



We Are Columbia

Together we will build a world-class city

City of Columbia Press Releases

May 1-31, 2014

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MAY PRESS RELEASES



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 01, 2014

Contact: Marli Drum at 776-7387

Columbia Animal Services Having Flash Sale on Feline Adoptions

Starting today, May 1, 2014, through Saturday, May 3, all feline adoptions will be only \$30 at the Columbia Animal Shelter, located at 127 Humane Ln.

All animals are spay/neutered, microchipped, vaccinated and wormed. Canines are tested for heartworms and felines are tested for feline leukemia/aids.

The Columbia Animal Shelter is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The shelter is located at 127 Humane Lane, Columbia, SC 29209 and can be reached by calling 803-776-7387.

For more information or to view adoptable pets, please visit www.petfinder.com.



For Immediate Release

May 1, 2014

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

Ft. Jackson to host City Council for team building exercise

Columbia, SC. – Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin and members of City Council will join together at Fort Jackson tomorrow for a series of team building exercises which include completing a six-station Teamwork Development Course and a simulated M16 multipurpose arms training as well as climbing the a 70-foot tall Victory Tower.

Proposed by Mayor Benjamin as part of his ongoing effort to promote civility and unity on Council and throughout the City of Columbia, tomorrow’s exercise also provide a unique opportunity to expand and enrich the long established partnership between the City and Fort Jackson.

“Fort Jackson is such a wonderful resource for our community and our nation,” says Mayor Benjamin. “Working with them on this effort has been a true honor and we’re very excited to see what they have in store for us.”

WHAT: City Council Teambuilding Exercise

WHEN: Friday, May 2

8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

WHERE: Fort Jackson

All media are encouraged to attend and should contact Pat Jones 803-751-7650 or Michael Pond 803-751-7313.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 02, 2014

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

Mayor Steve Benjamin and Columbia Urban League to Announce Program to Support SWELP

WHAT: Mayor Steve Benjamin and J.T. McLawhorn will be discussing a water bill check off program in support of SWELP. The initiative will allow citizens to donate funds to support SWELP through a check off process on the City's water bills.

WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin, elected City officials, J.T. McLawhorn and Columbia Urban League representatives.

WHERE: City Hall, Chambers

1737 Main St.

Columbia, SC 29201

WHEN: Monday, May 5, 2014 at 11 a.m.

The Columbia Urban League's Summer Work Experience Leadership Program (SWELP) is an evidence-based best-practice career development program for youth ages 14-19. SWELP provides 250-275 youth valuable work experience that helps foster a strong work ethic and self-esteem.

The purpose of this program is to provide primarily disadvantaged youth with summer work experience in an effort for them to gain the necessary fundamental skills they will need to ensure future employment opportunities.

In order to be eligible to participate in the program, interested youth must complete a SWELP application, which are available at the Columbia Urban League through May 31, 2014.

For more information on SWELP, please contact the Columbia Urban League at 803-799-8150 or visit www.columbiaurbanleague.org.



For Immediate Release

May 2, 2014

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

SCE&G To Perform Tree Trimming Activities As Scheduled for 2014

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

Lake Katherine

POA of Lake Katherine

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.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Monday, May 5, 2014

Contact: Pamela Benjamin at 803-545-3008

City of Columbia Public Safety Job Fair

The City of Columbia is excited to announce a Public Safety Job Fair to be held on Thursday, May 15, 2014 from 5:00 pm until 8:00 pm at the Columbia Police Department, 1 Justice Square. The job fair will be a joint effort between the Columbia Police Department, the Columbia Fire Department and Columbia-Richland 911 Communications.

The City of Columbia is seeking qualified, productive and motivated police officers, firefighters and 911 call takers to provide efficient and effective services to the citizens of Columbia.

For more details, visit www.columbiasc.net.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, May 05, 2014

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

Mayor Steve Benjamin and Columbia Urban League to Announce Program to Support SWELP

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The purpose of this program is to provide primarily disadvantaged youth with summer work experience in an effort for them to gain the necessary fundamental skills they will need to ensure future employment opportunities.

In order to be eligible to participate in the program, interested youth must complete a SWELP application, which are available at the Columbia Urban League through May 31, 2014.

For more information on SWELP, please contact the Columbia Urban League at 803-799-8150 or visit www.columbiaurbanleague.org



For Immediate Release

May 5, 2014

Contact: Victoria Kramer at (803) 240-9207

Clean Water 2020 Update: City Making Strides in System-wide Sewer Overhaul

Columbia, SC – On July 9, 2013, the City launched the Clean Water 2020 program – an overarching revamping and revitalization of its wastewater collection and treatment system. This program builds on major upgrades and rehabilitation work that began as early as 2005 as part of the City's dedicated effort to improve its entire sewer system. So what has the City been up to since then?

The City has already evaluated a significant portion of its sewer lines and manholes. Since 2009, the City has assessed approximately 15% of its 1,100 mile system. "This puts us well on our way to meeting our goal of assessing the entire system in 10 to 15 years," says Bill Davis, City of Columbia Wastewater Engineer. According to Davis, "This work is critical for the rest of the Clean Water 2020 program because it allows us to prioritize exactly where work needs to be done. Some older areas will require major rehabilitation while other, newer areas are still in good condition."

The City has also completed work on four of its five major pump stations, with the fifth due for completion in Summer, 2014. Its most recently completed pump station, the West Columbia Pump Station, is also its largest. Designed to withstand 100-year floods, it has a back-up generator large enough to run a small wastewater treatment plant. This generator will start up within seconds of a power failure and, since it runs on natural gas, can run indefinitely even under flooded conditions.

But the City's efforts don't just stop when construction ends. "How staff manages and operates the system on a daily basis is critical to protecting our investment, which is why training is so important," says Davis. The City is modernizing its operation and maintenance practices—from formalizing design and construction standards for contractors to developing standard operating and maintenance manuals for staff. And staff is benefitting, too, with training to do their jobs more efficiently and effectively. In 2013, the City began an Apprenticeship Program where wastewater collection system and wastewater plant operators can earn certifications and licenses in their fields of expertise.

The City is also working with citizens to protect our investment. Through its Commercial Fats, Oils and Grease Program, staff is working with local food service establishments like restaurants and hotels to keep sewer-clogging grease out of the sewer system. The City has also launched the "Trash the Grease" and "Trash the Wipes" public service announcements to educate residents on how everyone can help protect our sewer system.

So what effect is all this work having on sanitary sewer overflows? The City began tracking sanitary sewer overflows on a fiscal year basis (July 1-June 30) in 2008. In 2008/2009, the City experienced 455 overflows. By 2012/2013, the number of overflows had been reduced by over 70%. According to Davis, though, "The extreme wet weather this year has been a challenge." Over two-thirds of the overflows seen in 2013/2014 so far can be attributed to wet-weather conditions. However, on the upside, grease-related overflows continue to show a decline, meaning the City's continued efforts in implementing the Commercial Fats, Oils & Grease Program are paying off.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, May 05, 2014

Contact: Erika Moore at 803-545-3043

City Council Agendas

On Tuesday, May 6, 2014, The Columbia City Council will conduct a Budget Workshop/Work Session at 11 a.m. and a Council Meeting at 6 p.m.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, May 05, 2014

Contact: Columbia Urban League at 799-8150

Mayor Steve Benjamin and Columbia Urban League Announces Water Bill Insert Program to support SWELP

Today, at press conference held in City Hall Council Chambers, Mayor Steve Benjamin and J.T. McLawhorn, president and CEO of the Columbia Urban League, discussed a water bill insert check off program in support of the Columbia Urban League's Summer Work Experience Leadership Program (SWELP).

"We're very excited about this initiative and we hope everyone will participate," said Mayor Benjamin. "This is about making a difference, saving lives, building our workforce and securing the future. All you have to do is check the box."

The initiative will allow citizens to donate funds to support SWELP through a check off process on the City's water bills. Columbia water customers will begin seeing these inserts this week.

Customers will receive a pledge card in the monthly water bill. The water account customer can select a donation amount, sign the card and return to the Customer Care Center. The donation amount will be reflected on the monthly water bill.

SWELP is an evidence-based, best-practice career development program for youth ages 14-19. SWELP provides 250-275 youth valuable work experience that helps foster a strong work ethic and self-esteem.

The purpose of this program is to provide primarily disadvantaged youth with summer work experience in an effort for them to gain the necessary fundamental skills they will need to ensure future employment opportunities.

In order to be eligible to participate in the program, interested youth must complete a SWELP application, which are available at the Columbia Urban League through May 31, 2014.

For more information on SWELP, please contact the Columbia Urban League at 803-799-8150 or visit www.columbiaurbanleague.org.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 07, 2014

Contact: Tina Herbert at 803-545-3950

City of Columbia Office of Business Opportunities to Host Second Annual Small Business Week Conference

Registration Now Open

The City of Columbia Office of Business Opportunities will host its second annual Small Business Week Conference on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, located at 1101 Lincoln St.

Dr. Louis B. Lynn, president of ENVIRO Ag Science, is this year's keynote speaker. Dr. Lynn established ENVIRO Ag Science, Inc. in 1985, which has become the largest African-American owned landscape firm in South Carolina. Other construction projects on his résumé include the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, the University of South Carolina Colonial Center and BMW Manufacturing.

The topics for this year's conference include:

- Ways to Secure a Contract with the City of Columbia
- Free and Low Cost Technology Resources
- Business Creation and Sustainability for Women-Owned Businesses

- Benefits of Membership with the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce

Registration can be found online at Eventbrite.com or at www.columbiasc.net/obo. Tickets are \$25 and those interested in sponsorships should contact Tonya Porter-Deberry at tpdeberry@columbiasc.net or 803-545-3950.

For more information, please contact the Office of Business Opportunities at 803-545-3950 or visit www.columbiasc.net/obo.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 7, 2014

Contact: Marli Drum at 803-776-7387

Columbia Animal Services Will Partner with the Animal Mission for Fill the Red Truck Fundraiser

Columbia Animal Services and the Animal Mission will partner for Fill the Red Truck fundraiser benefiting local animal shelters. The red truck will be located in Shandon on the corner of Heyward and Holly May 17 and 18 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and the shelter is asking the community to donate items such as dog and cat food, leashes and collars and other animal care items.

Throughout the month of May, specials will appear on Columbia Animal Services' Facebook page each week and along with special events to help raise funding for the shelter.

For more information, visit [Columbia Animal Services Facebook Page](#).



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 7, 2014

Contact: Marli Drum at 803-776-PETS

Columbia Animal Services Launches Animal Cruelty Awareness Campaign

Due to the number of animals suffering from abuse and neglect, Columbia Animal Services is launching an animal cruelty awareness campaign. The campaign is a part of Be Kind to Animals Week, an annual week that encourages compassion toward animals, but will be a continuing initiative in order to inform citizens to report animal abuse.

Did you know?

- Neglect and abandonment are the most common forms of companion animal abuse in the United States.
- Pit bull dogs are the most common victims of animal cruelty.
- 71% of domestic violence victims report that their abuser also targeted their animal.

The goal of this campaign is to encourage Columbia citizens to call Columbia Animal Services or their local animal control if they suspect animal neglect or abuse. Additionally, the shelter wants to provide tips on proper feeding and care for animals. In many cases, we find that simple education and a few adjustments in the animal's environment is all that is needed.

If you know of a dog, a cat or any animal that is suffering, please contact your local animal control at **803-776-7387** or animal@columbiasc.net.



For Immediate Release

May 7, 2014

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

City of Columbia Wastewater Engineer Named Engineer of the Year

The Water Environment Association of South Carolina has awarded William “Bill” Davis, Wastewater Engineer for the City of Columbia, with their annual Engineer of the Year Award.

The Engineer of the Year Award is awarded to an engineer working in one of the following areas: consulting, municipal or industry, who is responsible for the design of a facility, or has demonstrated excellence, by managing, directing, operating, education, research or pollution prevention on a project in the field of wastewater collection, treatment, or residual management.

In 2010, Davis became the first Wastewater Engineer for the City of Columbia. His current duties include: Oversight of the City’s wastewater collection and treatment system, which contains 1,100 miles of sewer lines, 56 pump stations, and a 60 MGD WWTP. He is also the Clean Water 2020 Program Director.

Bill Davis holds an Associate’s Degree in Engineering Graphics from Midlands Technical College and Bachelor’s Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of South Carolina. He is a professional engineer in South Carolina and Georgia. He has been working in the water and sewer industry since 1988.

The Water Environment Association of South Carolina (WEASC) is made up of a community of professionals who protect the state's water environment so that this most precious resource can be preserved for generations to come. **WEASC** serves more than 3,000 members across 10 districts throughout our state. WEASC is also affiliated with the Water Environment Federation, which is composed of affiliates and members throughout the world. The purpose of WEASC is to serve those whose vocation is the promotion, protection and preservation of the water environment. And, by extension, to serve all those who enjoy the waters of South Carolina for recreation or refreshment.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, May 9, 2014

Contact: Tina Herbert at 803-545-3950

City of Columbia Celebrates Small Business Week

WHAT: The City of Columbia will kickoff Small Business Week with a press conference discussing the week's activities and a proclamation reading.

WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin, elected City officials, Chamber representatives, City staff members and business leaders.

WHERE: Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce
930 Richland St.
Columbia, SC

WHEN: Tuesday, May 13, 2014 at 2 p.m.

The City Of Columbia's Office of Business Opportunities and the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce are hosting events during the week of May 12-16. The annual Small Business Conference will be held on Wednesday, May 14 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. To purchase tickets, please visit www.eventbrite.com. For more information about Small Business Week or to find a full list of events in Columbia, please visit <http://www.columbiachamber.com/>.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 9, 2014

Contact: Michael Strange at 803-733-8299

Eau Claire Development Corporation to Hold Ground Breaking Ceremony for New Affordable Housing Development

WHAT: The Eau Claire Development Corporation will host a ground breaking ceremony for Phase III of the Burton Heights Affordable Housing Project.

WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin, elected City officials, Eau Claire Development Corporation board of directors and staff, neighborhood leaders and community members.

WHERE: Vacant Lot
155 Burton Heights Circle
Columbia, SC 29203

WHEN: Thursday, May 15, 2014 at 11 a.m.

For more information on the Eau Claire Development Corporation, please call 803-733-8438 or visit <http://www.columbiasc.net/ecdc>.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Friday, May 9, 2014

Contact: Pamela Benjamin at 803-545-3008

City of Columbia Public Safety Job Fair

The City of Columbia is excited to announce a Public Safety Job Fair to be held on Thursday, May 15, 2014 from 5:00 pm until 8:00 pm at the Columbia Police Department, 1 Justice Square. The job fair will be a joint effort between the Columbia Police Department, the Columbia Fire Department and Columbia-Richland 911 Communications.

The City of Columbia is seeking qualified, productive and motivated police officers, firefighters and 911 call takers to provide efficient and effective services to the citizens of Columbia.

For more details, visit www.columbiasc.net.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 09, 2014

Contact: Community Development at 803-545-3373

The Community Development Loan Committee will meet on Monday, May 12, 2014 at 9 a.m. at 1225 Lady St. Please review the attached agenda.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 9, 2014

Contact: Public Relations at 803-545-3020

Canceled: "Paycheck to Paycheck" Columbia Premiere

The "Paycheck to Paycheck" Columbia Premiere: Financial Status of Women Forum Series scheduled for May 15 has been canceled.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday, May 12, 2014

Contact: Tina Herbert at 803-545-3950

City of Columbia Celebrates Small Business Week

WHAT: The City of Columbia will kickoff Small Business Week with a press conference discussing the week's activities and a proclamation reading.

WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin, elected City officials, Chamber representatives, City staff members and business leaders.

WHERE: Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce
930 Richland St.
Columbia, SC

WHEN: **Tomorrow**, Tuesday, May 13, 2014 at 2 p.m.

The City Of Columbia's Office of Business Opportunities and the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce are hosting events during the week of May 12-16. The annual Small Business Conference will be held on Wednesday, May 14 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. To purchase tickets, please visit www.eventbrite.com. For more information about Small Business Week or to find a full list of events in Columbia, please visit <http://www.columbiachamber.com/>.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, May 12, 2014

Contact: Office of the City Clerk at 803-545-3043

City Council Meeting Agendas for May 13, 2014

On Tuesday, May 13, 2014, members of the Columbia City Council will conduct an Arts & Historic Preservation Committee Meeting at 9 a.m. and the full Council will conduct a Special Called Meeting at 11 a.m.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Monday, May 12, 2014

Contact: Pamela Benjamin at 803-545-3008

City of Columbia Public Safety Job Fair

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For more details, visit www.columbiasc.net.



For Immediate Release

May 12, 2014

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

Mayor to attend Bourbon ribbon cutting

Columbia, SC. – Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin will join city leaders, the City Center Partnership and chef Kristian Niemi for a ribbon cutting to welcome downtown’s newest dining experience Bourbon to Main Street today at 5:50 PM at 1214 Main Street.

WHAT: Bourbon Ribbon Cutting

WHEN: Today, May 12

5:30 PM

WHERE: Bourbon (in front of the restaurant)

1214 Main St.

Bourbon, a restaurant and craft cocktail bar steps away from the South Carolina State House is the latest step forward in what has become a renaissance of new shops and restaurants along Main Street.

Housed in the historic Brennen Building (circa 1869), Bourbon's concept originated after restaurateur and chef, Kristian Niemi, toured the building while it was undergoing restoration.

“As soon as I walked into the building and heard a bit about its history, I knew immediately that it would be called Bourbon and would feature the spirit and the cuisine of New Orleans, with a Southern, Columbia twist,” said Niemi.

All media are encouraged to attend this afternoon's ribbon cutting and should contact Michael Wukela at mcwukela@columbiasc.net or 803-413-5052.

For additional information about Bourbon, please visit bourboncolumbia.com.

About Bourbon and Off Menu LTD:

Bourbon is the first venture for Chef Niemi's new restaurant company, Off Menu LTD. Off Menu brings together some of the best people in their respective fields to realize a shared vision of a new restaurant company with several different concepts. Partners include Nick Wilson and Sara Thomas from the award-winning design firm, The Half and Half; Rick Crowe, a veteran GM and Operations leader with PF Chang's, McKendrick Steakhouse, Blue Marlin and Sullivan's; and Eric Duncan, owner of Blue Zebra Technologies, an innovative tech firm developing new hospitality technologies and applications.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, May 13, 2014

Contact: Tina Herbert at 803-545-3950

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WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin, elected City officials, Chamber representatives, City staff members and business leaders.

WHERE: Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce
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Columbia, SC

WHEN: **Today**, Tuesday, May 13, 2014 at 2 p.m.

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The City of Columbia is seeking qualified, productive and motivated police officers, firefighters and 911 call takers to provide efficient and effective services to the citizens of Columbia.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 13, 2014

Contact: Pam Benjamin at 803-545-3008

Columbia City Council to Appoint New City Attorney

The City of Columbia is in the process of recruiting and selecting a new City Attorney. This person will replace Kenneth Gaines, who is retiring after 25 years with the City.

Mr. Gaines was appointed as the City Attorney in February 2008. The position was posted on July 26, 2013 and again on November 1, 2013 and currently has a salary \$141,452. There were 16 candidates who applied for the position and 8 candidates were first interviewed on April 8, 2014 at Earlewood Park.

The list was narrowed down to four final candidates and they are as follows:

Kelly Golden is a graduate of the USC School of Law and is currently practicing law with the Carolina Legal Associates. Ms. Golden's experience has included managing her own law firm and has worked for Beaufort County Council, the SC Association of Counties and the SC State Ethics Commission.

Tina Herbert earned a Juris Doctor/Master's of Business Administration from North Carolina Central University. Ms. Herbert is currently the Executive Director of the Office of Business

Opportunities for the City of Columbia. Ms. Herbert has worked for several private law firms and also worked in the Richland County Public Defender's Office as an Asst. Public Defender.

Teresa Knox is a graduate of the USC School of Law and is currently the owner and managing partner of the Knox Law Office. Ms. Knox was formerly the General Counsel for the SC Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services for 11 years. Ms. Knox has also worked for the SC Attorney General's Office as an Asst. Deputy Attorney General.

John Weaver is a graduate of the USC School of Law and is currently with the Thomas & Brittain law firm. Mr. Weaver was previously the County Administrator and County Attorney for Horry County for the past 11 years. He was also self-employed in private practice for over 20 years.

Columbia City Council will meet today at 11 a.m. to continue the next steps in the process and plans to release the name of the selected candidate shortly.



For Immediate Release

May 13, 2014

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

Mayor's Basketball Classic to help bring community together

Columbia, SC. – Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin will host the inaugural Mayor's Basketball Classic, a first of its kind tournament for our city featuring teams of teenagers and young adults from across our community competing against and playing with officers from the Columbia Police Department on Friday, May 16 at Greenview Park (6700 David Street) from 6:00-8:00pm. These commingled teams will compete and help foster a new bond of mutual respect and trust that is much needed throughout our community.

The brainchild of former gang member and founder of the Stop the Violence Movement in Columbia, Shuron Malone, the Mayor's Basketball Classic provides an unique opportunity for young people to build a rapport with the officers of the Columbia Police Department.

“This game is a big step for us to unite, promote togetherness and demote violence. Sometimes people look at the police as an adversary. This game will be step in the right direction to open the eyes that the police are people just like any of us,” said Shuron Malone.

The effort is part of Mayor Benjamin's vision to create a better path forward for the young, African American males in Columbia. It is presented in conjunction with the 2014 Columbia Black Expo, which will host the Black Male Summit on Saturday, May 17th.

“Our job is to create an environment where every child has the chance to live up to their God-given potential regardless of race, heritage, ethnicity, creed, what social status they belong to or what zip code they were born in,” said Mayor Benjamin. “This is an important step in the direction of encouraging true mutual responsibility and we're very excited.”

WHAT: The Mayor's Basketball Classic

WHEN: Friday, May 16th

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

WHERE: Greenview Park

6700 David Street

All media are encouraged to attend and should contact Michael Wukela at mcwukela@columbiasc.net or 803-413-5052.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 14, 2014

Contact: Tina Herbert at 803-545-3950

City of Columbia Office of Business Opportunities to Host Second Annual Small Business Week Conference

WHAT: The City Of Columbia's Office of Business Opportunities will host the annual Small Business Conference today from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. Dr. Louis B. Lynn, president of ENVIRO Ag Science, is this year's keynote speaker. The topics for this year's conference include: Ways to Secure a Contract with the City of Columbia, Free and Low Cost Technology Resources, Business Creation and Sustainability for Women-Owned Businesses and Benefits of Membership with the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce.

WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin, elected City officials, City staff members and business leaders.

WHERE: Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center
11101 Lincoln St.
Columbia, SC

WHEN: **Today**, Wednesday, May 14, 2014 at 9 a.m.

For more information about the Office of Business Opportunities, please visit www.columbiasc.net/obo.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 14, 2014

Contact: Michael Strange at 803-733-8299

**CANCELED: Eau Claire Development Corporation to Hold Ground Breaking Ceremony
for New Affordable Housing Development**

Due to the threat of inclement weather, the Eau Claire Development Corporation ground breaking and press conference that was scheduled for tomorrow, Thursday, May 15, 2014 has been cancelled and will be rescheduled for a later date.

For more information on the Eau Claire Development Corporation, please call 803-733-8438 or visit <http://www.columbiasc.net/ecdc>.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Thursday, May 15, 2014

Contact: Pamela Benjamin at 803-545-3008

City of Columbia Public Safety Job Fair

The City of Columbia is excited to announce a Public Safety Job Fair being held today, May 15, 2014 from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at the Columbia Police Department, 1 Justice Square. The job fair will be a joint effort between the Columbia Police Department, the Columbia Fire Department and Columbia-Richland 911 Communications.

The City of Columbia is seeking qualified, productive and motivated police officers, firefighters and 911 call takers to provide efficient and effective services to the citizens of Columbia.

For more details, visit www.columbiasc.net.



For Immediate Release

Friday, May 16, 2014

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

Mayor's Basketball Classic to help bring community together

Columbia, SC. – Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin will host the inaugural Mayor's Basketball Classic, a first of its kind tournament for our city featuring teams of teenagers and young adults from across our community competing against and playing with officers from the Columbia Police Department on Friday, May 16 at Greenview Park (6700 David Street) from 6:00-8:00pm. These commingled teams will compete and help foster a new bond of mutual respect and trust that is much needed throughout our community.

The brainchild of former gang member and founder of the Stop the Violence Movement in Columbia, Shuron Malone, the Mayor's Basketball Classic provides an unique opportunity for young people to build a rapport with the officers of the Columbia Police Department.

"This game is a big step for us to unite, promote togetherness and demote violence. Sometimes people look at the police as an adversary. This game will be step in the right direction to open the eyes that the police are people just like any of us," said Shuron Malone.

The effort is part of Mayor Benjamin's vision to create a better path forward for the young, African American males in Columbia. It is presented in conjunction with the 2014 Columbia Black Expo, which will host the Black Male Summit on Saturday, May 17th.

“Our job is to create an environment where every child has the chance to live up to their God-given potential regardless of race, heritage, ethnicity, creed, what social status they belong to or what zip code they were born in,” said Mayor Benjamin. “This is an important step in the direction of encouraging true mutual responsibility and we're very excited.”

WHAT: The Mayor's Basketball Classic

WHEN: Friday, May 16th

6-8 p.m.

WHERE: Greenview Park

6700 David Street

All media are encouraged to attend and should contact Michael Wukela at mcwukela@columbiasc.net or 803-413-5052.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, May 19, 2014

Contact: John Fellows, Planning and Development Services, 545-3215

City of Columbia to Announce Master Plans for Walk Bike Columbia

WHAT: The City of Columbia in partnership with Palmetto Health, Abacus Planning, CMCOG, the Comet, and USC will announce plans to move forward with the City's

Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan for the entire city.

WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin, City Officials, Bike Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Palmetto Health, Abacus Planning, Central Midlands Council of Governments,

The Comet, and University of South Carolina.

WHERE: City Hall (Front steps on Main Street)

1737 Main St.

WHEN: Tuesday, May 20, 2014 at 10 a.m.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, May 19, 2014

Contact: Kim Mitchell at 803-545-3100

Mayor Steve Benjamin and City of Columbia to Host Let's Move! "End of School Bash!"

WHAT: The Let's Move! "End of School Bash" will be held at the end of May. This free event will feature a community cookout, scavenger hunt, line dancing, face painting, exhibitors, prizes, games, music and more. There will also be a "Meet, Greet and Play" with former Gamecock football and NFL players.

WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin, First Lady DeAndrea Benjamin, Bethany and Jordan Grace, City staff, community members and youth.

WHERE: Drew Wellness Center Greenway
2101 Walker Solomon Way
Columbia, SC 29204

WHEN: Saturday, May 31, 2014 from 2-5 p.m.

For more information, please contact Parks and Recreation at 803-545-3100 or visit

www.columbiasc.net



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, May 19, 2014

Contact: Erika Moore @ 803-545-3043

Columbia City Council Agendas for May 20, 2014

On Tuesday, May 20, 2014, the Columbia City Council will conduct a Budget Workshop at 11 a.m., a Council Meeting at 6 p.m. and a Zoning Public Hearing at 7 p.m. Please review the attached agendas for more information.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19, 2014

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

“Our heroes deserve better”

Mayor Benjamin calls on VA Secretary to resolve hospital issues immediately

Columbia, SC. – Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin has sent a letter to United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki calling on the Secretary to take immediate action regarding recent allegations of improper care, systemic mismanagement and significant delays in patient care at Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care facilities across the nation including William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center where at least 6 patient deaths have been linked to delayed treatments and screenings.

“The kinds of delays and mistreatment we’ve heard about would be troubling for anyone,” said Mayor Benjamin. “For it to happen to men and women who placed themselves in harm’s way to protect our lives and our freedom is absolutely unacceptable.”

“Our heroes deserve better.”

The letter, signed by Mayor Benjamin along with Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton and Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto, called on Secretary Shinseki to “personally take the steps necessary to ensure that this type of neglect and abuse of our veterans never happens again.”

In addition, the letter demanded that the Department of Veterans Affairs to share the findings from a recent investigation conducted by the VA Office of Inspector General and that they also be made available to the families of those who have suffered as a result of the VA’s mismanagement.

This is not the first time Mayor Benjamin has expressed his concern with the way veterans are treated in Columbia and across the nation. In 2012 he established the Mayor’s Veterans Committee whose report outlined a series of issues facing the city’s veterans including significant backlogs and wait times for VA claims. In fact, according to the [Report of the](#)

[Mayor's Veterans Committee](#), veterans in Columbia are often forced to wait as long as three and a half years before a decision is made on appealed claims.

For more information, please contact Michael Wukela at mcwukela@columbiasc.net or 803-413-5052.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19, 2014

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

City Offices to Close in Observance of Memorial Day

City of Columbia offices will be closed on Monday, May 26, 2014 in observance of Memorial Day.

All garbage and recycle routes will remain on schedule.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, May 20, 2014

Contact: Brenda Oliver at 803-545-3093

City of Columbia Art Center Announces New Summer Classes

The City of Columbia Art Center is offering three new classes this summer on jewelry making, quilting and basket weaving.

The Steam Punk Jewelry Box Workshop will be held on Saturday, May 31, 2014 from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Art Center, located at 1928 Calhoun St. Steam punk is defined as an art form that mixes Victorian Era style with repurposed modern materials. The workshop is \$60 and all materials are provided. Registration ends on Friday, May 23, 2014.

Quilting Skills Development will cover new techniques, creative skills, accurate cutting and color placement. Participants will need to bring their own sewing machine. Classes will start on Thursday, June 5 and be held every Thursday until June 26, from 9 a.m. to noon at Mayes Park, located at 4100 Trenholm Rd. Registration costs \$45 and ends on Monday, June 2, 2014.

The Basket Weaving Workshop, a one-day workshop, will teach participants how to create a Williamsburg-style basket. The workshop will be held on Saturday, July 26, 2014 from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The workshop will be held at Edisto Discovery Park, located at 1914 Wiley Dr., and the cost of \$65 includes all supplies and tools to complete the project. The deadline to register is Saturday, July 12.

All registration can be done online at www.columbiasc.net, at the Art Center or by calling Brenda Oliver at 803-545-3093.

For more information, please contact Brenda Oliver, cultural arts specialist, at 803-545-3093 or bloiver@columbiasc.net.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2014

Contact: Lucinda Statler, Urban Design Planner, 545-4395

City of Columbia Announces the Launch of Walk Bike Columbia

May Proclaimed as Bike and Bicycle Safety Month in the City Of Columbia

The City of Columbia has partnered with the Central Midlands Council of Governments develop a Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and Bike Share Plan, called Walk Bike Columbia, with funding provided in part by the Federal Transit Administration, Palmetto Health, and Abacus Planning. The planning process was kicked off at a press conference on Tuesday, May 20, 2014 and will extend through April 2015. The project will recommend a network of complete streets for the City of Columbia, as well as biking and walking related programs and policies. The completion of this Plan will set the stage for the City of Columbia achieving a higher national designation as a [Bicycle Friendly Community](#) and becoming the first nationally designated [Walk Friendly Community](#) in South Carolina!

In recent years, the City of Columbia and partners have taken steps to improve its multi-modal network and advance the culture of bicycling and walking and transit. Examples include additions to the Three Rivers Greenway, the completion of Phase I of the Vista Greenway, installation of bicycle corrals and the first HAWK pedestrian signal in South Carolina, as well as successful programs like Bike and Walk to School Day, “handlebar happy hours,” and the creation of the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). In 2008, Columbia earned the national designation as a Bicycle Friendly Community and in 2012, the University of South Carolina became the first Bicycle Friendly University in the state and one of only a few dozen around the country.

Columbia, however, like many communities, can be challenging to navigate on foot and by bike. In some cases, even transit is difficult to access. Columbia’s streets need to be designed to move people, regardless of their choice of travel mode, and to remove barriers to pedestrian and bicyclist mobility. Creating active transportation and transit access to destinations in Columbia will improve the quality of life for residents, enhance the experience of visitors, and positively

impact the region's health and economic vitality.

With the launch of the www.walkbikecolumbia.org website citizens will be able to learn about the planning process, find out about public meetings and important project dates, suggest walking and bicycling improvements, and review draft materials from the Plan.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2014

Contact: Connie Lucius at (803) 545-4268

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 five (5) Applicants.

The City of Columbia is accepting applications for the Board of Zoning Appeals Form Based Codes. *Applicants being sought must meet the following criteria: an architect, a landscape or urban planner, an attorney, and an individual involved in real estate.*

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.

Columbia Housing Authority

Seeking one (1) Applicant.

Responsible for the oversight of the Housing Authority and its Executive Director. Term – 5 years.

Midlands Authority for Conventions Sports and Tourism

Seeking one (1) Applicant involved in the lodging industry.

The mission of the Midlands Authority for Conventions Sports and Tourism includes: directing and managing the activities and mission of the Columbia Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Columbia Regional Sports Council and the Columbia Regional Visitors Center; and overseeing the development and operation of the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center under a long-term management agreement for the benefit of the Governmental Entities: City of Columbia, Lexington County and Richland County. Term – 3 years.

Parks and Recreation Foundation

Seeking two (2) 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 June 20, 2014, 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

Tuesday, May 20, 2014

Contact: Robert Sweatt, City of Columbia Streets Division, (803) 917-5414

HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATORS TO COMPETE IN TESTS OF SKILL AND CONTROL

Vying for Coveted Spot at July State Competition

WHAT: Midlands backhoe operators will compete in a regional backhoe rodeo hosted by the City of Columbia Public Works Department on Wednesday, May 21. Competitors represent winners of local backhoe rodeos and are among the best of the best.

This annual event is held as part of National Public Works Week, which recognizes individuals and organizations that plan, build, maintain and improve our communities. Public works professionals include water, sewer, public transportation and refuse removal, as well as those who maintain public buildings and grounds.

WHEN: Wednesday, May 21 beginning at 10 a.m.

WHERE: City of Columbia Public Works Department (back parking lot), 2910 Colonial Drive. The entrance to Public Works is actually located at the dead end of Slighs Street off of Harden Street. Landmarks include the SCE&G Office on Harden Street and the Clyburn Golf Center on Slighs Street. *Please note that neither Google Maps nor GPS will map to this location; directions follow.*

WHY: Operators will compete for a coveted spot in the State Championship Backhoe Rodeo this summer in Greenville.

VISUALS: Highly competitive operators maneuvering materials through tight, small spaces under time limitations on an eight foot/nine ton piece of equipment. *Especially great visuals and personalities for video.*

CONTACT: Robert Sweatt, City of Columbia Streets Division, (803) 917-5414



For Immediate Release

May 20, 2014

Contact: Victoria Kramer at (803) 240-9207

Clean Water 2020 Update: City Making Strides in System-wide Sewer Overhaul

Columbia, SC – On July 9, 2013, the City launched the Clean Water 2020 program – an overarching revamping and revitalization of its wastewater collection and treatment system. This program builds on major upgrades and rehabilitation work that began as early as 2005 as part of the City's dedicated effort to improve its entire sewer system. So what has the City been up to since then?

The City has already evaluated a significant portion of its sewer lines and manholes. Since 2009, the City has assessed approximately 15% of its 1,100 mile system. "This puts us well on our way to meeting our goal of assessing the entire system in 10 to 15 years," says Bill Davis, City of Columbia Wastewater Engineer. According to Davis, "This work is critical for the rest of the Clean Water 2020 program because it allows us to prioritize exactly where work needs to be done. Some older areas will require major rehabilitation while other, newer areas are still in good condition."

The City has also completed work on four of its five major pump stations, with the fifth due for completion in Summer, 2014. Its most recently completed pump station, the West Columbia Pump Station, is also its largest. Designed to withstand 100-year floods, it has a back-up generator large enough to run a small wastewater treatment plant. This generator will start up within seconds of a power failure and, since it runs on natural gas, can run indefinitely even under flooded conditions.

But the City's efforts don't just stop when construction ends. "How staff manages and operates the system on a daily basis is critical to protecting our investment, which is why training is so important," says Davis. The City is modernizing its operation and maintenance practices—from formalizing design and construction standards for contractors to developing standard operating and maintenance manuals for staff. And staff is benefitting, too, with training to do their jobs more efficiently and effectively. In 2013, the City began an Apprenticeship Program where

wastewater collection system and wastewater plant operators can earn certifications and licenses in their fields of expertise.

The City is also working with citizens to protect our investment. Through its Commercial Fats, Oils and Grease Program, staff is working with local food service establishments like restaurants and hotels to keep sewer-clogging grease out of the sewer system. The City has also launched the "Trash the Grease" and "Trash the Wipes" public service announcements to educate residents on how everyone can help protect our sewer system.

So what effect is all this work having on sanitary sewer overflows? The City began tracking sanitary sewer overflows on a fiscal year basis (July 1-June 30) in 2008. In 2008/2009, the City experienced 455 overflows. By 2012/2013, the number of overflows had been reduced by over 70%. According to Davis, though, "The extreme wet weather this year has been a challenge." Over two-thirds of the overflows seen in 2013/2014 so far can be attributed to wet-weather conditions. However, on the upside, grease-related overflows continue to show a decline, meaning the City's continued efforts in implementing the Commercial Fats, Oils & Grease Program are paying off.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

Contact: Jeff Rainwater at 803-545-3383

City of Columbia Community Development to Host Third Annual OMG of Homeownership Workshop

The City of Columbia Community Development Department will host its third annual OMG of Homeownership Workshop on Saturday, June 21, 2014 at Midlands Technical College, Northeast Campus, located at 151 Powell Rd.

The free workshop is designed for first time buyers, long term owners and DIYers. There will be classes on credit, home buying, gardening, maintenance and more. Online registration will become available in the coming weeks.

This year's classes include:

- Prune It, Don't Ruin It
- Crime Prevention: Protecting Your Home in Layers
- Your Money & Credit: Make the Most of Both
- Recycling: The Basics and Beyond
- Intro to Square Foot Gardening
- And many more!

All those interested in the benefits of homeownership and those interested in home improvements should attend OMG. Participants can take up to two classes.

Online registration is at <http://www.columbia.sc.gov/OMG2014>. The deadline to register is Wednesday, June 18, 2014 at 5 p.m.

For more information, please call Community Development at 803-545-3373 or visit www.columbiasc.net.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

Contact: Jada Hubbard at 545-3200

Drew Wellness Center Pool and Locker Room Access Closed Due to Maintenance

The Drew Wellness Center is currently experiencing a leak with the cooling system that is affecting the pool and locker room areas. As repairs are being completed, the pool and locker rooms will be closed for the remainder of today.

The pool and locker rooms will re-open at 5:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 22, 2014.

Swim lessons at 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. and the 7 p.m. Water Aerobics class have been canceled.

For more information, please contact the Drew Wellness Center at 803-545-3200.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 22, 2014

Contact: Office of Business Opportunities at 803-545-3950

The Commercial Revolving Loan Fund Committee will meet on Wednesday, May 28, 2014 at 10 a.m. Please review the attached agenda.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 22, 2014

Contact: Marli Drum at 803-776-7387

Columbia Animal Shelter to host Military Appreciation Day Adoptions in honor of Memorial Day

The Columbia Animal Shelter will host Military Appreciation Day adoptions in honor of Memorial Day on Saturday, May 24 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. There will be free pet adoptions for all cats and dogs for active or retired military. A valid photo ID, Military ID, DD-214 or NGB Form 22 must be presented at the time of the adoption. Free adoptions do not include licensing and there is a limit of one adoption per household.

For more information, please contact the Columbia Animal Shelter at 803-776-PETS(7387).



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 22, 2014

Contact: Gerry Lynn Hall at 803-545-3381

Last Call for North Main Corridor Façade Improvement Program Applications

Deadline Monday, June 30

The City of Columbia Office of Business Opportunities North Main Corridor Façade Improvement Program is coming to a close.

The last date to submit North Main Corridor Façade Improvement Program applications is Monday, June 30, 2014 by 5 p.m. All applications must be complete. Incomplete applications are deemed ineligible and will be returned to the candidate.

Applications and guidelines can be found on the Office of Business Opportunities website at www.columbiasc.net/obo.

Through the Façade Improvement Program, 25 projects along Main and North Main Streets, between Elmwood Avenue and I-20, have been awarded loans.

Over \$197,000 in public funds and \$63,000 in private funds have been invested in the target area. Many projects are in their final stage of construction and several candidates are completing the last applications that will be accepted.

For more information, please contact the Office of Business Opportunities at 803-545-3950 or visit www.columbiasc.net/obo.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2014

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

Mayor Benjamin to participate in Project R.E.A.D “Story Time Series”

Columbia, SC. – Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin will be reading to students engaged in the Richland County Recreation Commission’s Project R.E.A.D. (Realize, Explore, and Discover) initiative as part of that program’s “Story Time Series” tomorrow at Caughman Road Park (2800 Trotter Rd., Hopkins, SC) beginning at 3:00 PM.

Project R.E.A.D, which kicked off in October, is an incentive program designed to help motivate children to read by rewarding their accomplishments with praise, recognition and surprises. As part of the program, the “Story Time Series” invites prominent citizens and community leaders to read one of their favorite childhood books to the students and talk about the impact reading has and continues to have on their lives.

“As Mayor of Columbia and as a parent I can tell you that encouraging a lifelong love of reading in our children is one of the most transformative things we can do for them and for our community,” says Mayor Benjamin. “That is exactly what Project R.E.A.D. is all about and I’m proud to have this opportunity to help.”

WHAT: Project R.E.A.D. “Story Time Series”

featuring Mayor Steve Benjamin

WHEN: 3:00 PM Tomorrow, May 23, 2014

WHERE: Caughman Road Park

2800 Trotter Rd. Hopkins, SC

All media are encouraged to attend. To learn more about the Richland County Recreation Commission, please visit www.richlandcountyrecreation.com. For additional event information, contact Michael Wukela at mcwukela@columbiasc.net or 803-413-5052.



For Immediate Release

May 23, 2014

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

SCE&G To Perform Tree Trimming Activities As Scheduled for 2014

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

Greg Park Neighborhood Association

Lake Katherine

POA of Lake Katherine

Heyward Park Neighborhood

Crosshill Neighborhood

Kilbourne Park 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/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.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 23, 2014

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

Please review the attached committee agenda for Tuesday, May 27, 2014 at 11 a.m.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 23, 2014

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

Mayor Benjamin to participate in Project R.E.A.D “Story Time Series”

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“As Mayor of Columbia and as a parent I can tell you that encouraging a lifelong love of reading in our children is one of the most transformative things we can do for them and for our community,” says Mayor Benjamin. “That is exactly what Project R.E.A.D. is all about and I’m proud to have this opportunity to help.”

WHAT: Project R.E.A.D. “Story Time Series”

featuring Mayor Steve Benjamin

WHEN: 3:00 PM Tomorrow, May 23, 2014

WHERE: Caughman Road Park

2800 Trotter Rd. Hopkins, SC

All media are encouraged to attend. To learn more about the Richland County Recreation Commission, please visit www.richlandcountyrecreation.com. For additional event information, contact Michael Wukela at mcwukela@columbiasc.net or 803-413-5052.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 23, 2014

Contact: Randy Davis at 803-545-3100

City of Columbia Will Officially Open City Pool for the Summer Memorial Day Weekend

City of Columbia Parks & Recreation will open Maxcy Gregg swimming pool this weekend Saturday, May 24 at 10 a.m. The pool will remain open for the rest of the summer.

Additionally, swimming lessons will be offered at Maxcy Gregg pool in both morning and evening sessions beginning in June.

WHAT: Pool will open for summer Memorial Day Weekend

WHEN: Will Open Saturday, May 24th, 2014

Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Sunday, 2 p.m.-6 p.m.

Monday – Friday, 1:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

WHERE: Maxcy Gregg Swimming Pool

1651 Park Cir, Columbia, SC 29201

COST: Ages 12 and under \$3 per visit

Ages 13 and over \$4 per visit

Seasonal Pass:

12 and under \$80

13 and over \$120

For additional event information, contact Randy Davis at radavis@columbiasc.net or 803-545-3100.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 28, 2014

Contact: Jeff Caton at 803.545.3100

**City of Columbia Receives Top Honors for
Creative Journey Program**

Columbia, SC- The City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department’s Creative Journey program was awarded Best Neighborhood Program of 2014 at the Neighborhoods, USA 39th annual conference in Eugene, Oregon.

“Our neighborhoods and the programs offered to our citizens are vital to the quality of life in our great city,” City Manager Teresa Wilson stated. “This award reflects the value and high standards of the initiatives that are developed and implemented by our staff. The Best Neighborhood Program award also has special meaning because the ‘Creative Journey’ program benefits the veterans in our community.”

Creative Journey is an all-volunteer art resource that provides monthly art programs to veterans, military members and military family members. It is a collaborative effort between the City of Columbia’s Parks and Recreation Department, the U.S. Army, local artists, nonprofit organizations and businesses.

"We are very excited to be recognized by NUSA for the ‘Creative Journey’ program and for the impact it has had on the many wounded warriors at Fort Jackson,” said Jeff Caton, director of parks and recreation. “This program would not have been possible without the compassion for our military by people like Brenda Oliver, Suzy Shealy and all of the volunteers and businesses that came together to make a difference in the lives of our wounded heroes and their families.”

Henderson, Nevada's Mediation Program tied for top honors as the Best Neighborhood Program of 2014. This is the first time in the history of NUSA's Best Neighborhood Program Award that there has been a tie for first place.

For more information about the Creative Journey program, contact Brenda Oliver 803.545.3093



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 30, 2014

Contact: Kim Mitchell at 803-545-3100

Mayor Steve Benjamin and City of Columbia to Host Let's Move! "End of School Bash!"

WHAT: The Let's Move! "End of School Bash" will be held at the end of May. This free event will feature a community cookout, scavenger hunt, line dancing, face painting, exhibitors, prizes, games, music and more. There will also be a "Meet, Greet and Play" with former Gamecock football and NFL players.

WHO: Mayor Steve Benjamin, First Lady DeAndrea Benjamin, Bethany and Jordan Grace, City staff, community members and youth.

WHERE: Drew Wellness Center Greenway
2101 Walker Solomon Way
Columbia, SC 29204

WHEN: Saturday, May 31, 2014 from 2-5 p.m.
For more information, please contact Parks and Recreation at 803-545-3100 or visit www.columbiasc.net.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 30, 2014

Contact: John Fellows, Planning and Development Services, 545-3215

City of Columbia to Hold Plan Columbia Workshops

WHAT: If you care about connecting neighborhoods, providing places for jobs, ensuring housing choice, preserving special places and creating a Columbia future generations will love you should participate in the Plan Columbia Workshop. For the first time in almost 50 years, the City of Columbia will have the unprecedented opportunity to directly connect the City's land use plan with its zoning and development regulations. It is essential to have community input about how to accommodate future growth and development to inform the plan. PLAN TOGETHER is a process to shape policies that will affect how and where the City and County will grow for years to come. Two public workshops and a drop-in will be held to help the City of Columbia create a place future generations will love.

WHO: Anyone who lives, works, owns a business, plays or visits Columbia and cares about its future.

WHERE: Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center (Ballroom A)
1101 Lincoln Street

WHEN: Tuesday June, 24, 2014

6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Workshop Part 1: Learn about the project and share insights on shaping the future of growth and development in the City of Columbia.

Wednesday June, 25, 2014

9 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Drop-in: Talk one-on-one with the planning team and see work in progress

Thursday, June 26, 2014

6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Workshop Part 2: Review and provide feedback on the proposed plan framework that will shape the future character of our community.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, May 30, 2014

Contact: Community Development at 803-545-3373

The Community Development Loan Committee will meet on Tuesday, June 3, 2014 at 9 a.m. at 1225 Lady St. Please review the attached agenda.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, May 30, 2014

Contact: Randy Davis at 803-545-3100

City of Columbia Awarded Playful City USA Designation

The City of Columbia was honored as a 2014 Playful City USA designation for the first time by KaBOOM!, in partnership with the Humana Foundation.

“The City of Columbia is proud to be designated as a Playful City. We are committed to providing services and programs in our parks that will benefit our citizens, especially our youth. This is great news and we encourage everyone to get out and enjoy our wonderful parks this summer,” City Manager Teresa Wilson said.

The City of Columbia is among 212 cities and towns across the United States named as 2014 Playful City USA honorees. These communities are leaders in playability – the extent to which a city makes it easy for kids to get balanced and active play – and are making play part of the solution that can move the needle on countless urban challenges.

The City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains 60 city parks and green spaces, 600 acres of city-maintained park land, 55 tennis courts and 16 city pools, spray pads and ponds. All city parks are open year-round from dawn to dusk with no entrance fees.

The KaBOOM! Playful City USA program, sponsored by the Humana Foundation, honors cities, towns and communities across America that are taking bold steps to ensure that all children, especially the 16 million American kids living in poverty, have easy access to balanced and active play in their communities.

For more information, please contact the Parks and Recreation Department at 803-545-3100 or visit www.columbiasc.net.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 30, 2014

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

Mayor Benjamin statement on VA Secretary's resignation

Columbia, SC. – Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin released the following statement today in response to United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki's resignation:

"I have the utmost respect and admiration for former Secretary Shinseki and I applaud his decision to stand up and take responsibility for the recent failures at William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center and VA Health Care facilities across the nation.

"His resignation, while unfortunate, was an act of honor in keeping with his long and distinguished service and I wish him the absolute best in his future endeavors.

"That being said, Secretary Shinseki's resignation does not solve the problem at hand and I urge all members of South Carolina's Congressional Delegation to work hand in hand with President Obama and acting VA Secretary Gibson as they move swiftly and deliberately to take whatever steps necessary to ensure that this type of neglect and abuse of our veterans never happens again."

Today's statement follows a letter earlier this month from Mayor Benjamin, along with Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton and Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto, calling on Secretary Shinseki to take immediate action regarding recent allegations of improper care, systemic mismanagement and significant delays in patient care at Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care facilities across the nation including William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center where at least 6 patient deaths have been linked to delayed treatments and screenings.

For more information, please contact Michael Wukela at mcwukela@columbiasc.net or 803-413-5052.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, May 30, 2014

Contact: Kim Mitchell at 803-545-3117

Summer Concert Series Heats Up Finlay Park Starting in June

Beginning Saturday, June 7, 2014, the City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department will be bringing the sounds of summer to Finlay Park, located at 930 Laurel St.

The Summer Concert Series will be held every Saturday from 7 to 10 p.m. on the following dates:

- June 7- Sweetwater Junction
- June 14- Orquesta Mayor
- June 21- Second Nature
- June 28- The Reggie Sullivan Band
- July 5- The Episodes
- July 12- Terence Young and Soul Centric
- July 19- Daniel D and Urban Instrumentalists
- July 26- Mystic Vibrations
- August 2- Daniel Lewis
- August 9- Coconut Groove Band
- August 16- Horizons

Starting on Saturday, June 14, Karaoke Idol will be at 6 p.m. There will be weekly winners for a cash prize and the finals will be held on Saturday, August 16.

Attendees are welcome to bring blankets, lawn chairs and coolers. All concerts are free and open to the public.

For more information, please contact Parks and Recreation at 803-545-3100 or visit www.columbiasc.net.