

**2010 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA
JANUARY 28, 2010**

The information below provides details regarding each department for the calendar year 2009 and is data used for the State of the City presented by Mayor R. Keith Summey on Thursday, January 28, 2010. The State of the City is presented via video and will be redisplayed for public viewing in a timely manner on the City's website at <http://www.northcharleston.org>.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Although the national, state, and local economies remain sluggish, major industries and businesses continue to locate in North Charleston; some of our existing businesses are also expanding. The following are significant activities:

The largest economic announcement in the history of the State of South Carolina occurred when Boeing announced its second final assembly plant for the 787 Dreamliner program would be built in North Charleston. In addition to serving as a location for final assembly of 787 Dreamliners, the facility also will have the capability to support the testing and delivery of the airplanes. This announcement represents a \$750 million investment and a work force of at least 3,800 over the next seven years. The facility will total 1.2 million square feet, and could use up to 2,000 construction workers. The production line is scheduled for completion in 2011.

Also in 2009, Boeing acquired the business and operations conducted by Vought Aircraft Industries and Global Aeronautica both of which provided components to Boeing for the 787 Dreamliner. With the acquisition of these two companies, Boeing is now the sole owner of the aerospace plants located on the Charleston County Aviation Authority property near the Charleston International Airport.

Clemson University's Restoration Institute (CURI) landed a \$45 million grant from the United States Department of Energy for the Clemson University Wind Turbine Drivetrain Test Facility to be constructed on the former Navy Base in North Charleston. This grant will be matched in the amount of \$53 million, bringing the project total to \$98 million. The site is to be located in Building 69, an existing 82,264 square foot building, as part of the CURI campus, and will be modified to meet test requirements. Modifications will create 113 construction jobs. 21 full time jobs are estimated at the facility, another 150 jobs from the manufacturing cluster located around the facility, and 568 indirect jobs for a total of 852 jobs. However, it is estimated by the State of South Carolina's Department of Commerce that the State could gain 10,000 to 20,000 new jobs related to this project over the next 20 years.

It is anticipated that the facility will serve as the catalyst for a wind industry cluster to form on the former Navy Base due to the unique industry/research environment at a brown-field site near existing port, rail infrastructure, and supporting industries.

Cummins Turbo Technology will consolidate its turbo charger operations into a single facility over the next 18 months. They will phase out operations at Leeds Avenue and expand operations at its facility in Palmetto Industrial Park by more than 83,000 square feet, increasing that facility to 207,000 square feet.

BAE Systems consolidated its three area facilities into a single 74,000 square foot facility at Aviation Business Park. The project represents an investment of \$4.5 million and created approximately 75 new jobs in 2009 and will create up to 100 additional jobs in 2010 with salaries ranging from \$50,000 to \$85,000. BAE Systems is a global defense, security, and aerospace company, delivering a full range of products and services for air, land, and naval forces, as well as advanced electronic, security, information technology solutions, and customer support services.

Scientific Research Corporation (SRC) announced an expansion at its present facility. SRC will invest \$4 million and add 300 new jobs. SRC is an advanced engineering company providing the US Government, private industry, and international markets products and services related to complex electronic systems, custom hardware/software development, and engineering services that span analysis, design, and development through integration, installation, and support.

ITT Kaliburn relocated to North Charleston from James Island, investing \$1.8 million in a 40,000 square foot building with room for an additional 40,000 square foot expansion. ITT Kaliburn currently employs 55. ITT Kaliburn is an engineering and manufacturing company of high current density plasma cutting systems and torch height control systems.

First Federal Credit Union invested \$1.2 million at its North Charleston location and amended its corporate bylaws to officially move its headquarters from downtown Charleston to North Charleston.

Within North Charleston, 25 new commercial structures were built in 2009. Among these is the \$37.5 million dollar, energy-efficient City Hall building with over 150,000 square feet.

Commercial buildings continue to be constructed. The following are other significant improvements:

- CowardHund Office building \$800,000
- Lowcountry Innovation Center \$1.8 million
- South Carolina Federal Credit Union \$12 million
- Charleston County Auto Garage \$3.7 million
- Virginia College \$2.3 million
- First Citizens Bank \$819,000
- Lowes \$875,000

Over 100 commercial structures were renovated in 2009. Businesses such as the Davita Dialysis Center, Southcoast Bank, Lowe's, and the Barling Bay in the Remount Business Park completed their structures and renovations bringing in over \$57 million dollars in construction value in 2009 .

As of September 2009, North Charleston's hotel occupancy was down 7% for the year, but hotel expansion was ongoing with three new hotels receiving certificates of occupancy in 2009, totaling 314 rooms. The Springhill Suites, boasting 116 rooms and over 71,000 square feet, the Staybridge Hotel with its 93 rooms and 65,000 square feet, and the Hampton Inn with its 105 room and over 70,000 square feet brought in \$20 million dollars of construction value to the City. An 8% increase or 240 hotel rooms are slated for 2010 with two new hotels totaling 150,000 square feet, which will bring the City to 7,246 available rooms.

Centre Pointe has continued to expand with the addition of several new businesses including Golden Corral, Jim & Nicks, Burger King, Sprint First Federal Credit Union Branch, and the Woodforest National Bank at Wal-Mart. Also, Five Guys filled the vacancy left by the closing of Atlanta Bread Company. Construction began on a building to house the Paul Mitchell School, the Sake Restaurant, and a North Charleston Police sub-station with additional retail space totaling 44,000 square feet.

A major hurdle was overcome regarding the visibility of Centre Pointe from I-26 and I-526 with the ongoing day-lighting project that will be completed this winter.

MeadWestvaco acquired Watson Hill, a 6,600 acre property, near Summerville, SC. This property is within incorporated North Charleston. MeadWestvaco is currently holding public meetings to determine how best to develop this property.

For years, the section of Interstate 26 between Ashley Phosphate Road and the Mark Clark Expressway (I-526) has been one of the worst traffic bottlenecks in the Lowcountry. To solve this problem, the South Carolina Department of Transportation awarded one of its largest construction contracts to date. The project, led by U.S. Group, Inc., the prime contractor, will be responsible for widening the Interstate and rebuilding interchanges at Aviation Avenue and Remount Road. When completed, the Interstate 26 project will greatly improve traffic flow. Improvements that are part of this construction project:

- Widen Interstate 26 from six to eight lanes
- Replace the cable barrier in the center of I-26 with a concrete wall
- Construct separate exit lanes, like at Ashley Phosphate Road, for the Aviation Avenue and Remount Road exits
 - This will keep exit ramp traffic from slowing I-26 traffic
- Reconstruct the Aviation Avenue interchange
 - Replace the existing overpass with a wider overpass
 - Realign the exit ramps to improve traffic flow to and from I-26
- Reconstruct the Remount Road interchange
 - Replace the existing overpass with a wider overpass
 - Add an on-ramp onto I-26 Westbound
 - Add an off-ramp from I-26 Eastbound
- Realign Fain Street alongside Interstate 26

The existing Palmetto Commerce Parkway begins at Ladson Road and extends for approximately 1.7 miles to a dead end. Palmetto Commerce Parkway Phase II began construction on January 5, 2009 and will extend approximately four miles to Ashley Phosphate Road with a divided four-lane road and planted median.

The primary purpose of this project is to provide a north-south connector linking Ladson Road and Ashley Phosphate Road. The connector would improve the road network in this area of North Charleston and accommodate intra-regional travel. The extension of Palmetto Commerce Parkway will relieve traffic on nearby roads, such as Dorchester Road and I-26, and provide a better distribution of traffic in the area.

The City is working to complete the Future Drive Loop to Ladson Road project to compliment the Palmetto Commerce Parkway project. Future Drive will provide a connection between the parkway and Highway 78 near I-26. Also under this project, the existing Northside Drive would be extended towards Ladson Road to an intersection with Future Drive. The network of these roads would assist in relieving congestion on Ladson Road, Dorchester Road and Ashley Phosphate Road. Future Drive and the extension of Northside Drive will also provide access for future commercial and residential development.

Design services for the extension of Tanger Outlet Boulevard from International Boulevard to Montague Avenue were approved by City Council in September 2009. The extension will provide traffic relief along International Boulevard and the surrounding roadways.

BUILDING INSPECTIONS DEPARTMENT

The Building Inspection Department’s mission is to protect life, health and property as a solemn responsibility of the highest order. The Building Department is responsible for issuing building permits both residential and commercial, new construction, and renovations and conducting field inspections for new commercial/residential structures. The growth in our city is reflected by our Building Inspections Department. A total of 5,801 permits were issued in the City of North Charleston, resulting in \$132,396,705 in construction values. This is a 21.6% decrease in permits issued from 2008.

In 2009, 379 new single family detached homes and 32 new townhomes (attached) began construction. New residential construction attributed to \$35 million of the total construction value for the year. This value can be attributed to the growth of Baker, McKewn, Taylor Plantations, North Brookdale at Forest Hills, and Paddock Pointe. The Villas at Charleston Park has continued expansion, completing construction on over 90 homes in 2009.

The Building Inspections Department continues to offer BluePrince, an online permitting and inspection software, free to contractors, developers, architects, and engineers. The software is currently providing service to over 300 contractors.

OAK TERRACE PRESERVE SUMMARY

Oak Terrace Preserve is a 55-acre sustainable redevelopment project located within the 3,000 acre Noisette Master Plan of North Charleston. At completion the project will consist of approximately 300 single-family detached homes and 74 single-family town homes. The project is sustainable in design and implementation through a unique storm water management system including pervious surfaces and bio-retention, an extensive tree preservation program, green home building standards by Earthcraft House and its proximate location to existing services.

Despite the economic crisis that hit the mortgage and credit markets late in 2008, continued interest in Oak Terrace Preserve was reflected in regional and national media coverage bringing unprecedented recognition to North Charleston. In December, the Home Depot Foundation Award of Excellence for Sustainable Community Development was presented to the City of North Charleston in partnership with the Sustainability Institute. According to the Home Depot Foundation, drawn from projects submitted by cities across the country, the award recipients were selected based on a number of criteria, including comprehensive sustainability, environmental sustainability and green infrastructure, as well as how well they met the needs of the local community while maintaining affordability for the residents.

Also, the Charleston City Paper named Oak Terrace Preserve as the “Best New Development” of 2009.

Construction began on the first townhomes at Oak Terrace Preserve. With the addition of the townhomes, we are now able to offer pricing for prospective homebuyers from the low 100s to the mid 200s.

The current absorption and sales information for Oak Terrace Preserve is listed below:

	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Lots sold	2	10	25	27	64
Homes occupied	2	9	24	27	62
Average sales price	\$245,554	\$254,451	\$221,237	\$218,342	\$226,065
Average cost /sqft	\$150	\$153	\$141	\$125	\$142
Average Days on Market	0	52	91	65	70

In just three short years, Oak Terrace Preserve has emerged as one of the green residential projects in the United States, and continues to be attractive within the Greater Charleston Area housing market.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

	2007	2008	2009
Inspections completed in the City of North Charleston	9,788	15,530	18,709
Number of citations issued	471	1,282	1,223
Number of dwellings, building and trailers demolished	29	35	23
Total Demolished since Mayor Summey took office in 1994	1,241	1,276	1299

Code Enforcement continues to contribute towards improving the quality of life in North Charleston with the Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET). The NET, spearheaded by Code Enforcement, also includes the Police, Building, Public Works, Planning, and Fire Departments, and targets neighborhoods that are prone to heightened ordinance violations. The Recreation Department joined the NET in 2009, distributing information to residents about upcoming events and programs. Also, the Charleston Animal Society joined the NET, furthering the scope of the operation. The NET focused on Dorchester Waylyn, Dorchester Terrace, Charleston Farms, Union Heights, Chicora/Cherokee, Ferndale, Russelldale, Pepperhill, and Midland Park, and corrected many existing violations.

Code Enforcement began utilizing individuals looking to fulfill community service time. This allowed 1,700 bags of trash and debris to be collected in 904 hours throughout North Charleston's neighborhoods. Community service was also served assisting the department's secretaries and other city staff.

The "Most Improved Yard of the Month" program continued with properties being recognized monthly in each Council District. To further recognize the hard work of the residents, Cultural Arts presented the winners with decorative wreaths. Pictures of the current and past winners' yards are displayed on the City's website at <http://www.northcharleston.org/living/mostimprovedyard.aspx>. We will continue to commend residents that work to keep our neighborhoods charming.

Code Enforcement Inspectors continue to reach out to the community by attending Neighborhood Council meetings and participating in Earth Day.

The department now assists Police, Fire, and Building in night inspections of restaurants and bars to verify business licenses, possible nuisances, and other violations.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

The Finance Department was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008. This represents the 21st consecutive year that the Finance Department has received this award.

Assessed value of taxable property throughout the City of North Charleston increased 10.7% for the 2009 property tax year. The value of a mill has increased to \$453,000, an increase of 93% over the value just ten years ago. This is attributable to the continued excellent commercial and residential growth throughout the City and this same growth should add another \$1.5 million to property tax collections for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010.

City Council approved during the 2009 calendar year the issuance of \$36 million in City Center Tax Increment Financing Bonds for the purpose of providing for the cost of constructing a new city hall. The City of North Charleston also affirmed its municipal bond rating of AA from Standard and Poors and A1 from Moodys. The ratings continue to reflect the City's sound financial position, improved liquidity and reserves, diverse and steadily growing economic base, and property tax base growth.

- Highlights from the June 30, 2009 Audit Report are as follows:
- General Governmental Revenues increased 5% or over \$4.2 million from FYE 6/30/08 to FYE 6/30/09. The following detail revenue changes:
 - Property taxes increased 10% or by over \$3.1 million. Excellent commercial and residential growth along with reassessment helped to generate an increase in assessed property value from \$409 million to \$453 million.
 - Business licenses revenues, franchise fees and permits decreased 1% or by over \$255,000.
 - Hospitality, accommodations, and sales tax collections decreased 2% or by over \$371,000.

FYE June 30	Hospitality Taxes	Accom. Taxes	Sales Taxes
2009	\$4,719,666	\$3,405,819	\$8,708,984
2008	\$4,807,458	\$3,457,861	\$8,940,402
2007	\$4,436,812	\$3,053,125	\$9,248,001
2006	\$3,983,488	\$2,720,342	\$9,091,500

2005	\$3,682,402	\$2,358,154	\$8,849,187
2004	\$3,461,976	\$2,262,006	\$7,206,883
2003	\$3,072,956	\$2,182,498	\$6,645,139

- Once again, we are the State's leader in retail sales for the sixteenth consecutive year. In calendar year 2008, gross retail sales exceeded \$6.30 billion and surpassed any other SC City by over \$800 million.

Calendar Year	Retail Sales
2008	\$6.30 (in billions)
2007	\$6.15
2006	\$6.51
2005	\$5.92
2004	\$5.18
2003	\$4.73
2002	\$4.38
2001	\$4.32
2000	\$4.4
1999	\$4.2
1998	\$4.1
1997	\$3.8

- During FYE 6/30/2009, General Fund Expenditures increased 1.5% or by over \$1.4 million primarily due to the increase in public safety costs. Key highlights of the increases are as follows: new hires in public safety, a rise in employee benefit costs and the absorption of the other post-employment benefit costs.
- Grants are managed by the City providing for community development services, public safety improvements and much needed equipment not otherwise available through General Fund expenditures. These grants produce over nearly \$5 million in sources of revenue not otherwise accessible. Additionally, the City received over \$6.2 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

On January 31, 2009, Leonard Judge retired as Fire Chief from the North Charleston Fire Department with 34 years of service. After an intensive internal search, Assistant Fire Chief Gregory A. Bulanow was chosen to succeed Chief Judge. Bulanow, 36, a native of Greendale, WI, began his career as a firefighter within the ranks of the NCFD in April 1996.

In November, the City broke ground on the department's 12th fire station. The new station at the corner of Palmetto Commerce Parkway and Carolina Commerce Parkway is in an ideal strategic location to support both the commercial and residential growth in the northern end of the City. The anticipated completion date is August 2010.

In addition to the construction of a new station, the first steps have been taken toward the total renovation of the Lower Dorchester Road Fire Station #5. The fire station is to include three bays, living quarters, and office space, and will total 8,040 square feet.

In July, the Fire Department launched a new wellness program in partnership with University Family Medicine and Trident Regional Medical Center to improve the department's physical fitness program and reduce firefighters' risks of heart attacks. This, together with the availability of a fitness center at City Hall, helps keep our firefighters safe and always ready to protect the City.

The Department completed an administrative restructuring that maximized efficiency and added a Fire Marshal position to supervise fire prevention and an additional Chief Officer to each shift.

As part of a strategic framework to guide the Fire Department to more effective services, a Mission, Vision, and Values Statement was developed after input was gathered from members of the Department from all levels.

Two 14 week sessions of the Charleston County Recruit School were hosted, combining the best available instructors and resources to train new firefighters. This collaborative effort reduces costs to each participating department and produces better trained firefighters.

The Fire Department responded to more than 3,200 medical calls in 2009. As the City continues to increase in population and our citizens age, the Department is preparing by instituting an internal First Responder Program. This service provides an increased level of emergency medical training with monthly refresher courses for all department personnel.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

In September 2009, the decision was made to change the name of the Personnel Department to the Human Resources Department. The Human Resources Department is not only responsible for administrative tasks, such as payroll and complying with employment laws, but is also responsible for managing a workforce as one of the primary resources that contributes to the success of the City of North Charleston.

As part of the transition from the Personnel to a Human Resources Department, employees in the Department attended various training sessions in Human Resources Management in 2009 and will attend additional sessions in 2010.

Human Resources is involved in the continuous development of functions and policies for the purpose of improving the City's workforce and work with management as a strategic partner. As a strategic partner, the Human Resources Department assists the City of North Charleston in developing and sustaining a high performance organizational culture.

Other highlights and achievements for the Human Resources Department in 2009:

- Received 1,577 applications for employment
- Hired 99 full-time employees, 23 part time employees and 127 temporary employees
- Conducted new employee orientation for 106 employees
- Received and responded to 33 subpoenas for employee personnel records
- 75 employees attended the Employee Wellness fair in May 2009 that included various tests for personal medical assessments
- Coordinated H1N1 and seasonal flu shots for over 500 employees and met with management staff to develop a pandemic flu plan
- Coordinated health, prescription and dental benefits for all City and retired employees
- Conducted training sessions in the Police Department for recruitment and interviewing strategies for its re-accreditation process.
- Conducted training sessions for all employees City-wide for the flexible spending program
- Implemented the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) program that ties into the City's current performance evaluation traits
- Organized the Employee Wellness Committee with a representative from each department.
- Assisted in organizing the grand opening for the new Employee Health Club, and processed over 700 liability waiver forms for employees

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Our Information Systems Department continually strives to provide City employees with up to date hardware and software solutions. This effort enables City employees to serve our citizens in the most efficient and expedient manner.

Special projects, which the IS department has successfully completed, include the installation of a wireless network providing internet access to our visitors that covers our entire City Hall.

The Fire departments' Mobil data project was completed, allowing our firefighters in the trucks to access CAD data, fire records data, and to self dispatch themselves to calls and update their status while on the calls.

The IS department automated and streamlined many reports from the Financial software used by the City, including annual and sick leave reports, insurance reports and budget preparation reports.

The GIS department has incorporated new data layers into ArcSDE as well as continuing to maintain and upgrade current data. GIS obtained 2009 oblique aerial photography from Pictometry and purchased Pictometry's online solution called POL.

GIS created several new internal websites for annexations and the comprehensive development plan. The GIS department assisted with the census update of local addresses and the appeal process.

ONLINE SERVICES

The City contracted with GovQA to implement its online Service and Information Centers. The Service Center allows citizens to input requests for service. Each request is set up with work flow and escalation rules and auto-routing capabilities to control and manage the request through completion.

The Information Center allows citizens to go online to search and quickly find answers to questions pertaining to city services. The knowledge base automatically collects answers and self-grows with new information that can be used in the future to service other citizens.

These services can be accessed from the City's homepage (<http://www.northcharleston.org>) or directly at (<http://www.mygovhelp.org/northcharlestonsc/>)

PLANNING & MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT AND ZONING

The Department of Planning & Management enjoyed a busy year including positive advances on several fronts.

The Department focused on executing the recommendations of the Comprehensive Development Plan. In 2009, the following were implemented:

- Adopted a revised tree protection ordinance
- Adopted a Riparian buffer ordinance creating 50' buffer areas adjacent to tidal and non-tidal creeks on new development sites
- Adopted revisions to the Single Family district that allow for detached Garden and Cluster unit development on two acre sites in designated areas
- Adopted a new Sidewalk Dining ordinance
- Adopted a revised Limited Business, General Business and Commercial Redevelopment District ordinance
- Initiated a proposed revision to the Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial zoning districts
- Initiated a proposed revision to create an ordinance to regulate portable storage units
- Worked with the BCDCOG on examining the traffic benefits of the proposed extension of the Palmetto Commerce Parkway project below Ashley Phosphate Road
- Adopted an ordinance creating a more flexible, general purpose Office District
- Minor modifications to the recently updated comprehensive development plan Future Land Use map

Staff worked with the Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities (LAMC), a nonprofit organization founded for the purpose of advocating environmental justice and promoting community development, education, employment, quality housing, and community involvement for the study area neighborhoods, to complete the LAMC Revitalization Plan. Launched in February 2009, the Revitalization plan presents a vision for the future of the LAMC area and sets a clear action plan for community revitalization of seven economically distressed neighborhoods: Accabee, Chicora/Cherokee, Five Mile, Howard Heights, Liberty Hill, Union Heights and Windsor Place.

The City of North Charleston was awarded a national EPA Environmental Justice Award this past December for its collaborative partnership with LAMC and the Mitigation Agreement Commission.

The South Carolina State Ports Authority (SCSPA) is providing funding for the Community Mitigation Plan. In December 2009, SCSPA Board Secretary John F. Hassell III presented a \$300,000 check to the City representing the third installment of the funding, bringing received amount to \$1,350,000 of the \$4 million total to be accepted.

In anticipation of the 2010 Census, the Zoning Department focused on ensuring correct addresses are posted throughout the City to optimize the delivery of the US Census forms. Correct addressing also has an important public safety benefit.

Significant progress was made on implementation of the Middle Dorchester Corridor Signage and buffering upgrades with approximately 33% (79 signs) of all nonconforming signs coming into compliance. This work is expected to continue in 2010.

In an effort to improve the appearance of the City's streetscapes, the Department performed special enforcement to validate compliance with the City's Dumpster Screening Regulations. This regulation requires commercial dumpsters to not be visible from the roadways.

Staff continued work on its city-wide inventory of shipping containers, including enforcement of unlawful container storage uses in a number of locations.

The Community Development Block Grant Program assists residents through various federally funded housing programs. Through non-profit partnerships, such as Midland Park Community Ministries, Metanoia, Coastal Community Foundation, CDBG received funding to further assist families throughout the City. Also, CDBG funding contributed towards the installation of sidewalks in four low and moderate income neighborhoods in the City.

By partnering with the Sustainability Institute, homes that participated in the rehabilitation program also received an energy audit. Recommendations from this audit were included in the improvements to the home, resulting in long term energy savings for the homeowner.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

This past year was exciting and challenging for our Police department. The Department's efforts have resulted in a significant decrease in every category of violent and non-violent crime, as well as improved relations between the Department and citizens.

In 2009, homicides decreased by 21%; rape decreased by 8%; aggravated assaults dropped 22%; and robbery saw a 32% reduction. Overall, we saw a 26% reduction in violent index crime. In addition, business and person robberies decreased 39% and 30% respectively. Aggravated assaults with a firearm dropped 25% and violent crime committed with firearms dropped 37% for the year.

Burglary decreased 14%; larceny decreased 4%; and motor vehicle theft saw a 22% reduction for an overall 8% reduction in non-violent index crime.

DUI arrests increased 115% over 2008; while vehicle accidents declined by 6%.

2009 also brought change within the police department's uniform patrol division designed to improve efficiency. The restructuring allowed the following for the department:

- Increased trust between police officers and the community. Officers are now permanently assigned to a geographic area. This greatly increases the officers knowledge of the assigned area and allows the community to get to know the assigned officer.
- Created accountability in the police department at the officer and zone level. We have appointed 54 zone officers that are accountable for what happens in their zone when they are working. Zone officers were provided with Interview and Interrogation Techniques Training and Problem Solving Training.
- Organized problem solving in our neighborhoods. We assigned our Corporals and Neighborhood Resource Officers as our community policing and problem solving coordinators at the neighborhood and zone level. They attend neighborhood meetings and increase our responsiveness to the needs of our residents and business owners. These officers received Problem Solving and Crime Prevention Training.
- Decreased travel time for calls for service, thereby increasing efficiency in fuel usage.
- Equalized the calls for service work load within each bureau of the Patrol Division.
- Equalized the span of control of our supervision assigned to the Patrol Division.

In 2009, the Department implemented a program to take rookie officers who had just graduated from the Criminal Justice Academy and place them in the communities that they serve prior to hitting the beat as a cop. The immersion project required the officers to spend five days being exposed to the Hispanic, African American and homeless communities. It is within these communities that we have the most violence and other crime problems. The officers conducted interviews, attended diversity presentations, and even served food at a Homeless Shelter kitchen.

As a result of this training, each new officer begins their career with a deeper understanding and respect for our community members and leaders. This program will become a part of our training curriculum.

As part of their commitment to reducing gun violence in the City of North Charleston, the Police Department's Community Panel held its 2nd Annual Gun Buy-back on Saturday, December 12, 2009. The gun buy-back initiative is an opportunity for citizens to turn in weapons to authorities with no questions asked, in exchange for a gift card.

During this year's gun buyback, 99 handguns and assault weapons and 28 shotguns/rifles were collected. After the weapons are processed by the police department, they will be melted down and used for artwork.

In March 17, 2007 the Police Department received National Accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Specifically, CALEA's goals are: to: strengthen crime prevention and control capabilities; formalize essential management procedures; establish fair and nondiscriminatory personnel practices; improve service delivery; solidify interagency cooperation and coordination; and increase community and staff confidence in the agency.

Every three years agencies are required to pass a rigorous re-accreditation process where CALEA assessors examine the department's policies and procedures, make site visits and meet with citizens and community leaders to ensure that the department continues to remain in compliance with CALEA standards.

In December 2009 CALEA assessors completed the re-accreditation process for our Police Department and have recommended to the Commission that the North Charleston Police Department once again be approved for accreditation.

The North Charleston Police Department will continue to provide professional public safety services, while working in partnership with the citizens of North Charleston to identify, prevent and solve the problems of crime, social disorder and neighborhood decay; thereby, improving the quality of life in our community.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Public Works Department is responsible for engineering, infrastructure maintenance, solid waste disposal, storm water ordinance, traffic signs and signals, landscaping, city facilities maintenance and repair, fleet maintenance and construction contract administration.

The Streets, Sidewalks and Drainage Divisions maintained over 100 miles of open ditch, in addition to piped drainage. The length of right-of-way maintained by the Department exceeded one million feet. The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Stormwater permit was finalized and became effective on July 1, 2008. NPDES established the rules and guidelines for the City's efforts in reducing the amount of pollutants in stormwater runoff. The drainage crews will perform a vital role in the application and enforcement of these new rules and regulations.

Household garbage pick-up exceeded 29,100 tons and bulk trash pick-up totaled over 21,800 tons. Newly constructed home roll cart distribution totaled 435 carts with the majority distributed to homes in the northwest portion of the City. Dorchester County recycling totaled over 290 tons.

The Facilities Maintenance division performs routine repairs and maintenance on 122 City buildings and over 70 parks, playgrounds, playing fields and courts. The Facilities Evaluation Program, implemented in 2007, helped to support the Facility Maintenance Improvement Program in the Facilities Maintenance division. The staff's knowledge and experience proved indispensable in the identification and evaluation of the scope of repair work and maintenance required for the execution of City-Wide Comprehensive Capital Improvements and Repair Program.

The City Garage made great strides in 2009 by using a two month strategic analysis that has improved procedures, operations, and efficiency. City-wide, as a result of the changes that were made, \$322,000 in savings was realized on vehicle repair in 2009 compared to the amount in 2008. The City Garage performed scheduled Preventive Maintenance Inspections and repairs on the city's fleet of more than 8,400 pieces of equipment. The City Garage's down time on vehicles also declined from 37 hours to six hours to maximize employee efficiency and vehicle/equipment turn around.

In 2009, the Landscape Division achieved the following:

- Continued its beautification efforts with its involvement in two large enhancement projects, including new landscaping at Park Circle and day-lighting/landscape improvements along I-26 at Montague Avenue
- In the effort of reestablishing Four Poles Park as a passive park, clearing and under-brushing was performed
- Over 14,000 shrubs, trees, and perennials have been added to the City's landscape from these projects and normal yearly plantings
- During the year, the ground crews were responsible for litter pickup, mowing and trimming over 9,800 acres of City property and several hundred more acres were maintained through annual service contracts

The Urban Forestry crew managed to make the City's public areas and streets safer and more pleasing in appearance by removing and pruning over 2,900 trees in various areas throughout North Charleston. Our Urban Forester continues to work with the Planning Department on tree protection and preservation issues to sustain the City's forested acreage.

The Beautification office was involved in several events, including the Day of Caring and City Year/CSX beautification event. These events included 2,500 volunteers, totaling over 10,000 man-hours.

The Keep North Charleston Beautiful program received a \$10,000 grant from the UPS Foundation's Global Volunteer Month Environmental Challenge and an \$8,000 grant from Palmetto Pride.

The Traffic Signal/Electrical division is responsible for the maintenance and upgrades of over 110 traffic signals, as well as the fabrication, installation, and maintenance of over 1,000 street and highway signs throughout the City. During 2009, the division responded to service calls and complaints regarding traffic signs and signals, including the installation of two new traffic signal intersections. The Electrical division responded to 700 service calls for the maintenance and repair of electrical and HVAC systems of many of the 120 buildings and 70 parks, playgrounds, ball fields and tennis courts owned by the City. The Traffic Signal/Electrical division utilized extensive experience and cutting edge technology to serve the many needs of the City and public.

PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

The City of North Charleston Purchasing Department is the smallest Department within the City, consisting of four employees. This department is responsible for providing services to all City departments involving procurement of supplies, equipment, services and construction. The Fleet Manager is also located under the Purchasing Department and oversees and monitors vehicle replacement, repair costs and scheduled maintenance.

During this fiscal year, the Purchasing Department has processed 20 formal bid packages for equipment, construction, or services in excess of \$2 million, obtained 24 price quotes for purchases of less than \$25,000 and processed 6,598 purchase orders.

The Purchasing Department is also responsible for disposing of excess, obsolete and confiscated equipment and goods. The auctions that have been held this year have resulted in additional revenue in excess of \$98,000.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The North Charleston Recreation Department (NCRD) takes great pride in serving our citizens for a lifetime. Its goal is to meet the recreation needs of all residents, as well as visitors to our wonderful City. NCRD offers programs to pre-school children through senior adults.

The Afterschool Program continues to provide a structured and safe environment for our children. Presently, we operate 12 Afterschool Programs in local community centers with 300 children participating daily. Through partnerships, we are currently in all 13 schools in Charleston County District 4, providing the recreation component to the Afterschool Programs.

Summer Camp 2009 was a success with over 700 campers participating during the nine week camp session. Campers participated in a full day of activities including sports, crafts, music, field trips, and special activities. Registration for Summer Camp 2010 begins February 8, 2010. One great benefit to our Summer Camp Program is the Summer Feeding Program, providing lunch daily for our campers.

Fishing camp is one of our newest additions to our Summer Program. This camp provides an opportunity for 14 children to learn and experience one week of the art of fishing and safety. The children have hands-on training with different types of rods, reels, baits, and lures, and the Department of Natural Resources hosts a field trip on the Fabulous Series to Morris Island for a day of educational fishing.

Once again our "Children's Festival" at the first of May served as the kick-off event for the North Charleston Cultural Arts Festival with over 600 children in attendance.

Over 900 preschoolers attended Winter Wonderland 2009 at Armory Park, proving to be a popular two day Christmas event that continues to grow.

The City's hosted its eight week Summer Feeding Program at 16 community centers and several church sites in North Charleston, ensuring that young people, 18 years old and under, were offered a balanced lunch daily.

"JOY" continues to be offered to the City's elderly population, providing a variety of senior citizen activities. This year, the Whipper Barony Community Center added a senior group that now participates in many of the "JOY" programming. We have added several activities to our senior programming through partnerships with local businesses. We now offer indoor water aerobics, golf, and bowling. Our bowling partner is Sandpiper Lanes on Ashley Phosphate.

Our Line Dancing Class continues to be a favorite, averaging between 50 and 60 most weeks. Merrill Ridgeway, our longtime instructor of choice, recently added a beginner's class to meet the need of first timers.

The City's Square Dancing group, which meets weekly for classes, hosted a 'Weekend of Square Dancing' with over 200 dancers traveling to North Charleston from across the State.

We are in our second year of the Contra Folk Dance Club. This group meets twice a month and usually fills the Felix C. Davis Community Center auditorium with contra dance enthusiasts. During the spring they hosted the "Bug Stomp," a popular weekend. Seven states were represented by 300 plus attendees. A special note to this event, 100% of the waste was recycled.

In an effort to revive the Live Oak Senior Center, we began a lunch program on Tuesdays and Thursdays in conjunction with a local ministry program. Over an eight week period, approximately 800 meals were served.

Last spring, the NCRD participated in the senior vouchers program for seniors funded by DHEC. Seniors who meet the criteria were given a \$25 voucher to be used at area Farmers Markets. Distribution totaled approximately 300 vouchers to North Charleston seniors.

The North Charleston Farmers Market served over 200 people each Thursday from April to October. Apart from offering fresh, locally grown vegetables and fruits, craft vendors and music performances enhanced the market.

The 2009 April's Finest Senior Softball Classic was held at MWV/KapStone Park. This year's event featured the top 38 teams in the United States. This tournament is the largest Softball Players Association National Qualifier in the country.

Other adult activities in 2009 included:

- Softball leagues with over 740 participants
- Flag football, in conjunction with the World Adult Kickball Association Lowcountry League with over 37 teams totaling 555 men
- Basketball at the Danny Jones Complex with 18 teams
- The wheelchair basketball program at Northwood Park gym. North Charleston's Rolling Hurricanes hosted its annual "Wheels & Steals" tournament with six teams throughout the southeast
- Friday Night Mixers Bowling with 116 participants

In 2009, the Adult Athletics Division provided recreational opportunities for 2,245 adult athletes through regular programming and special events.

The North Charleston Recreation Department's Athletic Programs served nearly 3,200 youth between the ages of 4 – 19 years old in 2009. These programs also attracted over 550 volunteer coaches and parents.

In 2009, the NCRD once again hosted the Dixie Majors World Series at Collins Park and Charleston Southern University. The Opening Ceremony for the event was held at the North Charleston Coliseum. This event brought nearly 3,000 visitors to our beautiful city. The City's 15 – 16 Dixie Pre-Majors took 2nd place in their division and the 17 – 19 Dixie Majors won the 2009 Dixie Majors Championship. Separately, our 7 – 8 Machine Pitch team from the Northwoods area advanced to the State Tournament in Lexington, SC.

Other athletic programs in 2009 included:

- Youth basketball with over 1,000 boys and girls
- Youth football/cheerleading with over 500 participants
- Youth soccer with over 600 participants

In addition to our annual programs, the North Charleston Recreation Department also hosted a Punt, Pass and Kick Competition, a Pitch, Hit and Run Competition and a Free Throw Shootout.

In 2009, over 600 middle school students from four schools participated in football, basketball, soccer, volleyball, track/field programs, step team and cheerleading.

On November 11, over 480 veterans paid tribute to those in past and present wars. In special recognition, veterans received a specially designed medal given in gratitude for their service to our country. Our 2009 guest speaker was Retired Lt. Col Robert Mastrion, USMC. The City of North Charleston's Veterans Day Celebration is the largest of its kind in the State of South Carolina.

Our facilities continue to be used by groups, civic clubs and community classes. Felix C. Davis Community Center at Park Circle alone provides a meeting and class space for square dance groups, neighborhood councils, dog training, Seniorcize, senior line dancing, youth dance classes, AARP tax preparation, yoga, coin club, Scottish dancing, senior citizen china painting, Red Hat Ladies, Council of Garden Clubs of Greater Charleston, sorority chapters, wedding receptions, family reunions, community events and more.

CULTURAL ARTS DEPARTMENT

The North Charleston Cultural Arts Department provides a variety of programs and services that contribute to the City's quality of life as a great place to live, work and play. A vast array of multi-discipline arts and history initiatives touched the lives of 95,000 program participants, with an additional 200,000 people served through public facilities.

Our General Public Programs reach residents and visitors from all backgrounds and walks of life through a variety of free and fee based activities throughout the year. A total of 102 performances, 40 art exhibitions and 97 classes were presented last year. Highlights included:

- Coordinating a Dinner Theater Series for adults
- Working to incorporate exhibit space for the City Public Art Collection into the new City Hall and revising the collection catalog
- Providing alternating musical concerts and art demonstrations at the North Charleston Farmer's Market
- Presenting the Charleston Symphony Orchestra Gospel Choir in the Martin Luther King Concert
- Coordinating the Children's Art and Drama Summer Camps
- Presenting the USAF Heritage of America Concert Band in a Holiday Concert

- Coordinating an African/American Quilt Exhibit at the SC State Museum
- Presenting the nine day, multi-discipline North Charleston Arts Festival

Outreach Programs are free programs geared to reach our city's youth, senior citizens, low-income residents, youth at risk, and underserved populations. These programs are generally held on-site in schools and city facilities throughout the City. Last year, a total of 89 outreach programs were conducted with 14,491 participants. Examples include:

- Providing School Outreach Programs for city schools and featuring an array of educational programs utilizing all art disciplines
- Providing an arts component in city sponsored after-school elementary school programs
- Presenting a patriotic music concert for Veterans
- Supporting schools seeking to obtain state Arts in Basic Curriculum status
- Providing free monthly art and craft workshops for adults and seniors
- Working with the VSAarts of South Carolina for people with disabilities
- Creating an outdoor sculpture installation with students from Carolina Youth Development and sculptor Michael Morrison, 2008/09 Artist in Residence

Artist Assistance initiatives serve the dual purpose of strengthening the city's quality of life and building a strong foundation for future economic growth. Our facilities are at full capacity and we are experiencing escalating interest as City initiatives move forward to meet growing facility needs. Last year, the Cultural Arts Department assisted 212 arts organizations and 93 individual artists from every art discipline ranging from the local to state levels. Examples include:

- Providing artists and cultural organizations with: small grants, technical assistance, publicity assistance, affordable/donated space, information sharing, referrals, and studio/production/performance space relocation assistance
- Coordinating the Annual Fine Art and Craft Co-op
- Co-sponsoring the Low Country Quarterly Arts Grants partnership with the City of Charleston and SC Arts Commission
- Providing opportunities for artists and fine craft artisans to sell their work at the Arts Festival, Christmas Festival and City Gallery and Gift Shop
- Providing internships and shadowing opportunities for college students studying the arts or arts administration

Our Economic Development efforts involved active partnering with the community to develop local and regional initiatives to advance tourism and business. Examples include:

- Participating in local and state organizations that aid in the development of arts related businesses
- Working with map companies and the CVB to create residential and tourism maps
- Providing information for local, state and national publications
- Promoting tourism development and marketing
- Providing program development information as requested for area government entities
- Assisting the local/state film industry
- Providing arts related office and studio incubator spaces
- Working with developers and merchants associations as requested

The Department's City History initiatives focus on increasing public knowledge of the area's unique history, tourism development and work as requested with city officials and contracted professionals on projects related to history, preservation and aesthetics. Examples include:

- Working to establish a City History and Archive Room in the new City Hall and developing an inventory/implementation system
- Incorporating donated historic street markers into a city park landscape
- Assisting various groups that are actively involved in the research, documentation and highlighting the history as it pertains to our city
- Collecting appropriate photographs, documents and items that pertain to area history

This year the department also completed a review and revision of promotional print materials and web formats and expanded marketing efforts through the addition of social media and electronic communications.

The challenges of the current economy have not diminished participants' interest in the department's programs and prospects for potential developments in the future. The department's staff and 100+ volunteers are committed to the development and implementation of programs and services that enhance the quality of life experience of our citizens, visitors, and businesses. The

public may keep up to date with program offerings by checking the Cultural Arts Department's section of the city's web page, <http://www.northcharleston.org> or by contacting the office and signing up for monthly e-newsletter or quarterly print calendar updates.

CONVENTION CENTER COMPLEX

Since its establishment in August, 1999, the Charleston Area Convention Center Complex has attracted millions of guests and visitors to the greater Charleston area and contributed significantly to the regional and local economy. The Complex includes exhibition halls, ball rooms and meeting rooms, the Performing Arts Center, the North Charleston Coliseum and the Embassy Suites. In 2009, booking highlights included Eagles, Taylor Swift, Cirque du Soleil, Jerry Seinfeld, John Legend, Willie Nelson, Stingrays Kelly Cup Championship, Black Expo and Blackbaud International Convention.

SMG realized over \$418,000 in operating budget savings resulting in an operating deficit of only \$575,000. After deducting the operating deficit, \$1,056,000 net cash revenues were generated for the City of North Charleston.

In 2009, the Complex drew 1.2 million visitors which represent a decrease of 7.6% from 2008, due to the economic recession. The Office of Tourism Analysis at the College of Charleston estimates that \$40.0 million (\$49.3 million in 2008) in economic impact can be directly attributed to the Convention Complex and the visitors it serves. Direct tax revenue for the complex is estimated at \$4.9 million (\$6.0 million in 2008). But the economic impact of the Charleston Area Convention Center Complex does not stop here. Spending at the complex, as well as the nearby hotels and restaurants, ripples through the local economy. In addition, both the owners and employees of these hospitality businesses spend part of their income purchasing local goods and services, which generates additional business income supporting more local jobs.

Using conservative assumptions about the ripple effects created by the \$40.0 million in sales, we estimate that the total economic impact to the Charleston area amounts to \$66.2 million (\$73.0 million in 2008), of which \$22.1 million (\$27.2 million in 2008) are in wages earned locally.

The above estimates should be considered conservative in nature given that: 1) The number of overnight visitors was discounted by one third to one half; 2) The expenditures of meeting planners, exhibitors, athletes, and performers were not estimated; and 3) City/County property taxes for the convention center hotels, though considerable, were not included. If such impacts were included, the total impact would have been higher.

Economic Impact Estimates				
	Coliseum	Exhibition Halls & Ballrooms	Performing Art Center	Total
Guests	536K	390K	230K	1.2M
Ratio of Local Guests	80%	50%	75%	68%
Ratio of Non-Local Guests	20%	50%	25%	32%
Total Non-Local Visitor Days	107K	195K	58K	360K
Ratios of Overnights (Discount of Nights Stayed)	0.50	0.67	0.50	0.59
Total visitor Nights	54K	130K	29K	212K
Average Daily Expenditures per Visitor Per Day	\$151	\$212	\$151	\$188
Total Direct Impact	\$8.1M	\$27.6M	\$4.3M	\$40.0M
IMPLAN Multipliers	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66
Total Impact-Direct, Indirect, and Induced Impacts	\$13.4M	\$45.7M	\$7.2M	\$66.2M
Total Labor Earnings	\$4.5M	\$15.2M	\$2.4M	\$22.1M
State Sales Tax	\$524K	\$1,791K	\$281M	\$3.2M
State Accommodation Tax	\$68K	\$232K	\$37K	\$337K
Charleston County Accommodation Tax	\$68K	\$232K	\$37K	\$337K
City of North Charleston Accommodation Tax	\$68K	\$232K	\$37K	\$337K
Local Option Sales Tax	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$400K
Bond Fees	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$199K
Local Hospitality Tax	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$181K
State Admission Tax	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$478K
Total Tax Collected				\$4.9M

Note:

These estimates are produced in a conservative fashion:

1. The number of overnight visitors was discounted by one third to one half

2. The expenditures of meeting planners, exhibitors, athletes, and performers are not estimated
3. City/County property taxes for the convention center hotels, though considerable, were not included

FIRE MUSEUM

The hallway of the Fire Museum reads, "Enter this place to learn; Leave this place to share." 2009 has been a year of many entrances into the Museum and instances of sharing. Although tourism and attraction visitation generally experienced a downturn for 2009, the Fire Museum enjoyed a visitorship of approximately 29,000 people. This translates into a 12.5% increase in visitorship from 2008. The Fire Museum is indeed becoming better known, not only throughout the area, but all over the state and beyond. We are the primary destination for many of our visitors as the word spreads.

During the North Charleston Cultural Arts Festival, the Fire Museum acted as host for film events. This allowed exposure to an audience that we may not have reached otherwise. The website for the Museum has been updated and has added a variety of features, including fire escape plans and current subjects of interest such as holiday safety. The website (<http://www.legacyofheroes.com>) is being utilized as an outreach tool to teach life and fire safety, as well as a location for general Fire Museum information.

In partnership with Safe Kids, the 2nd Annual Safe Kids Day was held at the Museum. This event was celebrated in conjunction with the 2nd Anniversary of the opening of the Museum. The event saw an increase in attendance from last year and enjoyed a larger variety of participating sponsors. 18 inspection and installation checks were performed this past year. The Fire Museum applied and received a grant from the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation and received an AED (automatic external defibrillator). All personnel were trained on the use of the AED as well as in CPR.

The Fire Museum continues to be a unique and exciting location for seminars, holiday parties, corporate events, luncheons and other events. This year we hosted 15 after-hours rentals, 13 special events, and several meetings of the South Carolina Heritage Corridor and staff. Also, 69 birthdays were hosted at the Fire Museum.

Another exciting special event hosted by the Fire Museum was the 2nd Annual All American Fire Muster. A good time was had by all as area fire personnel competed in the antique art of hand pump engine spraying and bucket brigades. The event was well attended and we hope to be able to continue to grow this event on an annual basis. The Fire Museum acted as host for the 2009 CERT Expo, exposing and introducing our attraction and services to another set of interested personnel. After-hours rentals are increasing and we hope to build on this foundation to continue to act as a unique and special event venue.

The Fire Museum is also meeting its stated mission by increasing the number of field trips and types of field trips available. Schools from across the Lowcountry make this a must-do field trip every year. In 2009 over 213 scheduled field trips came through the Fire Museum, as well as several drop-in field trips. These groups include area public schools, private schools, and home schools. Other groups that schedule tours with us include the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, retirement homes, assisted care groups, youth and elder day care programs and church groups. Badge programs particular to a visit to the Fire Museum are being developed with input from the Boy Scouts to further their visitorship.

This past summer we hosted a special focus group of students from across the state of South Carolina that was participating in an event at the Coliseum. We facilitated the touring of over 300 middle school students in just over four hours. Another unique event that we hosted was a large group of YMCA Spelling Bee champions from California. They were amazed by the exhibits and the antique apparatus, and enjoyed meeting and eating in our lobby space.

The Fire Museum continues to honor the memory of the Charleston 9 by waiving fees on the anniversary of the tragedy. We find that those who visit us on that day are most appreciative of the honor of these men and the support the City of North Charleston has shown in this tragedy.

Another way that the Fire Museum maintains visibility in the public is through participating in local parades and other events such as 4th of July celebrations and car shows with our restored 1921 American LaFrance vehicle. Acting as an ambassador for the Fire Museum, the vehicle is fun way to advertise.

We continue to work with travel publications and media to ensure the public knows of our facility. Toward that end we elected to participate in the Convention and Visitors Bureau Tourist In Your Own Town Program. This exposes the Museum to an audience which will in turn bring in additional guests. Also, we participate in a reciprocity program established by local plantations, museums and other attractions. These programs are important in garnering references to the Fire Museum for tourists who are visiting the Charleston area.

This past year, the Museum welcomed the addition of a 1785 hand pumper "enjin," making it the oldest apparatus in the building. Also, we are enjoying the loan of a beautifully-restored 1855 hand pumper engine. It is displayed in our lobby for all to enjoy. In 2009 the Fire Museum was approached by the Ray Case family regarding a donation to be used to for an exhibit that would be

appealing to children. Plans are underway for the development of this exhibit as an addition to the interactive exhibits that already delight our visitors and reinforce the lessons learned here.

Although the Fire Museum is less than three years old, we have already become an attraction that is a destination point for not only local citizens but tourists visiting our area. We were recently toured by the State Welcome Centers personnel and they continue to direct visitors our way. It is gratifying to note that many of our visitors are citizens of North Charleston enjoying this wonderful amenity provided by the City.

The Fire Museum continues to grow in its visitorship. We are appreciative of the increasing interest in what the Museum has to offer as a destination point for fun, life safety lessons, and heritage and history lessons. We strive to provide education and fun as our visitors “enter this place to learn and leave this place to share.”

At the end of August 2009, the City of North Charleston moved into its new City Hall located at 2500 City Hall Lane. The \$37.5 million facility is being paid for with Tax Increment Finance funds generated from developments around Centre Pointe. The new City Hall is estimated to be paid in full within eight years without allocating any funds from the City’s general budget.

The building itself has been constructed in anticipation of becoming LEED Certified. Energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to our impacts were all kept in mind during the construction process. A few of the green features include a wealth of natural lighting, waterless urinals, and carpets made from recycled materials.

City Hall will remain the Emergency Operations Center during times of disasters. The building’s steel was strengthened to withstand earthquakes and hurricanes with all exterior glass being impact resistant.

Fire Administration, Cultural Arts, Recreation, Code Enforcement, Purchasing, and Legal personnel were all scattered throughout the City. All departments, excluding Public Works, are now housed at a single location. This not only cuts fuel and time consumption, but enhances City management.

The City’s permitting process has been simplified. The new City Hall features a ‘One-Stop Shop’ for permitting. Planning, Building, Zoning, and Finance all share one lobby with accessible walkup customer windows. Instead of traveling from one floor to the next, as in the previous City Hall, one only has to walk a few feet to the next window. To further convenience the public, kiosks will be available in the near future to apply for permits in the lobby.

When the previous City Hall was opened in 1979, the City was a fraction of its current size. Fast forward 30 years, and the facility became cramped and outdated. Looking to the future, the City has planned for inevitable growth with accommodations for a 25% employee expansion.

This past year, City Council approved leasing space in the new City Hall to the Law Offices of J. Brady Hair. Our full legal staff is now located conveniently under the same roof, cutting down on travel costs and greatly increasing response time.

Apart from City employees, the Charleston County Legislative Delegation, Crimestoppers, and Coastal Crisis Chaplaincy are calling the new City Hall home.

Trident United Way’s Day of Caring, a joint effort between the City, Trident United Way, and the Navy Nuclear Power School was a great success. The Navy Nuclear Power School had over 300 attendees dedicate an afternoon to helping the Liberty Hill neighborhood. Over 20 houses were power washed and painted, as well as the interior of the Felix Pinckney Community Center. A massive trash pick up occurred along the roads, overgrown lots were cut and cleaned, and minor home repair work was completed.

For nearly three years, the City has wrangled with the taxi cab companies to ensure our citizens and visitors are safe and treated fairly. The Taxi Compliance Office moved into the Executive Department this past year. Enforcement of the City’s Taxi Cab Ordinance has been greatly increased. Every year, taxicabs in North Charleston must undergo inspection and receive certification. Driving history and background are researched to ensure there are no past indiscretions that may present a danger to occupants of their vehicle, including whether or not the driver is a registered sex offender. The taxicab itself is inspected for conditions and equipment, ensuring it is clean and in good working order.

In January 2008, the City took a more active role in Education, Youth, and Families. The coordinator, Kyle Lahm, was hired and efforts were focused on directing activities in the community and finding ways to promote youth and families, as well as encouraging a conscious effort on improvement in North Charleston’s schools.

This past summer, two AmeriCorps VISTA members were brought into the Office on Education, Youth, and Family to assist the City in implementing its Afterschool Initiative. The VISTA Members perform regular site visits, are developing evaluation tools and devising a plan to enhance the City's involvement in the programs.

The City also gave back to the community through its quarterly blood drives in conjunction with the American Red Cross. In 2009, the City donated 266 pints of blood to bring our four year total to 941 pints. We will strive to continue our partnership with the American Red Cross and hope to see our numbers increase throughout 2010.

Improvements were realized with the construction and renovations of several schools within North Charleston. The Zucker Middle School, with an emphasis on the sciences, opened its doors for the 2009-2010 school year. In addition to the students zoned for the school, there are 100 seats available for students who are zoned for Morningside Middle or Alice Birney Middle. Only students who live in North Charleston may apply for admission to Zucker Middle.

The School of the Arts, a Charleston County School District magnet school, after spending 14 years in the same building, moved across the street into its new \$59.3 million facility designed to meet their unique needs. At more than twice the size of the previous building, the school includes an academic building, as well as a fine arts building to house band, choral, orchestra and dance. In March of this year, the school's 600 seat performing arts center will be completed.

Previously located on the former Navy Base in an aging building, the Academic Magnet High School will move into its new school located on the same campus as the School of the Arts in August 2010. Academic Magnet High School will move into its new facility ranked as the top magnet high school in the US, according to US News & World Report.

Also, expansions and upgrades were made to the North Charleston High School campus as part of a multi-million dollar renovation project to transform the facility into a world-class, 21st century learning environment.

In October 2009, Mayor R. Keith Summey celebrated his 15th year as Mayor of the City of North Charleston. Through a team effort of Mayor Summey, his administration, City Council, and city staff great strides have been made in improving the quality of life for the citizens of North Charleston.

Since the closing of Winn-Dixie at the Pinehaven Shopping Center, one of the major desires of the administration and the two City Council Members from the south end of the City has been to attract a grocery store to this region. We are happy to report that a Save-a-Lot will locate into a vacant building at the corner of Rivers and Durant Avenues.

In the coming year, great challenges will be faced with the economy remaining sluggish. It is the City of North Charleston's goal to continue to provide the best level of service to the City's citizens and visitors for the dollars we have.

Each Council Member truly cares about the citizens of North Charleston. They not only look at their district, but make decisions based on the greater good of the City as a whole. City Council ultimately has the same goal as the administration: to create a better quality of life for the citizens of our community. The City is truly blessed to have this assembly working so harmoniously. We salute our City Council.

We have a wonderful future in North Charleston. No one knows exactly what the state of the economy may be over the next year, but North Charleston will be ready for whatever the future has in store. We hope God blesses the City of North Charleston, our State and this great nation, but most importantly, we hope he blesses you individually. We are one when it comes to the community, and together we will continue to be a strong City.

God Bless.