

###



We Are Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Contact: Tezra Haire,
803.413.9165

CITY'S ART PROGRAM FOR WOUNDED WARRIORS RECEIVES TOP AWARD

City of Columbia Parks and Recreation is celebrating a major accomplishment. The department was recently presented the Programming Excellence Award from the South Carolina Recreation and Parks Association for its Creative Journey program. The award was given during the association's annual conference held earlier this month.

Creative Journey is the only program of its kind in the country for active duty members of the military and exists as a result of a partnership between the City of Columbia and Fort Jackson. The program features a monthly arts workshop designed to help soldiers in the Wounded Warrior Transition Unit at Fort Jackson recover from health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injuries.

The program has been in existence for nearly a year and was developed as a result of the collaborative efforts between the Parks and Recreation Department's Cultural Arts Center Coordinator, Brenda Oliver and local artist and Gold Star Mother, Suzy Shealy.

"The program is indeed doing what it was designed to do — provide art as a path to healing as part of the recovery process," said Oliver. "Our vision is to expand Creative Journey to veterans in other branches of the armed services."

The public will have an opportunity to view the artwork created by the soldiers and support the Creative Journey program by attending the Art Center's Annual Holiday Art Sale and Silent Auction on this Saturday, November 23, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Earlewood Community Center, 1113 Parkside Drive in Earlewood Park.

For more information, call City of Columbia Parks and Recreation at (803) 545-3093.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, November 21, 2013
Contact: Tezra Haire,
803.413.9165

Main Street ICE Returns to Boyd Plaza *Update*

In just one week, Columbia residents will be able to hit the ice for some fun! Columbia's Famously Hot, Surprising Cool outdoor ice skating rink is set to open next Thursday, November 28, 2013 (Thanksgiving Day) from 5 to 9 p.m. and will remain open until January 20, 2014.

Setup crews will be in place at Boyd Plaza this weekend to begin assembling the rink and work to transform the plaza into a winter wonderland.

Opening day at Main Street ICE will feature exciting giveaways, live music, games, face painting and skate exhibitions by Palmetto Skate Club. There will also be a once price skate fee on opening day. Everyone gets to skate for just \$8.00.

Normal skate fees will resume after opening day: \$10 for adults and \$8 for children ages 12 and under as well as for seniors (55+) and active duty military. Skate rentals are included in the fees. Reservations are available Monday - Thursday only, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for groups of twenty or more.

The rink will be open seven days a week with the following operating hours:

Monday -Thursday, 4 - 9:00 p.m.
Friday, 4 -10:00 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Sunday, 1:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

The rink will have special operating hours December 16 through January 3, opening at 12 p.m., Monday - Friday to coincide with local school districts' winter break schedules.

The rink will be closed on Christmas Day and open until 12 a.m. on New Year's Eve.

For more information on Main Street Ice or for group reservations, contact City of Columbia Parks and Recreation at (803) 545-3100.

###



We Are Columbia

For Immediate Release

Friday, November 22, 2013

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

SCE&G To Perform Tree Trimming Activities As Scheduled for 2013

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

Historic Trenholm Buchanan

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/treetrimming.

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:

MAPS: [2013 SCE&G Utility Distribution Line Trimming Locations](#)

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

###



**MEDIA ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 25, 2013

Contact: Erika Moore at 803-545-3045

Two Educational Forums on Forms of Government Being Held Tomorrow

The Municipal Election Commission of the City of Columbia has announced a special election on the question of a change in the form of municipal government for the City of Columbia to be held on Tuesday, December 3, 2013.

What: The Municipal Association of South Carolina will share valuable information and answer any questions regarding the forms of local government.

Who: Scott Slatton, Legislative and Public Policy Advocate for the Municipal Association of South Carolina

When: Tuesday, November 26, 2013

Where: Greenview Park (6700 David Street) @ 2 p.m.
Sims Park (3500 Duncan Street) @ 6 p.m.

For more information, contact Erika Moore at 803-545-3043, email edmoore@columbiasc.net or visit www.columbiasc.net/elections.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, November 27, 2013

Contact: Tezra Haire,
803.413.9165

Main Street ICE Opening Day Tomorrow

Columbia residents will be able to hit the ice for some fun beginning tomorrow, Thursday, November 28, 2013 (Thanksgiving Day)! Columbia's Famously Hot, Surprisingly Cool outdoor ice skating rink will be open from 5 to 9 p.m. and will remain open until January 20, 2014.

Opening day at Main Street ICE will feature exciting giveaways, live music, games, face painting and skate exhibitions by Palmetto Skate Club. There will also be a once price skate fee on opening day. Everyone gets to skate for just \$8.

Normal skate fees will resume after opening day: \$10 for adults and \$8 for children ages 12 and under as well as for seniors (55+) and active duty military. Skate rentals are included in the fees. Reservations are available Monday – Thursday only, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for groups of twenty or more.

The rink will be open seven days a week with the following operating hours:

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The rink will have special operating hours December 16 through January 3, opening at 12 p.m., Monday – Friday to coincide with local school districts' winter break schedules.

The rink will be closed on Christmas Day and open until 12 a.m. on New Year's Eve.

For more information on Main Street Ice or for group reservations, contact City of Columbia Parks and Recreation at (803) 545-3100.

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Bull Street Commission Meeting Public Notice

The City of Columbia Bull Street Commission will hold a kickoff meeting Monday, December 2, 2013 at 2 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room located on the 2nd floor of City Hall, 1737 Main Street.

The Bull Street Commission is comprised of seven members serving in an advisory role to the City in advancing the vision and the goals articulated by City Council in achieving quality development on Bull Street, including funding issues, benchmarks and development activities.

The commission is chaired by City Councilman Brian Newman and comprised of the following six other representatives:

Lyle Darnell
Jason Stern
Rebecca Haynes
Robert Lewis
Sabrina Odem
Dr. John Dozier

The Bull Street Commission will meet at least every other month and report to Council at least twice a year.

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