



# WACCAMAW REVIEW

A publication for residents of Georgetown, Horry and Williamsburg counties

## Waccamaw Regional COG receives national award

**W**accamaw Regional Council of Governments' Area Agency on Aging recently won a national award for its annual regional Sports Classic.

The Sports Classic is an athletic competition in which seniors from Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg counties compete in track and field, pickle ball and other sporting events. The competition is a result of a community partnership promoting physical fitness among the tri-county region's senior population. The Sports Classic program strengthens the area's programming for older adults and provides a venue where all of the region's seniors can interact with each other.



*From left are Rodney Giles, Waccamaw Regional board member; Jeff Kiely, NADO president; and Randal Wallace, chairman of Waccamaw Regional's Board of Directors.*

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[www.wrcog.org](http://www.wrcog.org)

## New plan will make county better prepared for disasters

Williamsburg County and its municipalities are better prepared for disasters with the recent approval of its local Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP).

In 2015, Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments assisted Williamsburg County in identifying and obtaining a \$40,000 Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) offered by FEMA to help fund the plan's update. In 2016, Waccamaw Regional worked with Williamsburg County to draft and implement the HMP report.

In addition to unincorporated areas of Williamsburg County, the towns of Greeleyville, Hemingway, Kingstree,

Lane and Stuckey also adopted the updated HMP.

The HMP is a long-term strategy to reduce a community's vulnerability to natural disasters. It identifies potential hazards in Williamsburg County and creates a framework to help community officials make decisions that may ultimately protect lives and property.

An approved HMP also ensures communities are eligible to receive certain types of disaster assistance provided by FEMA, including funding for mitigation projects.

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## Waccamaw Regional welcomes two new board members

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments is proud to welcome Paul McCracken and Conway Mayor Barbara Blain-Bellamy to its Board of Directors.

McCracken, a lifelong resident of Aynor, is a member of Aynor Town Council. He attended Aynor High School and Horry-Georgetown Technical College before beginning his career at Horry County Emergency Management Service. He took an interest in improving Aynor's roads and spent several months working to obtain \$1.1 million for street funding. He also served four years on an advisory committee for Grand Strand Water and Sewer.

His interest in improving his town and community spurred him to run for Town Council, where he continues to push for infrastructure improvements, such as new sidewalks. Now retired from Horry County, he is a member of the Aynor Lions Club. He and his wife Kim have a daughter, Sara, who is a senior at Aynor High School.

Barbara Jo Blain-Bellamy is an attorney and Conway native who has been involved in public service for her entire adult life. She was sworn in as Mayor of Conway in

2016, and previously served on the City Council from 1993-98 and 2012-16. She was Mayor Pro Tem in 1996.

In addition to her elected service, she served four years as Conway's assistant city administrator.

Blain-Bellamy holds master's and bachelor's degrees from the University of South Carolina in education and sociology. In addition, she received her Juris Doctorate from the University of South Carolina School of Law and is a member of the S. C. Bar. She has served as an assistant public defender with Horry County, a staff attorney with the S.C. Department of Social Services, and was Assistant Solicitor for the 15th Judicial Circuit. She was also staff attorney for COAST Regional Transportation Authority and then in private practice.

Blain-Bellamy is married to Bobby Bellamy and has one adult son, Craigon Lennon. She is a member of Friendship Baptist Church where she is a Youth Usher leader.



**Blain-Bellamy**

## 2017 directory showcases senior artists

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments' Area Agency on Aging will publish a new Senior Resource Directory in January. Published annually, the Senior Resource Directory provides seniors a categorized list of resources to locate services they need to help them remain healthy, happy and age in place.

The COG is responsible for the design and upkeep of the directory and decided this year's publication would feature artwork from the regional seniors. The COG worked with each county's Council on Aging to solicit submissions from seniors who participate in senior programming

throughout the region's three counties. Artwork from senior centers poured in and was judged by students from a local high school, who picked a winner from each county.

Once the directory is published, to make the directory more accessible, it will also be uploaded to Waccamaw Regional's website. This will allow the COG to keep the information current, as Waccamaw staff will work diligently to add new programs and services and ensure that all the contacts are up to date on a quarterly basis. Pictured is the winning artwork that will be featured in the new directory.



*Clockwise from top is featured art by senior center members: Lorene Wright, Horry County; Arthur Geathers, Georgetown County; and Arnegio Lyerly, Williamsburg County.*



## Sampit Elementary Panther Club makes donation to seniors

The Panther Club, a leadership program developed by Sampit Elementary School, recently took on a program to make the holidays brighter for Georgetown County senior citizens. The club did some research and learned that the Georgetown Senior Center was in need of a Christmas tree. The students then took it upon themselves to purchase and donate a tree to the center. The Club also put together a large Christmas card with signatures and holiday greetings inside.

The seniors at the center were excited and grateful to have a real Christmas tree donated for their center. The seniors at the center were overjoyed by the donation and the card that came with it, as well as the visit from some of the students.



# SC Association of Regional Councils Celebrates 50 years

2016 was a big year for the South Carolina Association of Regional Councils, marking the beginning of the 50th anniversary of the state enabling legislation which created the Councils of Governments in South Carolina.

The 2016 S.C. Regional Councils of Governments (SCARC) Conference was held in Myrtle Beach Nov. 20-22. The conference looked back over the past 50 years to mark the progress and impact achieved by Regional Councils of Government from across our great state.



*Pictured is Waccamaw Regional's conference display.*

Each COG in the state set up a commemorative table at the conference. These displays highlighted each COG's programs and services provided for residents, local businesses and local governments in its region. More than 300 individuals representing all 10 COGs in the state attended. This combination of elected officials, business leaders and COG staff made for a unique event.

Dr. Eddie Lee, the outgoing SCARC President, introduced and welcomed the new president of SCARC, Rusty Smith, from the Pee Dee Council of Governments.

## National Award

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The award was given by the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), a best practices across the country in regional development that support prosperous communities, stronger local economies, and improved quality of life. Washington, D.C.-based association that promotes programs and policies that strengthen local governments, communities, and economies through regional cooperation, program delivery, and comprehensive strategies.

The association's Innovation Awards program recognizes regional development organizations and their partners for improving the economic and community competitiveness of our nation's regions and local communities.

Award-winning projects were honored during NADO's 2016 Annual Training Conference, held in San Antonio, Texas. The 2016 class of award recipients consists of 96 projects spanning 28 states.

These projects are presented in an interactive "Story Map" developed by NADO and Esri and include project summaries, funding information, and partners.

The Story Map is available online at: <https://www.nado.org/innovation-awards/>.

"Since 1986 through its Innovation Awards program, NADO has recognized the transformative work regional development organizations perform every day. Award-winning projects showcase quality of life for residents," said 2015-2016 NADO Board President Jeffrey Kiely, Executive Director of the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, located in Gallup, New Mexico.

In 2017 the Waccamaw Sports Classic Committee will attempt to expand the event.

"Many new events will be added, that you won't want to miss out on," said Sarah Smith, Waccamaw Regional's executive director.

Anyone interested in registering, becoming a sponsor, volunteering, or who simply has questions, should contact Waccamaw Regional's Sports Classic Committee at [info@waccamawsportsclassic.com](mailto:info@waccamawsportsclassic.com).

More information can be found at [waccamawsportsclassic.org](http://waccamawsportsclassic.org). Like Waccamaw Regional COG on Facebook to receive updates on event details. You may also find information at [www.wrcog.org](http://www.wrcog.org).

## Disaster Planning

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The HMP serves as a tool for implementing mitigation projects throughout Williamsburg County. With projects such as enhanced emergency alert notifications, utility upgrades and updated flood plain ordinances, Williamsburg County and its municipalities are taking proactive steps to lessen the impact of future disasters and the costly expenses associated with them.

Ultimately, the HMP's approval and the adoptions by Williamsburg County and its municipalities was due to an effective collaborative relationship between Waccamaw Regional, Williamsburg County Emergency Management Division, the Williamsburg Hazard Mitigation Committee and other community stakeholders.

Waccamaw Regional has historically demonstrated its ability to provide technical assistance to jurisdictions that have planning needs.

Waccamaw Regional's planning department is available to work with any member jurisdiction on HMPs, grant writing and other local planning needs.

Anyone with questions about the plan or services offered by Waccamaw Regional, please feel free to contact Tom Britton at (843) 436-1231.

More information, including a staff directory, is also available online at [www.wrcog.org](http://www.wrcog.org).

## WORKFORCE SUCCESS STORY: Joshua Lee of Carolina Cool

**Occupation:** Electrician

**Employer:** Carolina Cool

**Industry:** HVAC/Electrical/Plumbing

**Location:** 1294 Surfside Industrial Park,  
Surfside Beach SC 29575

**Personal Quote:** "I thank God every day for the opportunities and the second chance I have been given."

I was sentenced to prison and began my time on February 7, 2008. I was able to transfer to Georgetown County Detention Center four years later on August 16, 2012. At that time I signed up for the Georgetown County Sheriff's Re-entry Program. There I received hands-on training in HVAC and electrical throughout the day, under the direction of Georgetown County Facility Services. In the afternoon, the Re-Entry program had me attend classes they provided to study for my EPA 608 and 609. After I finished my classes, I signed up for the SC Apprenticeship Program in Electrical. I worked daily to achieve the education and certifications I needed to secure a position in the electrical field once I was released. I completed my 8,000 hours for my Journeyman Certification in Electrical and graduated from the Re-Entry program on July 1, 2016.

I must add, when I started the Re-Entry Program, I came from prison with somewhat of an attitude. Ms. [Debbie] Barr, who coordinates the program, saw my potential and would not give up on me. Every day she sternly reinforced my talents and taught me to see my self-worth.

Through connections forged by Waccamaw Regional, Ms. Barr invited Verlon Wulf, owner of Carolina Cool and Chairman of the Waccamaw Workforce Investment Board, to the classroom one afternoon so he could learn about the program. This happened to be in June of 2016, just a month prior to my release. At that time, Ms. Barr and I had gone on three other job interviews, however, the night I met Mr. Wulf at the Re-Entry school, I knew he was the employer I wanted to work for. I gave Mr. Wulf my resume and set up an interview the following day.



In the meantime, I met with Sherell Robinson, Career Coach from Waccamaw Regional at the SC Works Center, who assisted me with registering for On the Job Training (OJT) through the WIOA program. When I secured the position with Carolina Cool, Rusty Gaskins, Waccamaw's Business Service Rep., took me to Home Depot to help me purchase the tools I needed for my new job as an electrician. Kyle Rahner, General Manager of Carolina Cool, also helped guide me along in the process.

I began my OJT with Carolina Cool following my release in July 2016 and am now a full-time permanent employee as a Field Electrician.

I can't thank everyone that supported me enough: Sheriff Lane Cribb, Debbie Barr, Verlon Wulf, Donny Cummings (Georgetown Facility Services), the SC Apprenticeship Program and all the staff at Waccamaw's SC Works Center in Georgetown, Ayla Hemeon (WIOA), Rusty Gaskins (WIOA), Sherell Robinson (WIOA).

With this support, I arrived at the Re-Entry Program a kid and left a well-educated man, ready to enter the workforce and be successful.

*\*Mr. Lee's success story was selected to be in the Department of Labor's Federal Apprenticeship Showcase.*



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Waccamaw Regional  
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