



North Augusta FORWARD

A Publication for the Citizens of North Augusta, South Carolina

December 2006

Volume XIII, Number 4

CITY COUNCIL

Lark Jones, Mayor

Jimmy Adams

Carolyn Baggott

Pat Carpenter

Ken McDowell

Arthur Shealy

Jason Whinghter



CONTENTS

New Municipal Center
Construction(Cont.)2

City Administrator
Retires2

Center Street
Construction3

2007 Budget Adopted . . .3

Winter Base Period3

Business License
Renewals Due Soon3

Palmetto Parkway
Proceeds3

Tax Notices3

Meth Watch4

Project Lifesaver4

Construction Begins on New MUNICIPAL CENTER

Construction of the city's new municipal center is scheduled to begin in January. The 68,000 square foot, brick facility includes four levels. The main level or first floor will be occupied by the departments of Finance and Building Standards (currently located in the former South Carolina Highway Department building). The first floor also includes exhibit and meeting space for the North Augusta Cultural Arts Council and the Heritage Council of North Augusta. The second floor will be occupied by the departments of Economic and Community Development, Engineering and Stormwater Management. Information Technology and Administration staff will occupy the third floor along with Council Chambers. The first, second and third floors include meeting space, space for records storage and office space for additional staff as it becomes necessary. The fourth floor consists of a public meeting/event room with a kitchen and several covered terraces.



*Architect's rendering of
the new municipal center.*

Since its incorporation in 1906, North Augusta's administrative offices have been housed in three different locations. The first was the old "Fire Barn" in the 500 block of Georgia Avenue. As the city grew so did the need for workspace and records storage and in 1955 the city offices were relocated to 400 East Buena Vista Avenue. In 1984, again to accommodate the need for additional space, a new municipal building was constructed next to the existing building. The Department of Public Safety remained in the existing facility and the city's administrative offices moved to the new facility, where they remain to this day.

Since 1984, the city has met the increasing need for space through a number of renovations to both the public safety and municipal buildings. In 1994, one of the municipal building's two stairwells was converted to storage space to meet state records retention requirements. In 1996, the first floor hallway was converted to office space. In 1998 and again in 2002, the public safety building was remodeled to accommodate increased space needs for municipal court operations and the criminal investigations division. Also in 2002, to free up needed space, the staff of the Building Standards Department was relocated from the second floor of the municipal building to the old "drivers license" building across the street. The municipal building space was then reorganized to provide for a stormwater manager, code compliance officer and a planning position in the Department of Economic and Community Development. Designed to house a maximum of seventeen people, the 10,000 square foot municipal building now provides office space for twenty-two employees.

continued on page 2

CITY ADMINISTRATOR RETIRES

North Augusta's City Administrator, Charles B. Martin, recently announced his retirement after almost 27 years of service.

In a 1980 *Aiken Standard* article after his selection as the city's second administrator, Martin stated, "The city should make itself attractive to developers, but at the same time preserve the residential integrity the city has enjoyed in the past." Serving under four mayors and numerous council members during his tenure as North Augusta's city administrator, Martin has accomplished that, quietly shaping North Augusta from a sleepy "bedroom" suburb of Augusta, Georgia, into a vibrant and desirable community in which to live, work and do business.

Since Martin took the reins as administrator in 1980, the city's population has increased by over 40 percent and the city limits have increased from slightly over eight square miles to almost 20 square miles. The number of full-time city employees has grown from 125 to almost 200 and the city budget has increased from approximately \$3.5 million to almost \$30 million.

During his tenure, North Augusta has changed dramatically, enhancing the quality of life of residents and attracting quality growth and development. Accomplishments, to name a few, include numerous advances in technology, construction of the Community Center, the Municipal Building and the Riverview Park Activities Center, major enhancements to Riverview and other city parks, development of new park amenities such as the Greenway Trail and Walnut Lane Neighborhood Park, and the realization of development of the riverfront. As well, major water and sewer line extensions and water plant expansions have been completed.

In the letter to the City Council announcing his retirement, Martin credited city leaders and employees, writing, "The growth and success of the City of North Augusta during this time is directly related to your leadership and to the efforts of the many fine staff members and dedicated employees of our organization."

According to Mayor Lark Jones, "Much of the success the City of North Augusta has had over the last 25 years has been due to the consistent and effective leadership of Charles Martin. Rarely does a city keep a manager or administrator for that length of time. His adherence to orderly planning, scheduling and sound fiscal policies have made the job of elected officials easier. Most citizens appreciate the things that are going on in North Augusta. Charles Martin has played a large role in much of it."

Mr. Martin plans to enjoy his retirement by traveling and spending time with wife Ann, sons Bo and Russ (Shelly), and grandchildren, Katie, 10, Chandler, 8, and Skylar, 4. After that, says Martin, "Then we will see what opportunities may be available that would allow us to be constructive." His last day as city administrator will be February 28, 2007.



*City Administrator
Charles B. Martin*

NEW MUNICIPAL CENTER continued

In 2002, to address the growing need for office space, the City Council authorized the first phase of a multi-year effort to design and construct a new municipal center and funds were included in the 2003 budget to begin the process. A primary goal of the City Council was designing a facility that could grow with the city through the coming century.

After soliciting proposals for the new center, the City Council selected the Boudreaux Group of Columbia, South Carolina, to manage the design and supervise the construction of the new municipal center. In early 2004, the Boudreaux Group held a public meeting to solicit citizen input on possible additional uses, potential funding for those uses, the general area where the building should be located, and the kind of image the new facility should present. The Boudreaux Group then conducted a space needs analysis, performed site evaluations and developed preliminary designs for the City Council to consider.

In 2005, the City Council purchased 1.8 acres of land from North Augusta 2000 to locate the new municipal center. The site was selected based on the recommendation of the Boudreaux Group because of its visibility and accessibility. The property is located south of Bluff Avenue between Georgia Avenue and a planned extension of Georgia Avenue and is adjacent to a 0.6 acre parcel purchased by the city a number of years ago. The Georgia Avenue extension, named Center Street, will connect Bluff Avenue with the new municipal center and eventually, the Hammond's Ferry development. Access to the new municipal center will be available via Georgia Avenue and Center Street.

Construction on the new municipal center is expected to be complete by the summer of 2008. Once the new facility is complete, the former municipal building will be occupied by the Department of Public Safety and Municipal Court.

2007 CITY BUDGET ADOPTED

The 2007 Consolidated Municipal Budget totaling \$29,795,496 was approved by the City Council on November 20, 2006. The city's mill levy for 2007 (2006 tax year) is 81.08, unchanged from 2006. In 2007, revenue from 72.13 mills will be collected for General Fund purposes and revenue from 8.95 mills will be applied to the Capital Projects Fund.

The major funds and functional areas of expenditures for 2007 are:

2007 CONSOLIDATED MUNICIPAL BUDGET						
Fund	Personal Services	Operations & Maintenance	Lease Purchase	Capital	Debt Service	Total
General Fund	\$7,771,292	\$3,202,062	\$405,276	\$239,725	\$0	\$11,618,355
Sales Tax 2 Fund	0	0	0	5,550,000	0	5,550,000
Street Improvements Fund	0	24,500	0	290,000	0	314,500
Riverfront/Central Core Fund	0	0	0	0	495,000	495,000
Capital Projects Fund	0	85,000	0	0	395,000	480,000
Sanitation Services Fund	1,665,917	1,117,508	239,632	21,350	0	3,044,407
Stormwater Utility Fund	187,252	81,523	14,825	479,486	0	763,086
Water & Sewer Fund	2,167,433	3,176,494	89,359	214,375	1,843,487	7,491,148
Other Funds	0	39,000	0	0	0	39,000
TOTAL	\$11,791,894	\$7,726,087	\$749,092	\$6,794,936	\$2,733,487	\$29,795,496

WINTER BASE PERIOD IN EFFECT

The City of North Augusta uses a "Winter Base Sewer Rate System" for calculating sewer service charges. Three months of actual water usage are used to calculate sewer charges for the remaining nine months of the year. The three month base period covers the three water meter readings taken between December 10 and March 9. Water meter readings are based on the actual water consumed for the month preceding the reading.

Each utility customer is billed a sewer service charge based on actual water consumption during the three winter base months. The average consumption of these three months is then used for the remaining nine billing periods of the year. New customers with no winter base history are charged an amount equal to the average of all residential sewer customers. For more information about the Winter Base Period, please call 803-441-4212.

Business License Renewals DUE SOON

Calendar year 2007 Business License renewal applications will be distributed to current licensees during the last week of December. Completed applications are due on February 1, 2007. A delinquent payment penalty of ten percent will be added to applications received after February 1. The penalty will increase by an additional five percent each month until received.

Business licensees should carefully examine the information on the application to confirm that it is correct. Corrections or additions should be written directly on the application form. Once properly completed and signed, the application should be returned to the city with the correct fee. The turn around time on a properly completed business license application is usually within ten days.

Questions about Business License renewals can be answered by calling 803-441-4214.

PALMETTO PARKWAY PROCEEDS

Construction on the final phase of I-520, the Palmetto Parkway will begin in January and is scheduled to be opened to traffic in 2009. United Contractors, the team that completed Phase 1 in 2004, was awarded the \$130 million contract for Phase 2.

TAX NOTICES COMING SOON

Tax notices on real and personal property and on merchants' inventory for the 2006 tax year will be mailed to property owners in January. Tax payments are due by May 1, 2007. For those property owners whose taxes are escrowed by a mortgage company, tax notices will be mailed directly to the mortgage company.

For questions about property taxes, please call 803-441-4215.

CENTER STREET CONSTRUCTION

Construction will begin soon on the planned extension of Georgia Avenue. The new \$5 million roadway, to be called Center Street, will extend from the current intersection of Georgia Avenue at Bluff Avenue to the Savannah River through the Hammond's Ferry development. Funded with state and federal appropriations, the new street will provide access to the new municipal center and other buildings to be constructed in the town center area.

Bids will be accepted by the South Carolina Department of Transportation in January and construction of Center Street will commence in March or April. Road construction will be coordinated with the grading work on the adjacent municipal center site.

Public Safety PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED

Meth Watch

In response to the discovery of illegal methamphetamine (meth) drug labs operating in the North Augusta area, the city's Department of Public Safety, in cooperation with the South Carolina Office of the Attorney General and the North Augusta Chamber of Commerce, has implemented the South Carolina Meth Watch Program. The program is designed to help curtail the theft and improper sale of pseudoephedrine and other common household products used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine.



Participating retailers place products commonly used in the manufacture of meth where they can be easily monitored and post Meth Watch signs and tags in prominent locations in the store. Purchase limits are also imposed to prevent high volume sales of pseudoephedrine and other methamphetamine components.

North Augusta businesses currently participating in the MethWatch Program are CVS Pharmacy, Dollar General, Eckerd Pharmacy, Kroger, Parks Pharmacy, Publix Supermarket, Thomas & Howard and Wall Hardware.

To learn more about the program, become a member or report suspicious activities or purchases, contact Detective George Shaw at 803-441-4269 or gshaw@northaugusta.net. Additional information is available at www.northaugusta.net or www.methwatch.com.

Project Lifesaver

As of November 1 local families and caregivers of individuals suffering from Alzheimer's Disease, Autism, Down Syndrome, Dementia and other conditions that cause disorientation and can result in wandering or getting lost have a new option to help keep loved ones safe.



The North Augusta Department of Public Safety, Aiken County Sheriff's Office and City of Aiken Department of Public Safety have joined forces with Project Lifesaver International, a non-profit public safety program used to assist in locating missing persons.

Project Lifesaver clients wear a small wrist or ankle band that emits a continuous radio tracking signal. When a caregiver notifies law enforcement that a Project Lifesaver participant is missing, a special mobile tracking unit is activated to quickly locate the missing person.

The program has been adopted by over 325 police departments in 37 states. To date, over 1,300 wanderers have been located. The average recovery time, formerly often hours or days, has been reduced to less than 30 minutes. Project Lifesaver eliminates the need for costly searches involving teams of officers, scent-tracking dogs, volunteers and expensive search equipment including helicopters and heat locating devices.

Initial funding for the local program was made possible through a \$15,000 grant from the Sertoma Club of North Augusta. Continued funding for the program is being sought through donations and grants.

Additional information about the program is available online at www.northaugusta.net or by contacting Project Lifesaver Program Coordinator Captain Randy Mosley at 803-441-4270 or Judy Dooley at 803-441-4251.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

POLICE & FIRE EMERGENCY	911
PUBLIC SAFETY	
Non Emergency	279-2121
Administration	441-4251
Records/Court Services	441-4271
Investigations	441-4274
PARKS, RECREATION & LEISURE SERVICES	
Riverview Park Activities Center	441-4300
Activities Coordinator	441-4311
Community Center	441-4290
GENERAL SERVICES & FINANCE	
Taxes	441-4215
Utility - New Service/Disconnects	441-4219
Utility Billing Services	441-4212
Business Licenses (Non-Contractor)	441-4214
Human Resources	441-4205
ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS	
After-Hours Emergencies	279-2121
Engineering	441-4223
Building Standards	441-4227
Permits	441-4227
Business Licenses (Contractors)	441-4227
Animal Control	441-4227
Sanitation Services	441-4223
Sanitation - New Service	441-4219
Stormwater Management	441-4295
PUBLIC UTILITIES	
After-Hours Emergencies	279-2121
Utility - New Service/Disconnects	441-4219
Utility Billing	441-4212
Water and Sewer Repairs	441-4240
Streets and Drains Repairs	441-4240
ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	
Economic Development	441-4221
Planning	441-4221
Zoning	441-4221
Code Compliance	441-4258
ADMINISTRATION	
Mayor	441-4202
City Administrator	441-4202
OTHER FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS	
North Augusta Chamber of Commerce	279-2323
Nancy Carson Library	279-5767
North Augusta Health Center	278-3621
Comcast (cable)	706-733-7712
S. C. Electric & Gas	442-2000
BellSouth	780-2355
S. C. Department of Transportation	1-800-442-1368
Magistrate	202-3580

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS are held every first and third Monday at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers of the municipal building. Citizens are encouraged to attend these meetings.



CITY of NORTH AUGUSTA
400 East Buena Vista Avenue
PO Box 6400
North Augusta, SC 29861-6400

www.northaugusta.net

North Augusta Forward is mailed quarterly to every city water customer. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please write to:
North Augusta Forward
P. O. Box 6400, North Augusta, SC 29861-6400
or call 803-441-4221.