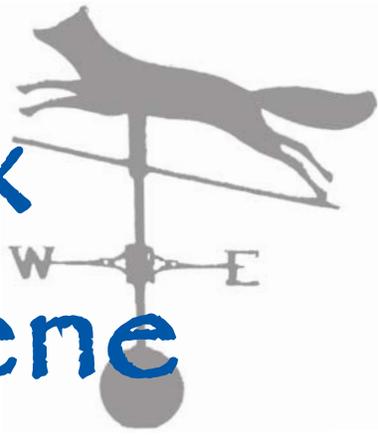


Swamp Fox Scene



A FREE monthly news magazine for the citizens and visitors of the Swamp Fox City

Issue 1, Volume 1

June 2010

City conveys water, sewer to GSWSA

In May, City of Marion officials put the final touches on the agreement to sell the city's water and sewer franchises and systems to the Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority. After months of negotiations, and a referendum vote of Marion citizens with a nearly 3-1 margin in favor of the move, GSWSA purchased Marion's water and sewer system for \$13.6 million.

Questions?

Call Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority at (843) 443-8221.

Of that purchase price, \$11 million paid off the city's water and sewer debt for those systems and \$2.6 million was paid directly to the city. Also, GSWSA will give Marion 7 percent of Marion's yearly operating revenue. At current rates, that is expected to be \$150,000 per year.

Marion residents will see their rates decrease to what they were before the last increase put in place by city council in August 2009 and GSWSA has agreed to not raise rates again in Marion until July 2012. The Authority's CEO, Fred Richardson, said the authority would keep all of the Marion city employees and that they would keep their same seniority and will not lose benefits.

City rentals: Fees apply

During the April City Council meeting, Mayor Rodney Berry suggested that the City maintain the current fee schedule for renting its facilities and maintain its liability policy.

After much discussion about liability and the renting of the city's buildings, Council member Michael Baker made a motion to leave the policy as it is. To see the city's fee schedule for its recreation buildings, visit <http://marionsc.gov/residents/recreation/default.aspx>.



City celebrates: FoxTrot 2010

Thousands of visitors, family members and friends descended on Marion's Main Street in mid May to enjoy the city's annual FoxTrot Festival. Stay tuned for information about the 2011 festival...

For the latest in news and information, check the city's web site at www.marionsc.gov and keep up with us on our Facebook page.



Council to vote on Budget in June

City council members had first reading of the 2010-11 city budget on May 11 and a budget workshop on May 18. After publishing the revenues and expenses in the local newspaper, the city will have the public hearing and second reading of the budget at a called City Council meeting at 6 p.m. on June 22 in City Hall.

Truckers have two areas for parking

Truck drivers who live in the City of Marion cannot park their rigs in the city limits unless it is in a designated area. Those designated areas, which require payment for security and liability, are Marion County Supply on Jones Avenue and at James Equipment and Repair on U.S. Highway 76. For information, call the city Zoning Office at 423-5961.



City staff photo

City has Census Rally on Courthouse Square

In early March the City of Marion had its 2010 Census Rally on the Courthouse Square that highlighted the winners in the "I count because..." essay contest. The essays were a part of a contest and program to bring awareness to the 2010 Census. Winners of the essay contest each received a \$100 savings bond from Anderson Brothers Bank. The winners were Brandon Murrell, Elizabeth Rogers and M'kala Blue, all of Johnakin Middle School.

Coming up

June 8th

Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.: City Council (Second Tuesday of the Month), Council Chambers, City Hall, 107 S. Main Street.

June 14th

Monday, 5:30 p.m.: Citizens Advisory Committee meeting (Second Monday of the Month), Fire Station, Bond Street.

June 15th

Tuesday, 6-8 p.m.: Main Street Marion's Annual Meeting & Auction, in the Emporium on Main Street. Call Chuck at the Main Street Marion office at 423-9918 for details.

June 21st

Monday, 6:30 p.m.: Fox Watch (Third Monday of the Month) in the group's Main Street Headquarters building.

Visit the City of Marion online at www.marionsc.gov and on Facebook under City of Marion, South Carolina.

Main Street Marion to have annual meeting

Main Street Marion, previously known as Historic Marion Revitalization Association (HMRA), is a volunteer organization established to stimulate Marion's economic development within the context of historical preservation.

The group's Annual Meeting & Auction will be from 6-8 p.m. in the Emporium on Main Street on June 15. Citizens are invited and asked to consider joining the Main Street Marion program. For information, please visit their web site at www.theswampfox.com or call Chuck Wiegert, director, at (843) 423-9918.

In addition to its monthly Rise & Shine breakfasts updates, the group launched, this past fall, a number of new programs including quarterly "Lunch & Learns." The successful meetings have provided members and the community opportunities to learn about preservation, history and other subjects of interest. A program by Main Street South Carolina will be in Marion this month, as well.

The *Swamp Fox Scene* is the City of Marion's free monthly news magazine for the citizens and visitors of the Swamp Fox City, Marion, South Carolina.

The staff consists of City of Marion employees Cheryl Askins, Elizabeth Fick, Pam Jones and Dianne Owens.

The newspaper is distributed by city employee Dennis Brown and may be found in City Hall, in the Marion Chamber of Commerce's office in the Historic Train Depot, in the Main Street Marion office on Main Street and in other spots around town.

Call Mayor Rodney Berry or City Administrator Bob Anderson at 843-423-5961 with questions, concerns and comments.

CITY NEWS

Banquet recognizes employees



The City of Marion hosted its annual Employee Awards Banquet at the Marion Fire Station in March. A delicious meal was served and many door prizes were awarded. Almeta Mullins of the Marion Police Department, shown above, defeated police officer Michael Haberstick and firefighter Samuel Herring in a basketball shooting contest and won a vase filled with 601 quarters. Grand prize of a 42" television went to firefighter Josh Brown, shown below, right.

A number of employees were recognized for their hard work and dedication to the City of Marion and its citizens. 5-Year Service Awards went to Mike Shall, Utilities Director; Jimmy Collins, Fire Department; Jeneral Harps, Street Department; William Skipper, Volunteer Fireman; and Robert Taylor, Street Department. 10-Year Service Awards were presented to Gene Cabbagestalk, Water Department; Lula Davis, Water Department; Marilyn Rogers, Police De-

partment; Frank Page, Recreation Director; and William Sanders, Volunteer Fireman.

Elmore Davis, Volunteer Firefighter, was recognized for 15 years of service. 20-Year Service Awards went to Greg Horne, Water Department; Bobby Legette, Street Department; and Ralph Atkinson, City Council. Earl Godbold and Joey Skipper of the Water Department were recognized for 25 years of service.

Also honored were three retiring employees: Rodney Parsley, Water Department; David Moore, Street Department; and Fire Chief and Building Official Alan Ammons, who has returned to work fulltime for the City of Marion.

Fire Chief Alan Ammons presented the Firefighter of the Year award to Samuel Herring. Sgt Keith McNeil was named Police Officer of the Year by his peers and Sgt Deric Ray received the 2009 Chief's Award from Police Chief Willie Smith.

Firefighter Ryan Skip-



per, shown above, was named Employee of the Year and took the 2009 Public Service Award. Ryan is a third generation firefighter, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather.

He began working for the City Marion Fire Department in January 2007.

He completed the South Carolina Fire Academy Recruit School and was named Volunteer Rescue Member of the Year in 2007. Ryan received his EMT certification in 2008 and became a certified Fire Inspector and Fire Marshall in March 2009.

In May 2009 he was promoted to Captain. Ryan also serves as the Public Education Officer and Certified Plans Examiner. He is one of the most dependable employees of the City and is always there to lend a helping hand.

Congratulations to all of service award recipients and thank you to all City employees for their hard work and dedication to the City of Marion.



Chamber News: Let's discuss Yard of the Month

Have you ever wondered how the Marion Chamber of Commerce Yard of the Month is selected?

Selections are made by a committee from the Garden Club Council. The committee is made up of anonymous representatives from each Garden Club and the president of the Council serves as the chair. The fifth member vote is used if there is a tie. The Marion area is divided into four sections and nominations are made within these sections on a rotating basis. The committee member responsible for the month's nominations selects three addresses, within the section, and calls the nominated addresses in to the chairman. The addresses are given to the other committee members and within a specified

time, committee members ride by and evaluate each of the nominated yards.

Overall maintenance and curb appeal, with priority to yards that are planned and maintained by the owners, help in the selection process. The committee calls back their vote to the chairman and the selection is made.

We appreciate and are thankful for the assistance of these committee members who so freely give of their time. We also appreciate the Yard of the Month sponsor, Tru Green Nursery, for helping us recognize the recipients each month. Lastly, we thank the many homeowners and community members who keep Marion the well kept "pretty little town on the way to the beach" and who make this a difficult task each month.

FROM THE MAYOR TO YOU

Dear Neighbors,

Welcome to the first edition of your *Swamp Fox Scene!* The birth of this newspaper was derived from the desire to keep citizens of Marion more informed of "What's Happening" in our city. I'm confident that I speak on behalf of City Council when I say our desire is to be transparent in conducting city business.

In our recent transaction with Grand Strand Water and Sewer, many folks said they were ill informed of the deal and how it would affect them. Truth is, every effort was made to market the entire process with several public hearings, newspaper articles, a television show on Channel 8 (that ran multiple times) and, finally, electronic media by way of facebook and the city's website. The bottom line remains that some people said they did not know about the pending agreement.

We hope this new attempt, the *Swamp*

Fox Scene, will greatly increase exposure to such city matters. We want and believe citizens deserve to be informed. We have many initiatives we will be rolling out in the future, all of which revolve around the enhancement of our quality of life. Some ideas will specifically focus on attracting new businesses and tourism to our beautiful city.

When I entertain guests in our city, without exception they make comments about the striking beauty of our hometown. One area that the South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism Commission has encouraged us to take advantage of is the history of Gen. Francis Marion and his presence in our area. A recent study showed Gen. Marion is Marion's greatest opportunity to attract tourism, an untapped resource for most municipalities. This presents us a potential revenue stream that we must explore if we are to

grow as a city.

Finally, through this inaugural edition of the *Swamp Fox Scene*, I'd like to encourage all citizens to raise the bar in their personal commitment to this place we call home, whether it is taking more pride in the appearance of your yard, volunteering, or simply speaking in positive terms as opposed to negative ones.

I'm convinced a city is only as good as its citizens want it to be. Appearances and the well being of a city is a direct reflection of the personalities in that city. Leadership shoulders a great deal of responsibility, and it should, but the masses are truly what shape the character of a city. A dominating majority of you are here because you love this place and wouldn't dream of leaving unless circumstance necessitated.

This is our city ... she is beautiful. Let us ALL work together to keep her healthy!

Your Mayor, Rodney Berry

THE BLUE LINE FLASHPOINT

News from and about the City Police Department

News from and about the City Fire Department

Officers get training

Recently the City of Marion Police Department had two officers in the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy. Officer Michael Hartson was expected to graduate on May 21 and another is expected to graduate on June 11, according to Police Training Officer Lt. Tony Flowers.

Earlier this year, thanks to a grant secured through the U.S. Department of Justice, all officers were outfitted with the Taser X26 and received training in its use.

Officers compete in county tournament

On May 29 the Marion Police Department participated in the first Marion County E-911/Communications co-ed softball tournament on the Green Street softball fields. All public

safety agencies in Marion County were invited to participate.

In other news:

The 12th Judicial Circuit Alcohol Enforcement Team was out during Marion High School's prom weekend. No incidents or alcohol violations were reported.

Also, the department has added four police cars to its fleet. We are in the process of changing the paint scheme on all vehicles as the city purchases new vehicles.

We congratulate Sgt. Keith McNeil for being chosen Officer of the Year by his peers and Sgt. Derric Ray on receiving the Chief's Award.

A Concealed Weapons Permit class is offered at the Police Department once each month. Richard Atkinson is the instructor. Call Lt. Flowers at 423-8616 for information.

Fire, Rescue to have fundraisers

Marion Fire and Rescue, which serves the citizens of Marion and those in the surrounding communities, is two separate organizations that work together to achieve a common goal.

The Marion City Fire Department and Marion Rescue Squad work seamlessly to improve public safety. Marion Rescue Squad responds to approximately 600 calls for service each year. This includes medical calls, fires, vehicle accidents, technical rescues, and marine rescues. The rescue squad is staffed with 45 volunteers, trained as emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and rescue technicians.

The Rescue Squad is an independent non-profit organization, funded through donations and governmental

subsidies. It is the Rescue Squad's mission to provide the best possible technical rescue operations, emergency medical services, marine rescue operations, and disaster support. With its mission in mind, the Rescue Squad often has fundraisers.

The Rescue Squad is set to have two fund raisers, a portrait drive conducted by Volunteer Mail Service (VMS) and a raffle. VMS mails out a coupon for portraits and those who make a donation receive a free portrait. Call 423-8602 for more info.

On Sept. 3, the group will raffle a Remington M877 shotgun or \$300 cash. Each ticket is \$1. Call 423-8602 to purchase tickets or for info. Proceeds from both events will help purchase a new cardiac monitor, a vital tool for the squad in its advanced life support arsenal.

Get to know your City Council



RODNEY BERRY
Mayor

Mayor Rodney Berry was elected to his first four-year term in April 2009. He can be reached by calling his office telephone at **843-423-8235.**



RALPH ATKINSON
Mayor Pro Tem
District 1

Council member Ralph Atkinson was reelected in April 2007. His term ends in April 2011. He can be reached by telephone at **843-250-0446.**



RONALD ATKINSON
District 2

Council member Ronald Atkinson was reelected in April 2007. His term ends in April 2011. He can be reached by telephone at **843-230-0072.**



BETSY ATKINSON
District 3

Council member Betsy Atkinson was elected in April 2009. Her term end in April 2013. She can be reached at **843-430-1137.**



BOBBY DAVIS
District 4

Council member Bobby Davis was reelected in April 2007. His term ends in April 2013. He can be reached by telephone at **843-423-4655.**



POIETTE BROMELL
District 5

Council member Poiette Bromell was reelected in April 2007. Her term ends in 2013. She can be reached at **843-275-0265.**



MICHAEL BAKER
District 6

Council member Michael Baker was reelected in April 2007. His term ends in 2013. He can be reached by telephone at **843-222-9405.**

SPORTS & RECREATION

Coming up



Ready for some aerobics?

Aerobics, or flexibility exercises, are offered each Monday & Wednesday in *Grice's Recreation Center*, 603 Gurley Street, from 7-8 p.m. and in the *Watsonia Recreation Center*, 100 Watsonia Street, on Tuesday & Friday, from 9:30 -10:30 a.m.

These are free and no registration is required.

Aerobics is also offered in the C.D. Joyner Fine Arts Center on Elizabeth Street on Monday-Friday. Call 423-5410 for registration information.

How about trying karate?

Karate is offered at Grice's Recreation Center on Tuesdays & Thursdays.

There are two time slots available for convenience, one from 6-7 p.m. and another from 7-8 p.m.

For information call 423-8623. Classes are free to city residents.

And then there is B-I-N-G-O!

Especially for all seniors, we issue an invitation to come join us for Senior Bingo in the Watsonia Recreation Center on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month.

Bingo starts at 8:30 a.m. and ends around 9:30a.m. Bingo, like aerobics and karate, is free of charge to Marion's citizens.



Prepare to make a SPLASH!

The city's pool at Grice's Recreation Center is about to open!

Stay tuned for details or call Cheryl at 423-5410 for opening date and times.

Rec department team creates successful 2010 Opening Day

Parents form COMPASS

Story and Photos by Cheryl Askins

The mission of the newly-formed group to assist fundraiser for the City's Recreation programs simple: To provide recreational athletics in a safe and positive environment to all children while maintaining professional business and management practices.

The group, COMPASS, is run by parents and was started in September 2009 when a group of parents noticed what they felt was a lack of funding for sports programs. They also felt, organizers say, there is a need for more parent involvement with the sports.

The organization's main purpose is supporting recreation programs for the City of Marion's children. So far, the group has done a great job in raising

about \$700 and in helping the players and teams and the recreation department.

COMPASS stands for Community of Marion Partners Assisting, Serving Sports. Board members are Ches Stepp



Members of COMPASS, a newly-formed group of concerned parents, helps out during opening day activities.

and Emerson Hunt, co-chairs; Antonio Vault; Judy Barker; Jimmy Trussell, treasurer; Jackie Yates and Mike Singleary.

Anyone interested in working with the group can get in touch with any of the board members.



The City of Marion's Recreation Department employees organized and carried off the 2010 Opening Day activities for baseball and softball on April 10. At left, players and coaches meet and greet on the field.

Where's the ball? This photo captures the batter waiting intently on the next pitch while the catcher tries to locate the missing baseball. The ball has dropped at the catcher's knee. Below, a t-ball player hits the ball and gets ready to run to first base. Below, right corner, players mingle before game time.

