

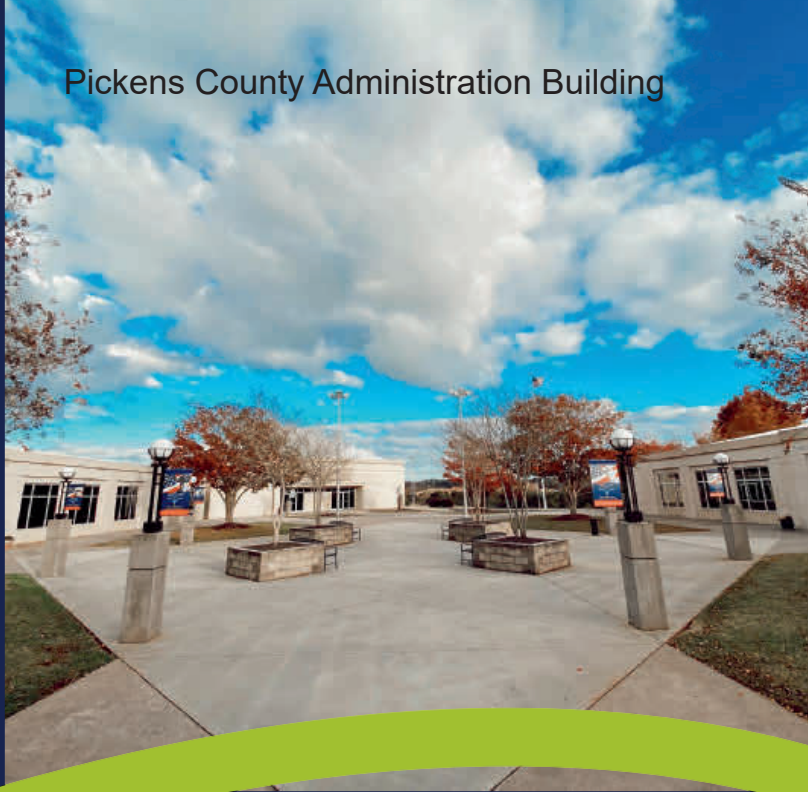
PRESIDENT'S **REPORT** 2024





Pickens Mural

Pickens County Administration Building



Lake Keowee



On the cover: Doodle Trail

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Roy B. Costner III

SCAC President
Pickens County Council Vice Chairman

Dear County Officials,

Throughout the past year, I've had the opportunity to travel almost 3,000 miles crisscrossing our beautiful state on multiple occasions to meet with many of you. Thank you for opening your council chambers and county office doors to talk about your challenges and opportunities.

The power of our Association is how it brings us together. SCAC not only serves as a collective voice for counties at the state level, but it also provides outstanding educational resources and plentiful opportunities for collaboration to you, our members in all 46 counties.

This has been a productive year, and now it is my honor to share the 2024 President's Report showcasing our Association's accomplishments, programs and services.

The SCAC team, along with county officials, continued to advocate on behalf of county government at the General Assembly and shape statewide legislation to benefit all South Carolina counties.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thank you for your dedication to working with your local delegation members throughout the year to voice your support of SCAC policy positions.

A highlight of the 2024 legislative session includes full funding to the Local Government Fund and Rural Stabilization Fund in the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget. The Local Government Fund will increase by more than \$13 million, and \$12 million will be returned to rural counties in the Rural County Stabilization Fund.

Thank you to the more than 150 county officials who attended our Counties Connect: A Legislative Action Day in February at the State House. In addition, more than 160 county officials took part in our Institute of Government sessions during the Fall Advocacy Meeting and the winter Counties Connect event. These meetings offered a chance to learn about the latest trends affecting local government and provided an opportunity to connect with colleagues across the state to share common challenges and best practices.

In this report, you will read more about the SC Counties Insurance Trusts including proactive risk management and safety training and support for counties. We also highlight our debt collection programs, which help county entities recover unpaid liabilities that would likely otherwise go uncollected.

Your involvement is what makes SCAC exceptional. Thank you for giving your time, talents and ideas to both your own communities and our Association.

My favorite quote, which I shared at the beginning of this year, is "Do all you can, with what you have, in the time you have, in the place you are," by Nkosi Johnson.

It has truly been a privilege to serve alongside you during this time and in this place. We can all be proud of our accomplishments for our counties.

2023-2024 Officers



President

Roy B. Costner III
Pickens County
Council Vice Chairman

First Vice President



William E. Robinson
Allendale County
Council Vice Chairman

Second Vice President



Mary D. Anderson
Chesterfield County
Council Vice Chairwoman

Third Vice President



C. David Chinnis
Dorchester County
Council Vice Chairman

Secretary



Charles T. Edens
Sumter County
Council Member

Treasurer



Julie J. Armstrong
Charleston County
Clerk of Court

Immediate Past President



Debra B. Summers
Lexington County
Council Member

Board of Directors

Terms Expire 2027

Cam Crawford
Horry County
Council Member

Tim Harper
Dillon County
Administrator

Brown Patterson
Laurens County
Council Chairman

Dwight L. Stewart Jr.
Clarendon County
Council Chairman

Phillip M. Taylor Sr.
Colleton County
Council Vice Chairman

Terms Expire 2026

Daniel Alexander
Barnwell County
Council Member

Barbara B. Clark
Jasper County
Council Vice Chairwoman

Charles T. Jennings
McCormick County
Council Chairman

Herman G. "Butch" Kirven
Greenville County
Council Member

Sammie Tucker Jr.
Kershaw County
Council Member

Terms Expire 2025

W. Brian Carnes
Lancaster County
Council Vice Chairman

Larry Haynes
Bamberg County
County Council Member

Jason P. Phillips
Anderson County
Treasurer

Cecil M. Thornton Jr.
Calhoun County
Council Member

Terms Expire 2024

John Q. Atkinson Jr.
Marion County
Council Chairman

Alphonso Bradley
Florence County
Council Member

Joseph F. Passiment
Beaufort County
Council Chairman

Johnnie Wright Sr.
Orangeburg County
Council Chairman

SC Counties Insurance Trust Chairman

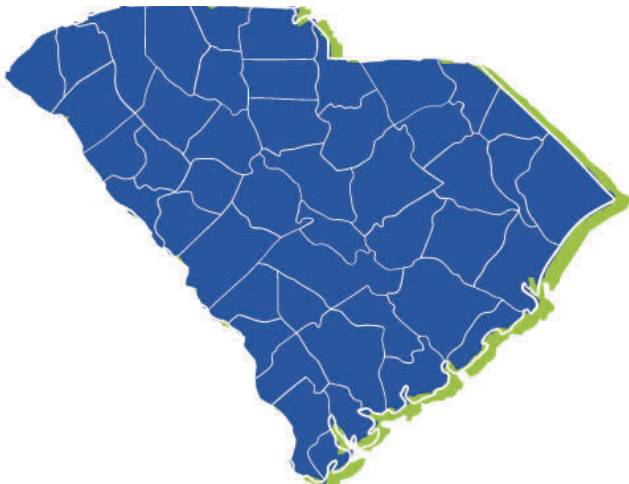
Joseph R. Branham
Chester County
Council Chairman

NACo Board Representative

Waymon Mumford
Florence County
Council Member



General Membership



100%
of South Carolina counties
are members of SCAC



535
county officials registered for
at least one SCAC event in
2023-2024

ADVOCATE FOR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

2024 Legislative Session Included:



969
bills tracked



20+
subcommittee
hearings where
SCAC staff
testified



152
county officials
attended
Counties Connect:
A Legislative
Action Day



1700+
people received
the weekly Friday
Report legislative
update



49%
average open rate
for the Friday
Report in 2024

Average industry
open rate for
emails is 35%

The Association has a rich history of working with county and state leaders to safeguard Home Rule. By partnering with county officials who work with local delegation members throughout the year, SCAC successfully amplifies the voices of county government at the state and federal levels.

Thanks to our Legislative Committee, Policy Steering Committee members and all county officials who offered input, recommendations and ideas for SCAC's 2024 Policy Positions. SCAC's legislative program success is due to relentless efforts of the Governmental Affairs team and hundreds of county officials engaging throughout policy development process, staying informed and making timely contact with General Assembly members.

2024 Legislative Session Wrap-Up

Highlights of the 2024 session* include the following laws and a regulation that address SCAC policy positions.



State Budget — H. 5100

SCAC continues to work with legislative leaders to ensure full funding of the Local Government Fund (LGF) and Rural Stabilization Fund. In FY 2024-2025, the LGF will once again increase by over \$13 million and \$12 million will be returned to rural counties in the Rural Stabilization Fund.



Coroner Qualifications and Law Enforcement/Judicial Privacy Act — H. 3865 and S. 841

As introduced, H. 3865 would have extended the qualifications for a coroner to include a licensed paramedic who has at least three years of experience. The Senate amended H. 3865 to add the provisions of S. 841, to change the effective date of Act 56 of 2023, the “Law Enforcement and Personal Privacy Protection Act”, and the “Judicial Personal Privacy Protection Act” from July 1, 2024, to July 1, 2025.

The conference committee struck the coroner qualification language originally in H. 3865 but kept the provisions changing the effective dates of the “Law Enforcement Personal Privacy Protection Act” and the “Judicial Personal Privacy Protection Act” to July 1, 2025. This will allow SCAC to work with stakeholders during the off session to draft a workable bill to carry out the intent of Act 56 of 2023 and not place an undue burden on clerks of courts and registers of deeds.

(Continued on next page)



Income Tax Deductions for Firefighters/Law Enforcement — S. 969

This bill increases the individual income tax subsistence allowance deduction for law enforcement officers and full-time firefighters and EMS personnel from \$8 to \$16 per day beginning in tax year 2024. The bill also increases the maximum deduction for volunteer firefighters, rescue squad members, hazardous materials response team members, reserve police officers, Department of Natural Resources deputy enforcement officers, members of the State Guard, and volunteer state constables who meet the volunteer activity requirements as specified in the statute from \$3,000 to \$6,000. The allowable deduction per taxpayer must be certified by S.C. Revenue and Fiscal Affairs annually such that the total revenue loss does not exceed an aggregate limit of \$3.1 million per year in total, which remains unchanged. S. 969 also allows counties with a local transportation sales tax to exempt unprepared food items eligible for purchase with U.S. Department of Agriculture food coupons from the tax through the authorizing ordinance. In addition, S. 969 revises the current clinical preceptor income tax credit for certain medical providers.



Auditor's Endorsements on Deeds — H. 3608

This bill removes the requirement that county auditors endorse deeds of conveyance for real property but permits them to do so either before or after recording the deed.



Probate Code Cleanup — H. 4234

This bill updates the probate laws in compliance with the Uniform Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Act that became effective in 2019 by amending the procedures for guardianship and conservatorship proceedings.



Cost of Care for Seized Animals — H. 3682

SCAC was able work out a compromise on this bill, which would allow a court to order a person whose animal was seized as a result of an arrest to provide for the cost of care of the animal while they are incarcerated. If charges against the owner are dismissed or they are found not guilty, they **must receive a refund, plus cost and interest** (SCAC's policy position was to oppose this bill). Under the compromise amendment, a court **may** award interest to the owner of the amount refunded if they are found not guilty.



Solid Waste Management / End-of-Life Solar Components — Doc. 5191

This new regulation (R.61107.20: Solar Energy Systems) establishes registration requirements and requires all large solar energy systems to have a decommissioning plan. This plan must address the removal of photovoltaic modules and accompanying equipment, contain procedures for the remediation of the land, and have a requirement that solar companies provide financial assurances to address the cost of decommissioning before establishing such facilities in a county.

**This was the second of a two-year session, meaning bills that did not pass will have to be refiled in 2025.*

Legal Assistance and Research

SCAC's legal staff works with county attorneys to provide informal opinions and in-depth research on legal issues important to county officials.



20

hours of customized in-person training programs to elected and appointed officials in Beaufort, Edgefield, Orangeburg, Union and York counties



Participated in county council retreats and planning workshops to address the statutory authority of council, administration and staff



Conducted research for county officials on a diverse range of legal issues including ethics, procurement, property taxes, capital project sales taxes, FOIA and public meetings, zoning, special elections and vacancies in elected offices, impact fees and growth management issues



EDUCATE AND BUILD KNOWLEDGE AMONG COUNTY OFFICIALS

The Association offers a variety of in-person and online educational opportunities designed to equip county officials with the latest tools and information needed to meet the needs of their communities.



By the Numbers

Institute of Government



27

Level I graduates

15

Level II graduates

41

County Councils with at least one Institute graduate

508

Registrations for in-person Institute of Government classes in 2023-24

46 counties

15 classes

56

Online Institute of Government courses taken in 2023-24

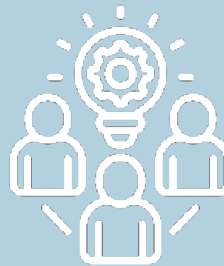
22 counties

100%

Of McCormick County Council are Level I and II graduates

100%

Of Allendale, Dorchester and Orangeburg County Councils are Level I graduates



24

Attended Council Chairperson's Workshop

47

New planning and zoning officials completed six hours of orientation training

295

Planning and zoning officials completed continuing education training via SCAC's learning portal or webinars

33

S.C. county officials and staff graduated from a NACo High Performance Leadership Academy

179

Attorneys attended SCAC's Local Government Attorneys' Institute

Common Challenges. Creative Solutions.

SCAC's annual awards—the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award and Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award—recognize top innovative projects completed by counties in the past fiscal year. The winners represent the best qualities of local governance—attention to details, service to citizens, efficient use of tax dollars and improvement in the quality of life. Projects are judged on written entries and oral presentations before a panel of judges.

The J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award recognizes counties that address community challenges, implement operational improvements or enhance their citizens' quality of life in unique ways.

The Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award highlights the growing need for regional partnerships, strategies and solutions. This award is open to two or more political subdivisions that worked together on a project.

In 2023, Charleston County's "Adopt a Polling Location" and "Day for Democracy" programs received the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award for their creative strategies for solving the poll worker shortage, a prevalent issue facing governments across the nation.

The Adopt a Polling Location initiative offered opportunities for nonpartisan community organizations to adopt a polling location on Election Day 2022, and each group's staff served as poll workers. Pay was donated to a local nonprofit organization of the group's choice. The companion Day for Democracy

offered Charleston County employees the chance to serve their community by working at a voting site and earning poll worker pay in addition to county pay.

"We tied the concept of local service to elections. We figured there's no better way of doing that than serving your community on Election Day by being a poll worker. We knew we had a lot of local community organizations that wanted to give back to the people they serve," said Isaac Cramer, executive director of the Charleston County Board of Voter Registration & Elections.

Honorable mentions were awarded to **Calhoun, Dorchester, Oconee and York counties.**

Landfill fires often take months to put out and can potentially diminish air quality for miles. Having the knowledge and ability to access needed resources from regional partnerships so quickly made a key difference in Barnwell County. **Barnwell, Aiken, Beaufort, Dorchester, and Hampton counties** received the 2023 Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award for their teamwork extinguishing the Barnwell Landfill fire.

"The impact of this project was a benefit to all our citizens as we were able to contain the amount of burning pollution to a minimal amount," said Barnwell County Emergency Operations Center Manager Roger Riley. "I am honored our county was recognized for this effort, but the main point of sharing our work is to give others ideas or solutions to similar problems they may face."

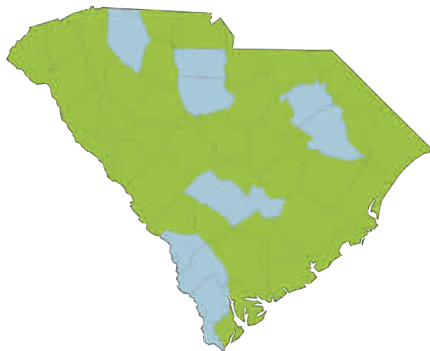
The 2024 J. Mitchell Graham Memorial and Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Awards season is underway with applications due Aug. 12, presentations scheduled for Sept. 19 at SCETV and awards announcements during the Fall Advocacy Meeting awards luncheon Oct. 17.

Learn more at sccounties.org/awards.



Resources and Technical Assistance

The FY 2024 Wage and Salary Report was published in March



38 counties participated

203 positions covered

Visit scacsalaryreport.org

2023 Property Tax Rates by County published digitally in December

The annual publication details millage rates for every jurisdiction that levies property taxes in the state.

2024 County Profiles published digitally in June

The bi-annual publication details statistical data for every county, including population trends as well as economic, tax and county finance and employment data. It also contains general county information, county millage rates and mil values, county local options sales and use tax collections and more.

Research and Surveys

SCAC staff conducts statewide surveys and gathers information on counties' policies and practices to further inform policymakers and practitioners.



Surveys conducted:

- County 311/Ombudsman Lines
- County Municipal Roads Maintenance
- Leave Pool Guidance
- Master in Equity Full-Time Status
- Property Tax Collection Rates
- Special Tax Districts to Fund Road Repairs
- Vaccine Mandates
- Veteran Affairs Office Staffing

COLLABORATE TO MAXIMIZE RESOURCES

SC Counties Insurance Trusts

The SC Counties Property & Liability Trust and Workers' Compensation Trust are run by members to meet the unique challenges facing county government operations. A Board of Trustees consisting of seven county officials oversee the trusts. It meets several times a year to review claim trends, financials and discuss mitigation strategies.

Strong risk management programs by participating counties plus SCAC's customized solutions and services make the programs a success.

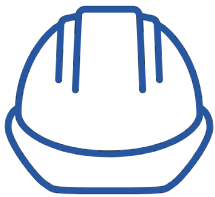


21

Total counties participated in the Property & Liability Trust in 2023-24

24

Total counties participating in the Property & Liability Trust in 2024-25



41

Total counties participated in the Workers' Compensation Trust in 2023-24

42

Total counties participating in the Workers' Compensation Trust in 2024-25



80+

Participants at the 2024 Insurance Trusts Annual Meeting

14

Counties received safety awards - awards doubled from previous year

Activities

Conducted **19** Staffing Needs Assessments for Detention Centers

Presented County Risk Management Awards at **9** County Council Meetings




Risk Management Classes

Defensive Driving Course 4 – **30** Classes – **521** Employees
Coaching the Emergency Vehicle Operator II – **9** Classes – **228** Officers
Anti-harassment – **10** Classes – **379** Employees
Lock Out Tag Out– **3** Classes – **161** Employees
Convenience Center Risk Management – **1** Class – **23** Employees
Electrical Safety – **1** Class – **26** Employees
Hazard Communication – **1** Class – **49** Employees
OSHA300 Record Keeping – **1** Class – **26** Employees
Blood Borne Pathogens – **1** Class – **29** Employees
Inmate Supervision Issues – **20** Classes – **409** Employees
Detention Center Risk Management – **32** Classes – **492** Officers
Leadership – **11** Classes – **211** Officers
De-escalation for Law Enforcement – **13** Classes – **190** Officers
De-escalation for Civilians – **5** Classes – **180** Employees



Communicate and Engage

67
 Targeted messages in 2023-24

50%
 Average open rate

County COMPASS

A monthly digital newsletter covering timely topics, event notices and county spotlights.

Average open rate **38%**

Average distribution **1,780** readers

Social Media

 **1,433** followers

 **1,056** fans

 **508** followers

Spotlight: Partnership Aims to Reduce Risk at County Jails

SCAC in 2023 forged a partnership with the South Carolina Sheriffs' Association on a proactive approach to address the potential liability detention centers pose to county governments.

The inaugural Jail Leadership Training brought together county law enforcement leaders to brainstorm ways to tackle common problems and improve overall operations. More than 70 county administrators, jail administrators, sheriffs and deputies completed the training held in Columbia, Myrtle Beach and Newberry. Issues addressed included:

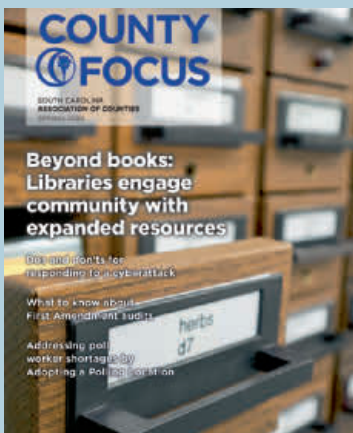
- Effective risk management practices,
- Engaging with stakeholders,
- Maximizing resources,
- Staffing and workforce sustainability, and
- Managing inmate behavior.

“We should all be on the same sheet of music working for the common good so it is good to be able to come together and discuss ways we can work together for our communities,” said Newberry County Sheriff Lee Foster, who hosted a training in August 2023.

Detention center operations represent one of the most significant liability and safety exposures in county government, explained Robert Benfield, SCAC's director of Insurance Services.

“Collaboration, training and networking among county detention centers strengthens the entire criminal justice system and enhances the safety of the citizens of South Carolina,” he said.

County Focus



The feature publication includes information about best practices, timely topics and spotlight articles on how county governments address challenges in today's environment.

1,500

Printed copies mailed to county officials and stakeholders per quarter in 2023-24

Launched digital edition in February 2024.

662

Total monthly active users since debut

Debt Collection Programs

SCAC assists county entities in two debt collection programs administered by the SC Department of Revenue. The Setoff Debt Collection Program and the Government Enterprise Accounts Receivable (GEAR) Program help counties recover unpaid liabilities which would otherwise go uncollected.

265

Participants in the Setoff Debt Program

41

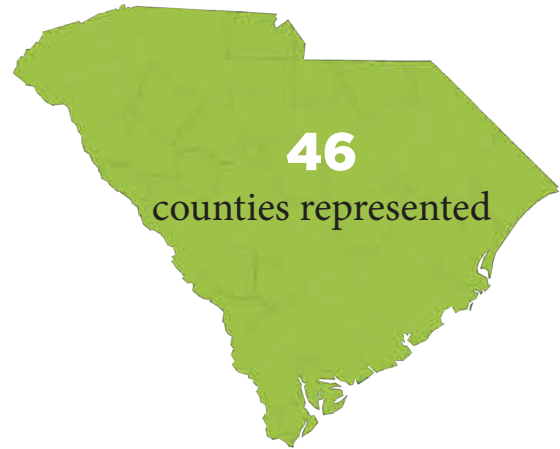
Participants in the GEAR Program

~\$70 million

Returned through Setoff Debt

~\$17 million

Returned through GEAR



Scholarships

The SCAC Board of Directors annually awards scholarships to graduating high school seniors who plan to attend a South Carolina college, university or technical college. Recipients are selected based on an essay, grades, school activities and community involvement.



75+

Applicants

\$25,000

Awarded to students in five counties

\$5,000

One-time award to student in the SCAC President's home county

\$5,000

One-time awards to students in Clarendon, Kershaw, Laurens and Marion counties

SCAC President Roy Costner and Presidential Scholarship recipient Isaac Esuary at the Liberty High School Awards event in May 2024.

Presidential Outreach

At the beginning of his term in August 2023, SCAC President Roy Costner launched a “Challenges and Opportunities” tour to learn more about issues facing South Carolina’s 46 counties. The goal? Visit each county for 30-to-45 minute meetings with key leaders to simply listen to issues and brainstorm possible solutions.

Costner traveled nearly 3,000 miles throughout the state meeting with more than 80 officials during the year and visiting each region of South Carolina.



SCAC President Roy Costner during a meeting with county council members from Allendale, Bamberg and Barnwell counties in January.

“From the challenges of managing growth to the opportunities with economic development, we all can learn from each other and share ways to accomplish extraordinary things for the counties we serve,” he said.

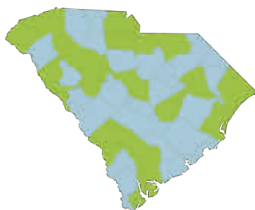
“There are a lot of opportunities to make your voice heard. When you feel like you are on an island, take advantage of the incredible resources SCAC offers in terms of the advocacy, education and collaboration components.”

Opportunities & Challenges Tour

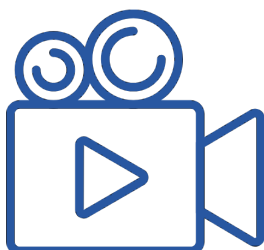


2,950+
Miles traveled

80+
County officials reached



22
Counties visited by President Roy B. Costner III as part of his Challenges and Opportunities listening tour in 2023-2024



10
Videos produced

Debuted Message from the President column in County Focus

Positive media coverage in every region

PAST PRESIDENTS

1960s-1970s

Charles W. Lawrimore,
Georgetown County
J. Mitchell Graham, Charleston County
John L. Greer, Union County
J. Hugh McCutchen,
Williamsburg County
James O. Thomason, Spartanburg County
Arthur H. Burton, Charleston County
Jack Q. Gerrald, Horry County
Harold L. King, Darlington County
E.E. Johnson, Hampton County
Berry L. Mobley, Lancaster County
Marjorie H. Sharpe, Lexington County

1980s

Howard A. Taylor, Charleston County
Alfred B. Schooler, Georgetown County
Lonnie Hamilton III, Charleston County
James P. Whitlock, Pickens County
Charlie I. Crews, Hampton County
Sue H. Roe, Aiken County
O.V. Player Jr., Sumter County
Danny E. Allen, Spartanburg County
David K. Summers Jr., Calhoun County
Lowell C. "Butch" Spires,
Lexington County

1990s

Kenneth R. Huckaby,
Spartanburg County
James R. McGee, Orangeburg County
Belle J. Kennette, Greenwood County
William L. McBride, Beaufort County
Raymond C. Eubanks Jr.,
Spartanburg County
George E. Bomar, Greenville County
Betty T. Roper, Clarendon County
Alzena Robinson, Bamberg County
Robert R. Nash Sr., Ph.D., Pickens County
Polly C. Jackson, Lancaster County

2000s

James H. Rozier Jr., Berkeley County
Steve S. Kelly Jr., Kershaw County
James A. Coleman, Laurens County
Gonza L. Bryant, Greenwood County
Barrett S. Lawrimore, Charleston County
Waymon Mumford, Florence County*
Belinda D. Copeland, Darlington County
K.G. "Rusty" Smith Jr., Florence County
L. Gregory Pearce Jr., Richland County

2010s

Diane B. Anderson, Laurens County
R. Carlisle Roddey, Chester County
Joseph B. Dill, Greenville County
Charles T. Edens, Sumter County
Joseph R. Branham, Chester County
James R. Frazier, Horry County
John Q. Atkinson Jr., Marion County
Julie J. Armstrong, Charleston County
Henry H. Livingston III,
Newberry County
Charles T. Jennings, McCormick County

2020-Present

Dwight L. Stewart Jr., Clarendon County
Johnnie Wright Sr., Orangeburg County
Paul A. Cain, Oconee County
Debra B. Summers, Lexington County

*Presidents are listed in chronological order for each decade. *Waymon Mumford served as president for two terms in 2005 and 2006 due to the untimely death of SCAC President Barrett S. Lawrimore..*

STAFF

Executive Director

Timothy C. Winslow

Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel

Joshua C. Rhodes

Senior Director of Operations

Anna B. Berger

SCAC Staff Members

sccounties.org/staff

Sassafras Mountain



Pickens County EMS



Sassafras Lookout



On the back:

Left: Costner (center) with Georgetown County Administrator Angela Christian and Georgetown County Council Chairman Louis Morant (photo courtesy of Georgetown County)

Right: Costner at the 2024 Counties Connect: A Legislative Action Day (photo by Travis Bell)

All other photos courtesy of Pickens County

Local Leaders. Statewide Strength.®

www.sccounties.org



**SOUTH CAROLINA
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**



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