



Cities Mean **BUSINESS**

A PUBLICATION OF THE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA | ISSUE 1 | 2013

Markets go metro

Farmers venues add value

Incubating ideas

**Clemson University
helps cities with startups**

You see a police car...



We see a police officer 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.

CITIES MEAN BUSINESS

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MASC Municipal Association
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Cities find farmers markets
enhance local economy

By Reba Hull Campbell

Cover: Mount Pleasant Farmers Market
(Photo/Ryan Wilcox)



Cities Mean BUSINESS

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Letter from the **EDITOR**

Thank you for reading this issue of *Cities Mean Business* magazine.

This issue marks our fifth anniversary of publication in partnership with SCBIZ magazine. In these five years, we have used this publication as a way to drive home the importance of the relationship between South Carolina cities and towns and the businesses located in them.

Strong cities and towns are the backbone of our state's economic success, and *Cities Mean Business* celebrates the positive and forward thinking partnerships that make our state stronger.

In this month's issue, our guest columnist is Mike Brenan, chair of the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce. He focuses on the importance of having adequate and safe infrastructure for the transportation of goods and commerce in our state.

But transportation means more than just roads and bridges. Read about two transportation alternatives several cities have focused on to improve economic development and the environment: improved parking availability for bicycles and increased use of electric vehicles.

Three South Carolina cities have partnered with private business and Clemson University to launch new small business incubators. Read about how Bluffton, Rock Hill and Hartsville are using Clemson's research university expertise to help entrepreneurs be successful in their hometowns.

Cities and towns around the state are seeing the economic value of supporting the start-up of farmers markets in their communities. Not only do farmers markets give local vendors the chance to sell their wares directly to the consumer, but the markets also enhance the local tax base, keep dollars in the local economy and give vendors low-risk business opportunities.

Finally, get a glimpse of how three diverse downtowns have found their individual success formulas for attracting and retaining businesses.



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Editor

Infrastructure Builds Cities and Businesses

By Mike Brennan



Mike Brennan

Our cities and towns are the lifeblood of the

Palmetto State. As we live and work in these wonderful communities, we strive to make them as economically competitive as possible. The relationships between cities and businesses are key to fostering success, and more often than not, our goals are closely aligned. One shared goal is clear: Cities and businesses depend on reliable infrastructure – of all types – to thrive.

The most obvious infrastructure is our road and bridge network. Our families, friends and employees depend on reliable and safe roads, and employers depend on them to move goods. South Carolina has not been keeping up with needed maintenance and improvements though, and it is evident in every hometown across this state.

Consider this. South Carolina’s population has increased by more than one million over the last two decades, but our infrastructure has not seen a dedicated revenue increase since 1987. While we spend an average of \$15,000 per mile on our roads, Georgia spends \$35,000 per mile, and North Carolina spends more than \$150,000. With other states focused on financing infrastructure to drive economic development, our policymakers must make infrastructure financing a top priority in 2013. This includes prioritizing expansion of Interstates 26 and 85 through the key corridors as well as secondary road maintenance to drive economic growth and job creation.

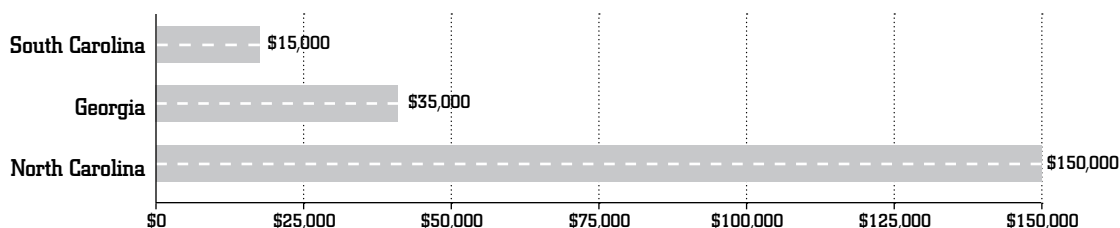
Another type of important infrastructure is our workforce. Employers continue to cite the need for a skilled workforce as one of their top priorities. This infrastructure investment is paramount to increased per capita income and economic development. There is no doubt that cities with the highest levels of educated citizens will have the advantage in attracting and creating jobs. The business community supports initiatives that will transform – not just reform – the current education system to compete in an ever-changing global marketplace.

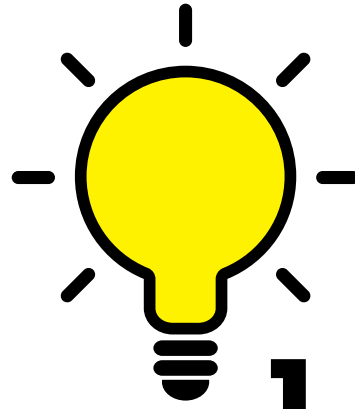
This begins with a shift in focus from the later years of education to early childhood. South Carolina must target at-risk children, starting with children living in poverty. At the foundation is reading. Business communities are stepping up to send employees into the classroom to read to children. This is just one small way we can partner with our local schools to improve the quality of life in our communities. There are many more.

Together, we are making South Carolina a better place to do business, but we cannot rest. We must continue to engage and advocate for proposals that set us apart from our competitors, beginning with addressing our infrastructure needs. ●

Mike Brennan is president of BB&T, South Carolina, and the 2012-13 chairman of the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce.

Average amount spent per mile on roads





Incubating ideas

Clemson University works with cities to support small tech businesses

By Amy Geier Edgar

As the owners of Greenbug Inc., an ecofriendly pest control company, Louise and Dan Hodges face many of the same challenges as other small business owners. Yet there are a few differences. For one, this Beaufort couple has a team of Clemson University graduate students doing bug research for them.

How can a small business have the backing and resources of a major research institution? The Hodges' business is one of an inaugural group of companies in a technology business incubator program created through a public/private partnership among Clemson, the Town of Bluffton, Care Core National and Buckwalter Place, along with additional private sponsors.

Greenbug Inc. is one of nine businesses in Bluffton's Don Ryan Center for Innovation, which opened its doors in May 2012, according to Director Jordan Berliner. The center's program provides business space and resources to help entrepreneurs, inventors and small business owners be successful. The incubator program assists small business owners with intellectual property, technology



Greenbug for People is one of Greenbug Inc.'s products coming out of the Don Ryan Center in Bluffton.

evaluation, product development services, seed financing, business mentorship, corporate relationships and recruiting.

The center, a 501c3 organization, reports to a seven-member board appointed by the Bluffton Town Council that works in cooperation with the Clemson University Institute for Economic and Community Development. It is designed for small and medium-sized cities, building local partnerships to diversify economic development, according to Karl Kelly, director of commercialization and technology incubation in Clemson's economic development division.

"We're able to use our many resources across Clemson to help these companies develop," said Kelly, adding that the program hopes to help establish 15 to 30 companies a year.

In addition to getting help with research, Louise Hodges said she's received input on her business plan, and legal and financial advice from the program.

"If I, as a small business owner, had to pay for all these services, I couldn't do it," she said.

Bluffton Mayor Lisa Sulka was a strong advocate for bringing the center to Bluffton.

"One of the town's goals is to enhance economic development," Sulka said. "With

an average age of 32 in the Town of Bluffton and an ever growing population in our high school, we need to look for ways to bring jobs to our area and train our workforce for the companies moving to our area. Having Clemson University's presence in our town opens the doors to the world in terms of knowledge and expertise in the economic development arena. This, along with USC-Beaufort just minutes away from our town, makes us the perfect location for this innovation center."

The center's success already has been recognized throughout the region and state, said Bluffton Town Manager Anthony Barrett. "Many of the innovators are close to launching their businesses and products. As a community, we are all better off and have been served well and will continue to be served by the center," he said. "Not only is it an idea whose time has come; it is a working and living example of how true entrepreneurial spirit works in a public-private partnership."

Sulka said she expects the innovation center will have a large impact on the town and region.

"My hopes are that these innovators will leave the center and open their businesses in Bluffton or the surrounding area," Sulka said.

Barrett said the center demonstrates the town's commitment and attitude toward economic development.

"The town views this initiative as more than an incubator; it is letting the entire world know we are serious about economic development," Barrett said.

"The synergy and word-of-mouth chatter around the state and beyond about the Don Ryan Center has created a robust 'economic state of mind,' which is just as important as the 'Bluffton state of mind,'" he said. "It is a harbinger of great things to come in developing companies as well as creating opportunities for true economic development here and in the region."

The incubator is a three-year pilot program with five communities, Kelly said. Rock Hill currently is developing a program, and another will launch in Hartsville later this year.

Rock Hill plans to select businesses for its incubator in the coming months, said Stephen Turner, executive director for the Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation, adding that a number of promising businesses have expressed interest. Rock Hill, the RHEDC, Winthrop University, York Technical College and private partners are involved in running the program.

The goal, Turner said, is to get a few small technology-based businesses to grow into larger businesses that eventually will create more jobs for people in the area.

Having Clemson as a resource is a tremendous plus for the program, said Rock Hill Mayor Doug Echols.

"I know the results in Bluffton have been positive, and I expect an equal amount of enthusiasm in our community," Echols said. "This is a piece of our continuing effort to make Rock Hill a great place to do business."

The Duke Energy Center for Innovation in Hartsville will be in a downtown storefront that the city will provide at no cost. The city will also hire a director to manage the day-to-day operations of the incubator, and has already assembled a diverse board of directors.

Mayor Mel Pennington says the incubator partnership is a huge win for Hartsville and the city's efforts to bring jobs to the community.

"Jobs, jobs, jobs – that's the single most important thing in any community. We're utilizing our diverse assets to create a unique environment that will attract the types of companies that most cities aren't focused on."

The ability to bring the incubator program to Hartsville comes from a grant from the Duke Energy Foundation.



The Greenbug Injector System uses an existing irrigation system to distribute Greenbug for Outdoors so that anywhere water is directed becomes safely pest free.

"Fostering economic development in the communities we serve is a critically important mission for Duke Energy," said Mindy Taylor, Duke's community relations manager for eastern South Carolina. "I can't think of a better place than Hartsville to bring this program, and we think it will pay dividends for the community for years to come."

One unique asset Hartsville can draw on is the students at the Governor's School for Science and Mathematics who will be able to get involved in the incubator. "We have the brightest kids in the state right here in Hartsville," Pennington said. "This is exciting for the City of Hartsville, and we are thankful for the partnership with Duke Energy and the Governor's School." ●

Driving into the Future

By Amy Geier Edgar

The cities of Greenville and Seneca are introducing electric vehicles locally in pioneering projects that are being hailed by leaders as beneficial to the environment and to economic development.

The City of Seneca received a \$4.1 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration to replace all of its diesel buses with electric buses built by Greenville-based Proterra, the leading maker of zero-emission commercial transit solutions.

Officials hope to have the buses running in tests by the spring, according to Ed Halbig, director of Planning and Development for the City of Seneca.

The fare-free buses, which are operated by Clemson Area Transit, travel three routes in Seneca, taking passengers to work, school, shopping, dining and the hospital. They help cut back on traffic congestion and are widely used by the community, serving 24,891 passengers over a 20-day period in November alone, Halbig said.

It takes about 10 minutes to recharge each bus when the battery is exhausted. Two recharging stations are planned – one at the downtown transit hub and one at the centrally located Oconee Medical Center property, Halbig said.



The electric WeCar in Greenville is a membership-based car sharing program for providing an eco-friendly way to get around.

Seneca was one of 46 innovative transit projects selected to help cut the nation's dependence on oil and create a marketplace for 21st century green jobs. Projects were selected through the FTA's Fiscal Year 2011 Sustainability Initiative.

As the nation's first all-electric transit system, Seneca's program is getting attention from around the world. The hope is that larger cities can see how these electric buses can make their communities more efficient

and can scale them to size to meet their own needs, Halbig said.

"We're excited to see if we can be part of the solution to get us off the imports of foreign oil," Halbig said.

The City of Greenville also is working to be part of the green solution.

In September, the Environmental Protection Agency awarded Greenville a



Community Action Award for its Electric Vehicle Ecosystem Pilot Program. The program – through a partnership with the City and County of Greenville, General Electric, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Greenville Spartanburg International Airport and Thurso Power System, among others – aims to provide local businesses and residents with access to electric vehicles and a network of charging stations.

The EV program introduces electric vehicles into the marketplace for short-term use at several companies and rentals at Enterprise and the airport. Enterprise also launched its membership-based car sharing program, WeCar, in downtown Greenville using EVs.

WeCar is a unique, membership-based car sharing program for people who are looking for an alternative method of transportation and provides downtown office tenants, residents and hotel guests with the convenience of a cost effective, responsible and eco-friendly way to get around. Users pay only for the hours used and the rate includes all maintenance and insurance.

Along with the vehicles, the EV program includes approximately 45 charging stations throughout the county, with more than 20 of them in the downtown area (including city garages), according to Greenville Governmental Relations Manager Julie Horton.

The EV Ecosystem Program seeks to improve air quality and decrease the city's gas dependence, carbon footprint and carbon dioxide emissions.

“This program continues the city's long history of public-private partnerships. When



Top: Electric buses will travel three routes in Seneca, taking passengers to work, school, shopping, dining and the hospital. **Bottom:** There are approximately 45 charging stations throughout Greenville County, including more than 20 in the downtown Greenville area (including city garages).

we talk about sustainability, it's about more than just saving energy. It's about making good business decisions in an era where every dollar must be stretched; it's about leading in innova-

tion and job creation; it's about cleaner air; it's about a longer-term process to make Greenville greener and more livable for its citizens," according to Mayor Knox White. •



Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd is returning to its roots with a new building on Greenville's Main Street.

Shared Vision

Public and private investment key to successful downtowns

By Reba Hull Campbell

Great downtowns don't just happen. They are the result of vision coupled with public and private investment and collaboration.

Three South Carolina business leaders in cities of varying sizes say their hometowns have found the right formula and can serve as a lab for other cities and the businesses located in them.

Greenville's renaissance began with a vision more than 30 years ago. The downtown Greenville of today in no way resembles the city of

the 1970s. Downtown Greenville has emerged with a strong mix of residential, retail and office, and a pedestrian-oriented Main Street.

Anne S. Ellefson, managing director of Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, says, "We have been blessed in Greenville to have visionary leadership. A creative combination of public and private efforts has allowed us to create development beyond normal expectations."

And Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd is putting its money where its mouth is. The law firm's Greenville office opened on Main Street 125

years ago, later moving to several other locations around the city. In January, the firm's office moved back to Main Street.

"The decision to move back that way was a return to our roots," Ellefson says. "The evolution of Main Street over the past 30 years has been awesome to watch. The area where our new One Building is located will be the link between the north end and the south end of Main Street, tying lots of development efforts together. We are excited to help make that happen."



Greenville Mayor Knox White is a partner in Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, and this dual role allows him to live what he preaches. “The city has a tradition of working in partnership with private businesses. Together we create an environment that is beautiful and full of life.”


It’s not just the big cities that are seeding their downtowns to be attractive to new investment. In Manning, entrepreneur Jeffrey Black could have chosen to locate his international consulting business anywhere, but he saw the potential in his hometown Main Street. He owns 12 downtown buildings in Manning and runs his company from one of them.

Black says he chose to invest in downtown Manning because he believes a city’s downtown is the first impression people get of what a community’s values are. “Nobody wants to come to a place that looks tired and uncared for. They want to come to a place that is alive and vibrant – a town rich in history, but with a vision for the future.”

Black points to the City of Manning’s participation in the Main Street SC program as a real asset to its downtown development. “This group’s support is instrumental in enhancing downtown, one building at a time. This organization provides yearly façade grants, and building owners realize that a new coat of paint, good signage and planters can make a world of difference.”

In Lake City, businesswoman Darla Moore also felt the pull of her hometown when she decided to help revive its downtown.

“This is my hometown,” Moore says. “Lake City is where I learned critical values and work ethic I needed to succeed in my profession. And, as such, it is a town I want to see succeed. Our research tells us Lake City has the assets necessary to succeed, and



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Darla Moore
Businesswoman

I believe, with a little help, we can use these assets to transform Lake City.”

“Our town leaders, led by Mayor Lovith Anderson, have committed their time and resources to be part of a huge public/private partnership effort to improve the economic viability of Lake City,” Moore says. “This collaborative is demonstrating to everyone involved the importance of working together to solve problems.”

Moore says downtown Lake City has been able to retain its early 1900s façade. And the town has enacted a historic preservation district ordinance to ensure the preservation of the downtown area. The town is also working to offer downtown property owners grants

and tax incentives to improve the façades of their buildings.

She believes that this Pee Dee town can become a destination many people will want to visit in order to reconnect with a small town atmosphere that has mostly disappeared from our countryside.

“I envision a vibrant, active downtown full of restaurants, retail stores, apartments and hotels to accommodate all the people who will want to spend some time visiting museums, viewing the agribusiness history of Lake City, honoring the life of the distinguished astronaut, Ronald E. McNair, and enjoying the beautiful gardens and rivers in the Lake City community,” Moore says. •



Cities roll out bike-friendly initiatives

By Mary Brantner

As gas prices remain high and efforts to be more ecologically friendly increase, bicycles offer an affordable, nonpolluting, greenhouse gas-preventing form of transportation.

Cities across the country are capitalizing on the growing popularity of biking, and they are reaping the economic and quality of life benefits from building and supporting a bike-friendly community.

“Communities that have fostered that popularity by providing bicycle infrastructure for transportation and recreation have seen considerable economic benefits by attracting businesses, tourism and active residents,” according to Advocacy Advance – a partnership of the League of American Bicyclists and the Alliance for Biking & Walking,

“Building such a (bike-friendly community) can translate into a more connected, physically active, and environmentally sustainable community that enjoys increased property values, business growth, increased tourism, and more transportation choices,” according to the League of American Bicyclists.

“The nation’s 60 million annual recreational bicyclists spend \$46.9 billion on meals, transportation, lodging, gifts and



Bike corrals are part of the City of Charleston’s overall effort to meet increasing demand for bicycle parking in the downtown area.

entertainment,” reported the League. It also cites a study by the Outdoor Industry Foundation that estimates the spill-over effects of all bicycling-related activities could be as large as \$133 billion, supporting 1.1 million jobs and generating \$17.7 billion in federal, state, and local taxes.

In October, Rock Hill became the state’s newest Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly

Community, a designation awarded by the League of American Bicyclists. Rock Hill joins other South Carolina Bronze Level Communities: Charleston, Columbia, Greenville and Spartanburg. Hilton Head Island is the only community in South Carolina to achieve the League’s silver level.

The League, through its Bicycle Friendly Community Program, recognizes cities for their commitment to improving conditions for bicycling through investment in bicycling promotion, education programs, infrastructure and pro-bicycling policies.

A Bicycle Friendly Community must demonstrate achievements in each of the program’s five categories: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation and planning. “Any city – regardless of size or geography – can take cost-effective steps to increase bicycling in their community,” said League President Andy Clarke.

“Receiving this designation from the League of American Bicyclists is not only a tremendous honor, but it is also a testament to Rock Hill’s commitment to providing the highest quality of life for all citizens,” said Rock Hill Mayor Doug Echols.



Above: The bike corral initiative is one of several initiatives the City of Columbia and its Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee are working on to enhance Columbia's bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure.

Right: With the help of a local college's art class, Eugene, Oregon, has made the bike corrals a part of its public arts plan. (Photo/City of Eugene)



Part of creating a bicycle-friendly community is providing safe, convenient and secure bike parking. Without some accommodation, cyclists are forced to either lock the bikes to a parking meter or compete with trees, pedestrians and newspaper racks for sidewalk space.

In response, communities across the country are turning to bike corrals. Typically installed in a single-car parking space, corrals provide on-street parking for up to 12 bicycles. By locating these corrals on city streets, officials ensure the bicycle parking spaces are out of the way of pedestrians, visible to motorists and, most importantly, easily spotted by cyclists.

Basically, bike corrals are just longer sidewalk bicycle racks – a fixed structure with upside-down U-shapes. However, some cities are unleashing their creativity and showing off their community's unique character. With the help of a local college's art class, Eugene, Oregon, has made the corrals a part of its public arts plan. The corrals showcase the city's history and culture.

The corrals offer a number of benefits. They give bikes a designated place to park at popular locations and acknowledge the

“Receiving this designation from the League of American Bicyclists is not only a tremendous honor, but it is also a testament to Rock Hill’s commitment to providing the highest quality of life for all citizens.”

Mayor Doug Echols
Rock Hill

cyclists' importance to the community. Business owners like the additional traffic and unobstructed view of their businesses that the corrals provide. By freeing up sidewalk space, pedestrians enjoy a safer place to walk.

In September, Charleston installed the state's first bike corral on King Street. Mayor Joe Riley explained, “Bike corrals ... serve as a signal to everyone that bicycling is an important part of our community. Promoting bicycling downtown and in other parts of the city helps address the problems associated with congested areas.”

Charleston plans to install three additional corrals in the downtown area. They

are part of the city's overall effort to meet increasing demand for bicycle parking in the downtown area. The corrals provide an innovative solution to the challenges of Charleston's historic streets where sidewalk space is already claimed by pedestrians and other streetscape elements.

In October 2012, Columbia installed four bike corrals in three of its hospitality districts – Five Points, the Vista and City Center. Groups representing the hospitality districts have supported the city's efforts, which included agreeing to a 50 percent cost share for the corrals.

“While Five Points, the Vista and City Center each have their unique features, the corrals provide a great sense of connectivity, helping to form a stronger, more viable city,” commented Mayor Steve Benjamin.

The bike corral initiative is one of several initiatives the City of Columbia and its Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee are working on to enhance Columbia's bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure. •

Learn more about the Bicycle Friendly Communities Program at www.bikeleague.org/communities.



Farmers markets are popping up all over the state supporting the movement to buy local. But farmers markets are more than part of a trend for the sale of local products.

In days gone by, farmers markets were found almost solely along rural roads where local farmers would sell their products from the back of a truck.

Today, the idea of a farmers market is much more market-driven, and local governments are seeing the economic value of supporting the startup of markets in their communities.

Not only do farmers markets give local vendors the chance to sell their wares directly to the consumer, but the markets also enhance the local tax base, keep dollars in the local economy and give vendors low-risk business opportunities.

The SC Department of Agriculture data shows more than 120 local farmers market around the state, many of which are operated in partnership with local governments.

The City of Camden partners with the Kershaw County Farmers Market, an independent 501c3 organization, to operate the Saturday market from April through December. The city secured a state grant in 2007 to fund half the cost of prime downtown land for a farmers market site, a one-acre grass lot in the heart of downtown. The city funded the remaining land cost. The city cuts the grass and makes improvements to the property as requested by the farmers market organization, such as a handicapped-accessible ramp, bike racks and electrical connections.

It's a great partnership, says Mayor Tony Scully. "While the city made an investment in the physical space, the Kershaw County Farmers Market does all the work. They have a manager who is an excellent organizer. Because the market is in the heart of downtown, all the downtown businesses benefit – from the restaurants to the antique stores to the general merchandisers."

The Town of Mount Pleasant sees similar success from its market that is held in

partnership with a local middle school located in the heart of the town. The town partnered with the school to build a pavilion area and install the other necessary infrastructure on the school campus. When not in use by the market, the pavilions provide covered, outdoor classroom space.

Mount Pleasant Mayor Billy Swails says the town's investment in the physical space and staffing for the market pays off in many ways for the whole community. "Beyond providing a much-needed community gathering space, the market has also shown success in helping local vendors get their products introduced to a larger market."

Lance Nilsen, owner of Dale's Lowcountry Cuisine, is a vendor at the Mount Pleasant market in addition to markets in Summer-ville, Pawleys Island, North Myrtle Beach, Florence and Daniel Island. He says "We use the farmers market to talk with people about our products. We let them sample and let them know where they can purchase our products when not at the markets." •



HOMETOWN SNAPSHOT



Photo/James T. Hammond

Columbia's Soda City Market moved to Main Street last fall and draws hundreds of shoppers and visitors every Saturday morning. Vendors sell fresh produce, meat, seafood and flowers as well as hot food, baked items and food to go. Local artisans also sell their wares.

You see a street...



We see a lifeline that is a hometown with planned traffic flow, fire stations, thousands of visitors each year, 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.

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