



Cities Mean **BUSINESS**

A PUBLICATION OF THE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA | ISSUE 1 | 2011

Homegrown businesses

**Partnerships between cities,
towns and small businesses
help fuel the economy**

Utilities key to growth

**Municipal utilities play a big
role in economic development**

*The Meridian, an artisan incubator
in Greenwood, on its opening day.*



You see a street.

We see a lifeline that is a hometown with planned traffic flow, fire stations, thousands of visitors each year, low unemployment rate, city parks and community centers for children of all ages. Our streets take us to our jobs, our churches, our fun places and even to grandma's house.

MASC Municipal Association
of South CarolinaSM

CONTENTS

7 Homegrown businesses

Small businesses help fuel the economy of cities, and many municipalities are taking extra steps to assist them.

By Amy Geier Edgar, Contributing writer

Cover photo: A crowd gathers outside Meridian, an artisan incubator that opened in Greenwood's downtown artisan district in 2008. (Photo courtesy city of Greenwood)



COVER STORY

Cities Mean BUSINESS

A publication of Municipal Association of South Carolina

1411 Gervais St., P.O. Box 12109
Columbia, SC 29211
803.799.9574
mail@masc.sc
www.masc.sc

Miriam Hair
*Executive Director,
Municipal Association of SC*

Reba Campbell
*Deputy Executive Director,
Municipal Association of SC*

Editorial staff
Meredith Waldrop
Mary Brantner

Contributing writers
Amy Geier Edgar

Published by

SC BIZ  NEWS

www.scbiznews.com



10 Working together

Cities play a direct role in regional economic development alliances.

By Amy Geier Edgar, Contributing writer



12 Utilities key to growth

Municipal utilities play important role in economic development

By Amy Geier Edgar, Contributing writer



14 State has overall competitive, positive business climate

By Amy Geier Edgar, Contributing writer



4 Letter from the Editor

By Reba Hull Campbell

5 Outlook and Opinion:

Small cities and towns see big benefits from regionalism

By Hal Johnson

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

Letter from the **EDITOR**

Cities and towns around South Carolina are increasingly becoming engaged in regional economic development efforts rather than trying to “go it alone,” as collaboration continues to become an important element in growing our state’s economy. This issue of *Cities Mean Business* magazine features the role of cities and towns in economic development from several perspectives and gives a snapshot of the state’s business climate.

As we move more toward economic development as a team sport rather than an individual sport, leaders in our cities and towns are becoming more and more involved in regional economic development initiatives. Read about how different variations on regional alliances provide cities and towns opportunities to be involved with economic development beyond their municipal boundaries for the benefit of the whole region.

Good examples of collaboration with higher education institutions and fledgling businesses can be seen in the work of business incubators in cities and towns around the state. Cities and towns can play a variety of roles in the development and support of incubators as a way to encourage new businesses to locate and stay in their hometowns. From high-tech research to small-town artisans, learn how cities are supporting local entrepreneurs through incubators.

One very important, but often behind-the-scenes, element of economic development is the availability of reliable utility services: water, sewer and electricity. In many cases, these utilities are provided by municipalities, and cities play an important role to ensure utility services are readily available for prospects. Read about how cities are preparing for future economic development projects by making long-term and strategic decisions about their utility services.



Reba Hull Campbell

Reba Hull Campbell

rcampbell@masc.sc

Editor

Thinking creatively

Small cities and towns see big benefits from regionalism

By Hal Johnson, president and CEO, Upstate SC Alliance



Hal Johnson

Bundling is not a new concept for small

businesses. It's a strategic tactic for companies serious about competing. Cell phone carriers, insurance companies, and the like, have long used bundling as a way to attract new customers, build market share and gain exposure for smaller brands that would otherwise be lost in the game. Banding together allows smaller companies to offer the optimum level of benefits and resources — it's a win/win strategy for everyone involved.

In the world of economic development, the concept of bundling operates in the form of regionalism, and smaller cities like Clinton, Union and Greer are reaping the benefits of bundling together. Regional marketing groups, like the Upstate SC Alliance, present opportunities for global reach and a unique channel for creating valuable partnerships that result in jobs and capital investment.

"To compete in today's economy, smaller cities need to think creatively in order to attract business," said Clinton Mayor Randy Randall. "The Alliance opened the doors for us to be part of a bigger playing field. It was time for us to be seen."

"The Alliance opened the doors for us to be part of a bigger playing field. It was time for us to be seen."

Mayor Randy Randall
Clinton, S.C.

For Clinton, thinking differently played a key role in landing a new pharmacy school downtown. Graduating its first class of 80 pharmacy students this past year, the Presbyterian College School of Pharmacy proved to be a catalyst the city needed for economic growth.

According to Randall, the project prompted new construction as the demand for more apartments increased;

more restaurants are popping up; and there's a noticeable boost in the population as more professors and their families move to Clinton. The college also reclaimed an existing building downtown, which adds to



Presbyterian College School of Pharmacy (Photo/Jonathan Hooks)



Southwest Airlines' decision to serve the Upstate was a game changing event for economic development. (Photo/Provided)

the appeal of the downtown area. Newcomers are locating in Clinton because of the collective amenities available in the region, and existing residents are realizing the advantages the school has on shaping the future.

For small cities like Clinton, the impact is not a one-time event. There's a trickle-down effect felt throughout the community as spin-offs are revealed. Most recently, Randall announced plans to launch a Center for Entrepreneurial Development downtown. Business projects like this have a lasting value because of the potential to attract business mentors who can influence a new workforce generation.

It's no secret: Businesses, like people, want to go where things are happening. As the location of one-half of the state's capital investments, the Upstate is fortunate to be the region where things are happening. Last year, we announced \$1.85 billion in capital investment, and more than 6,600 jobs were added to the area.

In addition, Southwest Airlines' decision to serve the Upstate was a game changing event for economic development.

Delivering outcomes like this is the result

Upstate SC Alliance announcements, 2010

\$1.85 billion
capital investment

> 6,600
jobs

of hard work and the commitment of strategic public and private partnerships. Success happens because leaders of our 10-county region think creatively and work regionally.

The Upstate offers a lot as a region, and we have a compelling story to tell. As an alliance of 10 counties and five cities, our mission is to market the Upstate, generate opportunities for job creation and stimulate capital investment, not to close the deals.


Our job is to convince corporate powerhouses why investing in the Upstate, versus China or South America (or Charlotte, N.C., or Birmingham, Ala.), is the right move. That's when the power of size becomes clear. Smaller cities are largely overlooked in the search — it's more about site elimination

than site selection. As part of a collective entity, contributions from small cities allow them a seat at the table.

Identifying industry sectors with the highest potential for attracting business was perhaps the most significant strategy of our long-term vision for growth. Industries like advanced materials, automotive, biosciences and energy are now the economic engines for our region's future.

Using these industries as our "guide posts" allows us to generate quality leads internationally as well as within our country. In 2010, our team led successful mission trips to China, Germany, Spain and Canada as well as a number of U.S. markets such as Detroit, St. Louis and Washington, D.C.

All types of partnerships have the potential to evolve from a regional strategy. Mayor Randall knows this firsthand and says being an involved partner of a regional alliance, like that of Upstate SC Alliance, took the city to another level.

Regionalism helps smaller cities gain economic traction, which strengthens our region as a whole. From a competitive standpoint, we know that's where we need to be. 

HOMEGROWN BUSINESSES

By Amy Geier Edgar

Small businesses help fuel the economy of cities, and many municipalities are taking extra steps to assist them.



Top: Joel Stevenson, executive director of the USC Columbia Technology Incubator, shares real-life examples in his entrepreneurship class at the Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina. Right: Stephenson with a few of the entrepreneurs that have taken his classes at the incubator. (Photos/Ashley Byrd)



Several South Carolina cities have business incubator programs that nurture emerging small businesses by providing a variety of business support services, shared resources and networking opportunities. Incubation programs seek to create or retain jobs in a community, foster a community’s entrepreneurial climate and grow the local economy.

Incubators typically are actual buildings that house a variety of small businesses. Office space is often leased at an affordable rate with flexible terms. In most cases, incubator businesses graduate out of the program within three to five years, creating opportunities for new firms to move in.

College campuses often are home to business incubators. These programs allow students to test their ideas and refine their business skills while learning from local businesses. The USC Columbia Technology Incubator works with Midlands Technical College to recruit, assist and deploy new technology-driven companies. The city of Columbia provides a \$1 a year lease for the building.

The most successful programs closely link local governments with local incubators. Na-

tionally, for example, the operations at the Louisiana Business and Technology Center at Louisiana State University are tied to the economic development strategies of the city of Baton Rouge, which helped establish the Center. Here in South Carolina, several cities have begun working closely with business incubators.

In Charleston, the city has invested in the Flagship, a downtown co-working business environment that offers flexible space for fledgling knowledge-based companies. The Flagship is also home to the city’s Business Development Office, which includes the Charleston Digital Corridor. The Digital Corridor attracts technology companies by serving as a portal to government, infrastructure, real estate and education needs, as well as venture capital, professional resources and a trained workforce.

That focus on jobs is carried over throughout the Lowcountry. The town of Mount Pleasant, which has been working closely with the Charleston Regional Development Authority, is making an investment in its own business incubator based on the results of a study by a coalition of creative professionals called Parliament.

The group found that there is a “cluster” of creative professionals in the Charleston area such as architects, graphic designers, historic preservationists and chefs. The Mount Pleasant Town Council decided to make an investment to foster this creative cluster, said Town Administrator Eric DeMoura.

The town is retrofitting a building into a business incubator, which can service up to eight businesses, called Biz Inc. Construction is underway, with the program set to begin by the spring, DeMoura said. The town’s Business Development Office will be located next to the Biz Inc. building, and the business development coordinator will serve as its manager.

“We’re hooking up these incubating businesses with the expertise of our business development folks who know what is out there and how to support them,” DeMoura said, adding that this support gives the small businesses “a better chance of succeeding and staying in this area.”

Potential businesses must apply for a spot in the program, and must qualify as a “creative” business. Once a business outgrows the

incubator, the Biz Inc. manager will work with outside agencies to relocate incubator companies in the town, DeMoura said. The incubator program also fits in as a piece of the downtown revitalization plan, he said.

The city of Greenwood also has worked closely with two different business incubators, a privately-owned artisan incubator and a not-for-profit biotechnology incubator.

The Greenwood-based South Carolina Biotechnology Incubation Program assists the development of life sciences companies as part of the state's efforts to build a knowledge-based economy. It serves as a center for biotechnology, research and development, and has worked with research centers such as the Greenwood Genetics Center, South Carolina's research universities and the Savannah River National Laboratory.

The city of Greenwood annexed the 215-acre research park, owned by the GGC non-profit institute, and provides city services at no taxable cost to GGC, Barrineau said.

Greenwood also supports its arts community, working closely with Meridian, a privately-owned artisan incubator in the Uptown with 12 working studios. The city provided the owner with a \$25,000 low interest bricks/mortar loan through the downtown development corporation and secured a \$20,000 façade grant, Barrineau said.


"The City of Greenwood is very focused on developing a creative energy in the downtown area," Barrineau said. "This energy typically encourages restaurant and boutique growth."

The city of Conway is home to a private business incubator. The Genesis Complex, which is operated by a local church, supports burgeoning businesses that aim to help the community through faith-based and social programs. The Genesis Complex, which was built three years ago, houses the Business Center that provides a professional atmosphere for new and growing businesses.



Meridian is an artisan incubator that opened in Greenwood's downtown artisan district in October 2008. The studio is the creation of Greenwood photographer Jon Holloway. The building previously operated as an auto parts store. (Photos courtesy of the city of Greenwood)

The center offers state-of-the-art technology and support services for the businesses, which currently include a group to help homeless women and a group that works on social issues such as teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, according to Kisha Hanna, support services coordinator.

The city of Conway has been supportive of the group's efforts and looks forward to a rich partnership, which could include computer training for city employees at the Business Center, said Assistant City Administrator Barbara Blain-Olds. 

CITIES PLAY DIRECT ROLES IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCES

By Amy Geier Edgar

These days, working alone just doesn't cut it.

Faced with a struggling economy and a competitive global marketplace, a number of municipalities have benefited by banding together with regional economic development alliances. When working together as a region, cities and towns have a greater chance of encouraging investment in their area, leading to more prosperity and better quality of life.

The regional approach has been successful in areas such as the Upstate, where the Upstate SC Alliance has been marketing the 10-county Upstate region globally since 2000. The group has focused on recruiting companies involved in the advanced materials, automotive, biosciences and energy fields, and the region is home to large employers such as Michelin North America, BMW Manufacturing Co. and Lockheed Martin Aircraft and Logistics.

The regional approach works in other areas of the state as well. All of the major prospects that have come to North Charleston — such as the Boeing assembly plant and the Clemson wind turbine project — were the result of coordination with the Charleston Regional Development Alliance, said North Charleston Economic Development Coordinator John Cawley.

The city has a close relationship with the CRDA, according to Ryan Johnson, public information assistant to North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey. North Charleston and other Lowcountry governmental entities play direct roles in CRDA on their board of directors and other task forces. There also is coordination among the city, CRDA and Charleston County when bringing in new industries and working on incentives and other economic development initiatives, Johnson added.



Boeing's decision to locate in North Charleston was the result of regional economic development efforts. (Photo/Leslie Burden)

It's important for cities to be involved in their region's economic development efforts for two main reasons, according to Karen Kuchenbecker, vice president of communications for CRDA. First, it's important for city leaders to understand the overall regional economic strategy so they can determine their own distinct role within the strategy, she said.

"For example, a city's leadership should consider which of the region's industry targets fit within the character and long-term development plans for their particular city. Some sectors just don't make sense for some municipalities," Kuchenbecker said. "If an industry is a fit, the city has to be able to support the kinds of businesses that comprise that sector. They have to have the right infrastructure, relevantly zoned real estate, the right permitting and access to an appropriate work force."

The second reason for city involvement, Kuchenbecker said, is to be sure the regional organization is aware of its city's particular

assets, and how they fit into the overall economic development strategy.

For example, a city might not be a good candidate for a new manufacturing plant but it could offer attractive lifestyle amenities for relocating executives. Another city might have the perfect attributes for a small technology company interested in a more rural setting, she said.

"One of the great things about a regional economic development effort is that it generates an overall awareness of the area so that each city has an opportunity to benefit — depending on what assets a company is looking for and where its employees choose to live," Kuchenbecker said. "The new Boeing assembly plant, for example, will attract employees from all over the region. All of our region's 27 municipalities will likely benefit from new spending and higher tax revenues. At the end of the day, our job is to attract new opportunities to this region. We couldn't do this without

the support, commitment and engagement of our region's city and county governments."

The city of Myrtle Beach has worked for years with the Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corp., and currently is partnering with Horry County to build the first phase of infrastructure for a new 400-acre International Technology and Aerospace Park on the former Air Force Base, according to city spokesman Mark Kruea.

The city is providing \$2.5 million in TIF bond proceeds for the initial roads, water and sewer to serve the site, while the county will provide an additional \$500,000. The site is adjacent to the runway for Myrtle Beach International Airport, so it's a great location for aviation-related businesses, Kruea added.

The focus with the International Technology and Aerospace Park project is on non-tourism job creation, said Dr. Phil Render, a city councilman who served on the MBREDC board in a city-appointed seat. The majority of new jobs are created by existing businesses, and Myrtle Beach wants to expand its base of businesses, Render said.

The project has been a joint effort among city, county and state legislative officials, Render said.

"When companies see a united government front, they see that cities mean business," Render said. "We're involved in an economic war right now. We simply cannot win with a divided house."

Sumter, Clarendon, Lee and Williamsburg counties have pooled their resources to support the I-95 Mega Site, which is one of only three certified "mega sites" in the state. With its 1,440 acres, the I-95 Mega Site can support industries that need a large amount of land such as automotive manufacturing operations, aerospace and military manufacturing facilities.

The city of Sumter also has been working with Clarendon and Sumter counties, as well as Turbeville and Manning, on a regional wastewater treatment alliance, according to Sumter Mayor Joe McElveen. The project still is about

10 years down the road but is expected to aid in development over the long-term, he said.

The city of Columbia is a member of the Central SC Alliance, an organization that represents 10 counties in marketing the area and recruiting business to the region. The city has a close relationship with the alliance, and Mayor Steve Benjamin is on its board and serves on the executive committee, said city of Columbia Economic Development Director Jim Gambrell.

An alliance makes sense because economic interests don't stop at the city limits, Gambrell said.

"Companies looking at us don't see city or county boundaries. They see Columbia as the larger area and that's the way our alliance markets us," he said. "It just makes good sense to combine resources to save money and maximize benefits."

The Central SC Alliance assists in marketing the city and in finding prospects, Gambrell said.

"With the help of the alliance we have landed new investments and jobs in Columbia, both from out of state (and country) and from within South Carolina," he said. "The new Verizon operations center in the city and the just-announced Amazon distribution center in Lexington County will both have a significant economic impact on the central region of South Carolina as well as the city of Columbia."

It's equally important for small towns to be involved with their regional economic development alliance, said Jeff McKay, executive director of the North Eastern Strategic Alliance, a regional economic development organization that focuses on the nine-county region in the northeast corner of the state.

"In our region, smaller towns and communities have found that it's more effective for them to be involved in the region," McKay said.

He cited Marion as an example of a smaller city that has seen some success. Sandwiched



The Amazon distribution center in Lexington County will have a significant economic impact on the central region of South Carolina. (Photo/Amazon.com Inc.)

between the larger economic engines of Florence and Myrtle Beach, Marion could be easily overlooked by working on its own economic development projects. Yet the city has worked with regional economic development efforts and successfully recruited new businesses, such as ACAS Landing Gear Services, a full-service aircraft repair and overhaul company.

"In order for regions to compete, there needs to be a true collaborative and cooperative effort across the region, with counties, municipalities and the state legislative delegation working together toward a common cause," McKay said. 

MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

By Amy Geier Edgar

When a business looks to expand or open in a new city or region, it considers everything from the tax rates to the quality of life. One key part of the decision lies with the availability of municipal utilities.

Municipal governments as utility providers play a significant role in promoting economic development activity. Without widely available, reliable and affordable water, electric, gas and wastewater services, most projects could not get off the ground.

Before the first shovel hits the dirt, municipal utilities incur significant advanced planning and preparation costs to ensure sufficient capacity and infrastructure are in place to serve current customers as well as future economic development projects.

Making wise utility planning decisions has positioned the city of Greer to be a major player in economic development. Access to water sources has allowed Greer to serve existing

business interests without interruption and to compete for new businesses when other communities have struggled with drought conditions, according to Reno Deaton, executive director of the Greer Development Corp.

The Greer Commission of Public Works and the city of Greer maintain Lake Robinson and Lake Cunningham as raw water reservoirs. The two lakes provide an ample supply of drinking and process water as well as excess capacity for future economic development projects, Deaton said.

There is enough excess capacity with the lakes and in the delivery system to serve new industry with water demands of approximately 1 million gallons per day. It is this access to water that is becoming so significant in South Carolina and is important for many companies as they make site location decisions, Deaton added.

Greer recently completed a project with Advanced Composite Materials that makes cutting

tools for the aviation and aerospace industries. The company is a large user of process water and electricity. “Greer’s competitive advantage in winning this project — estimated at \$10 million in new capital investment and the creation of 45 new jobs — was the ability to provide reliable and cost effective electricity and process water,” Deaton said.

Commercial and industrial growth is a priority for Greer CPW, according to its general manager, Nick Stegall. Greer CPW provides strong support to the Greer Development Corp. with the CPW general manager sitting on its board. The utility, in partnership with the Piedmont Municipal Power Agency, also helps with economic development by offering a special electric rate, available for new commercial and industrial customers. Greer CPW is one of 21 municipal electric systems in the state.

“No city or community can attract industry unless it has adequate, reliable, com-

petitively priced utilities,” Stegall said. “The Commission is very competitive with all of its utility rates.”

In the city of Anderson, the utilities division also plays a major part in the region’s economic development efforts.

“Two of the water system’s main goals are to prepare for future growth and support economic development. Achieving these goals begins with major investments in infrastructure,” said Utilities Director Jeff Caldwell. “As our utility master plans are updated, these goals are always front and center in the decision-making process.”

For site-specific economic development opportunities, the utility participates directly in the process, Caldwell said. The utility identifies current water and sewer infrastructure and their capacities. It also evaluates alternative water supplies, such as gray water from its wastewater treatment plant effluent and raw water from the surface water supply. The city of Anderson maintains rates that are in the lowest one-third of the state, Caldwell said.

In addition, the city of Anderson is the largest member of the Anderson Regional Joint Water System, which supplies potable water to Anderson County and parts of Pickens County. The Water System helped bring in at least one project to Anderson County, said Anderson County Economic Development Director Burriss Nelson.

First Quality Tissue SE LLC announced plans last spring to bring its manufacturing operations to Anderson County. The tissue and towel company plans to invest \$1 billion and create 1,000 new jobs to support its new production facility. Construction is ongoing at the plant, which uses about 3.5 million gallons of water a day for its operations, Nelson said. Anderson County and the Water System worked together on the project and agreed to build new recycling and intake facilities to support the plant, he said.

Competitive water rates also were attractive to the facility, Nelson said. “That affects



Lake Robinson. (Photo/Lynn Pilewsk, www.naturewalkphotos.com)

the project’s continuing costs over its lifetime,” Nelson said. “The more you can lower costs, that impacts the bottom line.”

To ensure the availability of these important utilities for economic development purposes, municipal governments have made enormous investments.

That’s the case in Manning, where city officials are seeking funding to double the size of their wastewater plant. Manning signed a regional wastewater agreement with Clarendon County and all of its municipalities, according to Mayor Kevin Johnson of Manning. Through this agreement, the city of Manning will be the regional provider of wastewater treatment.

“Our hope is that any growth in the county and surrounding towns will ultimately improve the economic situation in the city because we are the county seat,” Johnson said.

“If we expect a business to locate here, we have to have the basic utilities in place,” said Louis Griffith, chief financial officer of the Bank of Clarendon and a member of the chamber board in Clarendon County. He also served as chairman of the chamber’s infrastructure committee. “It’s the first step to allowing growth to occur. It’s the foundation of it all.

“It’s almost like the ‘Field of Dreams,’” Griffith added. “If you expect them to come, you have to have it all in place.”





State has overall competitive, positive business climate

By Amy Geier Edgar

South Carolina businesses are cautiously optimistic about the future, but still not ready to move ahead with growth or investments until they see steady economic growth, according to business leaders in the state.

Lots of large businesses are cash flush, having saved money during the recession, said S.C. Chamber of Commerce President Otis Rawl. These businesses are waiting to pull the trigger on investments until they see economic growth sustaining for at least a quarter or two in a row, he said.

Yet the small businesses on Main Street still are having a tough time, Rawl said. These businesses are struggling and don't have the same resources to weather the recession. With strict federal regulations on the banking industry, small businesses are often left with no access to capital to expand or even make payroll.

"Until the banks free up money, it will be tough for small businesses to move forward," Rawl said.

The state also needs to make some changes to help businesses, especially the technology-driven and knowledge-based jobs that tend to start out as very small businesses, Rawl said. The state's tax structure needs to be revamped to attract knowledge businesses; it currently is tailored to big boxes, manufacturing and agricultural type businesses, he said.

"We don't incentivize particularly small businesses that create jobs," Rawl said. "We've got to encourage their investment in the state."

In order to do that, the state needs to

get rid of its negative image as a place that doesn't offer the knowledge or skill set to handle high-tech jobs, he said. "There's nothing further from the truth," he said, adding that South Carolina has had a lot of success in improving the quality of its education.

Cities also play an important role in attracting businesses because they are the centers of economic and social activity. When businesses and business executives consider locating in the Palmetto State, they look for areas with good quality of life and excellent infrastructure in place, Rawl said.

South Carolina scores high marks on quality of life, according to Harry Miley, founding principal of Miley & Associates Inc., an economic and financial consulting and research group.

The state has small, rural communities, low crime rates, little traffic congestion, and the climate is conducive to year-round work and outdoor activities, Miley said. The May 2009 S.C. Department of Commerce Annual Cost of Living Index showed that South Carolina has a lower cost of living than neighboring states. It's also one of the top states for home ownership, according to U.S. Census reports.

Cities can play a part in helping economic develop-

ment by focusing on providing a strong cultural environment, reducing crime and making sure the infrastructure — water, sewer and roads — is available, Rawl said.

Overall, South Carolina has a positive business climate, with an overall competitive tax and regulatory climate, good quality of life, an educated work force and good technical education programs, and competitive wages, Miley said.


Businesses are taking notice. A November 2010 report by *Site Selection* magazine ranked several southern

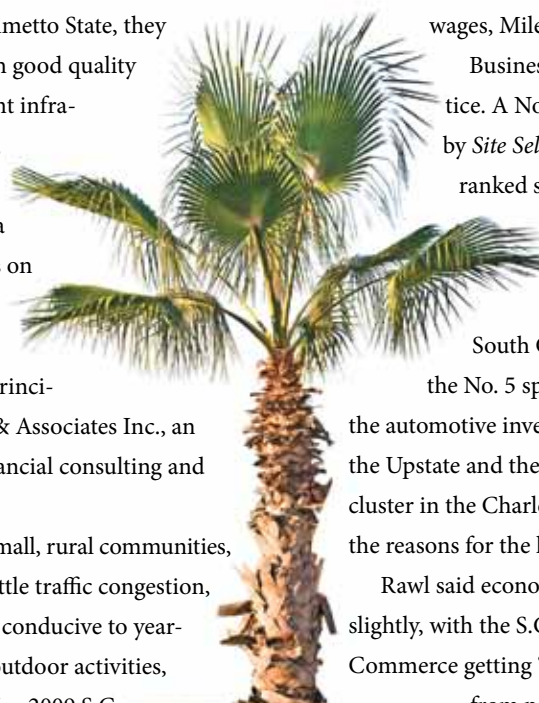
states among those with top business climates, with

South Carolina earning the No. 5 spot. The report cites the automotive investment cluster in the Upstate and the aerospace industry cluster in the Charleston region among the reasons for the high marks.

Rawl said economic activity is up slightly, with the S.C. Department of Commerce getting "a lot more looks"

from potential investors. The timing of when these big companies start investing, however, will be determined by signs of growth from the national economy.

"It's just around the corner," Rawl said. "We're going to come out of this. It's just a matter of when, and how fast." 





You see a police car.

We see a police officer named Hal who works closely with fire departments and EMS, who knows every business owner downtown, who can name every city street and who buys 12 snow cones on Saturdays even though his T-ball team has never won a game.

MASC Municipal Association
of South CarolinaSM

Magnets for good living



Quality of life is an essential element in attracting new businesses.

The good life. In this state, you only have to look as far as our cities and towns to find it. A pro-business attitude, diversified economies and a commitment to enhancing overall quality of life are the cornerstones of the almost 300 hometowns across our state.

People and businesses are drawn to the positive quality of life strong cities and towns offer... from the arts to recreation to quality city services.

This is a proven formula for success and a primary reason cities and towns are strong catalysts for growth and prosperity. But this doesn't happen by accident.

Hard work, vision and regional cooperation have helped make our cities and towns the centers of commerce they are today.

And the best is yet to come.



Cities Mean Business

To learn more about how strong cities contribute to the state's economic prosperity, visit www.citiesmeanbusiness.org.