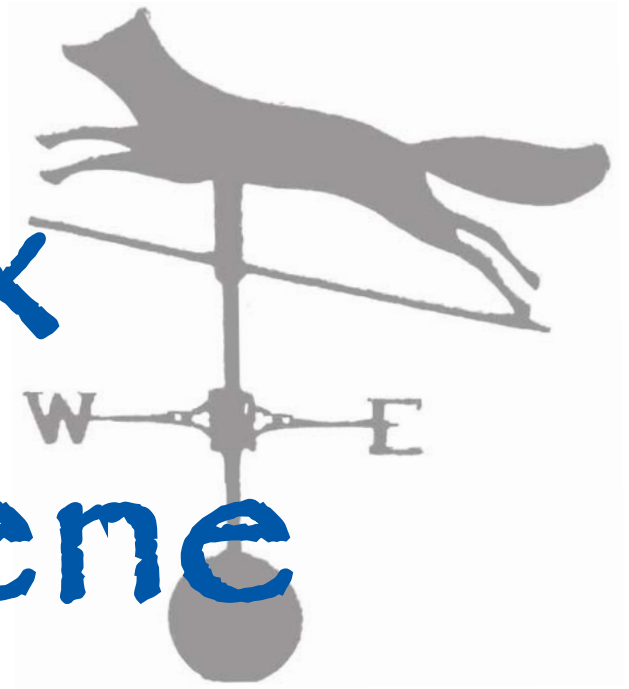


# Swamp Fox Scene



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



Plan now to join the fun in February,  
When Marion plays host to  
**Gen. Francis Marion Days**

*Celebrating*  
**Gen. Francis Marion**  
Historic Marion, South Carolina  
February 25, 26, 27

*Patriot and Loyalist Reenactors*  
*set up camps in McIntyre Park*



Join us in remembering our American hero!

**Wreath-laying ceremony, Living History Camp, Skirmish, Historic Marion Runfest with a 10-mile run, 10K run-walk, 5K run-walk, 1-mile challenge, Tot Trot 50-yard dash, Swamp Fox Chili Cook-off & more!**

For more details, call  
Marion Chamber of Commerce, 843-423-3561  
City of Marion, 843-423-5961, Ext. 11

To register in the *RUNFEST*,  
call Pam Jones  
@ 843-423-5961, Ext. 11.



**Celebrating**  
**Gen. Francis Marion Days**  
*is sure to be a fun, educational experience for the entire family!*

Visit [www.marionsc.gov](http://www.marionsc.gov)  
for updates & details!



The Swamp Fox Higher Education Center will begin serving students in Marion this month. The Center is in the C.D. Joyner Fine Arts Center on Elizabeth Street and is a partnership between Francis Marion University, Coastal Carolina University and Florence-Darlington Technical College. Above are Sen. Kent Williams, CCU President David DeCenzo, FMU President Fred Carter and FDTC President Charles Gould, all of whom attended the signing of the memorandum of understanding at the Center in November.

## Swamp Fox Higher Ed Center ready to serve area students

Francis Marion University, Coastal Carolina University, Florence-Darlington Technical College and City of Marion officials signed a memorandum of understanding Nov. 30 announcing a partnership that forms the Swamp Fox Higher Education Center in Marion.

Operating out of the C.D. Joyner Fine Arts Center, beginning this month, the Swamp Fox Higher Education Center is an opportunity for students to continue their education without having to travel too far from home. The partnership is a fine example of several entities coming together to help better the educational opportunities for those in the area, City of Marion Mayor Rodney Berry said.

Coastal Carolina University has a cohort in its Educational Leadership master's degree program underway in Marion, with students from Dillon and Marion County enrolled.

This program has moved its classes into the Center and the group's next class, offered through the Center, begins this month. The program and the cohort in Marion have been highly successful, Dr. Linda May, program director said.

"It's a great bunch of teachers pursuing their master's degrees. Another cohort will begin in the Fall 2011 and we'll begin recruiting for that soon."

A cohort is a group of students who go through the three-year program together, creating a professional learning community, May said. The program has two years of

class work and a one-year internship, May added. For those interested in the master's program that helps transition teachers into administrators, **visit CCU online at [www.coastal.edu](http://www.coastal.edu).**

Francis Marion University will begin recruiting for its RN to BN program and officials say they hope to offer classes in January, if the interest is there for it.

University officials conducted an information and interest meeting in the Marion County Medical Center in December. **For information about the RN to BN program, where registered nurses earn their bachelor's degree, contact Regina Smeltzer at (843) 661-1689 or [rsmeltzer@fmarion.edu](mailto:rsmeltzer@fmarion.edu).**

FMU's Coordinator of Continuing Education, Suzan Orrico, said other non-degree earning programs will be offered at the Higher Ed Center, such as Business 150, Fundamentals of Business, and Entrepreneurship Training for Unemployed Adults. **Call Orrico at (843) 661-1283 or by e-mail her at [sorrico@fmarion.edu](mailto:sorrico@fmarion.edu).**

Vice President for Academic Affairs at FDTC, Dr. Dale Doty, said once the school has gauged student interest, it will begin to offer classes in the Center.

To show interest, he said, potential students can go online at [www.fdtc.edu](http://www.fdtc.edu) and begin the registration process. Also, he said, **contact Marie Ferguson, Director of the Mullins site of FDTC, at (843) 676-8550** for more information.

### Coming up

#### January 1st

Happy New Year!

#### January 9th

Sunday, 3-5 p.m.: Reception, Marion County Museum on Wilcox Street, for students who participated in the Marion County Schools Art Contest, The Heritage of Our Lives.

#### January 10th

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

#### January 11th

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

#### January 17th

Monday, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Day, City Offices Closed.

#### January 17th

Monday, 6:30 p.m.: Marion's Fox Watch meeting, 332, N. Main Street.

**Throughout the month,** Yoga Classes are offered in the Marion County Medical Center, U.S. Highway 76, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:30 p.m. Call 431-2630 for details.

Visit the City of Marion online at [www.marionsc.gov](http://www.marionsc.gov)

& on Facebook under City of Marion, South Carolina, for the latest in news and things to do.

### Questions about your Water or Sewer Bill?

Call Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority at (843) 765-4539

or visit them in City Hall on Main Street.

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 Ficik, Pam Jones and Dianne Owens. Call Pam Jones if you are interested in sponsoring an issue.

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. Many photos are taken by city employee Winky Fore.

Additionally, the Marion Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Marion help the city to offset printing costs. Call Mayor Rodney Berry or the City Administrator at 843-423-5961 with questions, concerns and comments.

## CITY NEWS .....

### Many give money for food and help to spread Christmas cheer to others in the City of Marion



Thanks to the generosity of the people of Marion, at least 70 families enjoyed all the fixings of a Christmas meal! At last count, \$2,100 had been collected for the food and some \$400 had been donated to the Fire Department to be used to purchase toys to distribute at Christmas. Firefighters and Police officers went door to door, distributing the food over two days. Thanks to all who gave and blessed others during the Christmas season.

### McNeil is Employee of the Month

The City of Marion selected Police Sgt. Keith McNeil, at right, as its November 2010 Employee of the Month.

McNeil graduated from the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy in 2007 and was the recipient of the Chief's Award for 2009. Assigned to Delta Shift, Sgt. McNeil is one of the Police Department's friendliest and most dependable officers. He is well respected by his peers and in the community.

McNeil has a positive attitude, never complains, and when needed is willing



to go above and beyond what is asked of him.

"Through his work ethic you can tell that he believes his job is important and enjoyable," Marion Police Capt. and Interim Chief Jim Gray said of McNeil.

"He has a warm steady smile on his face that reminds you to have a good day too, even if you weren't before you saw him."

The Mayor and Council recognized Sgt. McNeil at the Dec. 14 Council meeting for his dedication and significant contributions to the City of Marion.

### RETIREE NEWS ...

### Catching up with Judy Cooper

New for 2011: The City of Marion is proud to feature a city retiree in each monthly edition of the *Swamp Fox Scene*. Our list of retirees is long and distinguished, and we have chosen to start with a friendly face that many residents will remember from our Water Department: Mrs. Judy Cooper.

Judy Cooper came to work for the City of Marion in August 1973 as a cashier at City Hall. At that time, she was responsible for collecting payments on water bills, taxes and other over-the-counter payments to the City.

Several years later, Judy was promoted to the position of Billing Clerk for the Water Department. She became responsible for billing every water account in the City of Marion, both residential and commercial, posting water payments, keeping up with industrial usage, making cut-off lists, filing monthly reports and many other administrative duties.

She frequently stayed late at the office at the time of monthly cut-offs for the Water Department in order to give delinquent customers the opportunity to come and pay bills so their service could be reconnected. She also often filled in when one of the cashiers in the front office or dispatchers in the Police Department was out for any reason.

Judy Cooper was named Employee of the Year in 1990 and she retired

from her city service in May 2003.

"I loved my job with the City, and enjoyed helping our customers," Judy said, fondly remembering her working days. "I always tried to do my best in what I did."

Judy has been a resident of Marion for the past 40 years and is married to George

Cooper, a retired electrician. They have three children, Greg, Randy and Debra; eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Judy is President of Lodge 122 Woodmen of the World and a member of Grace Community Church, where she serves as Music Director. Even in retirement, Judy remains busy. She is employed part-time with Florence School District 1 as a proctor for GED testing. When she is not working, Judy said she likes to spend time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, volunteering with her church, visiting old friends and shopping.

Thank you, Mrs. Judy Cooper, for your exceptional dedication and outstanding service to the City of Marion.



# FROM THE MAYOR TO YOU .....

Years ago I heard a pastor preach about the importance of staying in the present, looking to the future and not dwelling too often in the past. He used the illustration of a car, explaining there is a reason why the front windshield is so big. If the driver focuses too often on the little rear view mirrors, and not the big front windshield, then the driver is going to run into problems, literally!

I believe in the pastor's message but want to take the opportunity for a brief moment to look in the rear view mirror. Because of the support of the Marion City Council and the support of our citizens, our city has taken some giant steps in 2010. Despite a challenging economy recognized by our entire country, the City of Marion has managed to pull off some major feats.

First was our (by way of referendum) transfer of the water and sewer system. This was a long drawn out process by design. It was a major decision where no stone could be left unturned. The end re-

sult was Grand Strand Water & Sewer Authority paying off the more than \$11 million city debt, with a payout of \$2.6 million. The city also receives a monthly franchise fee. Furthermore, citizens got a rate reduction and a guarantee that after two years our rates can not go up any more than the Authority's other service areas. Finally, I think everyone has recognized the amount of effort and money Grand Strand has invested in elevating our systems to first class.

Secondly, we changed our trash service. Though our former sanitation company did a good job, American Waste Systems offered our city a significant savings that allowed us to prevent an increase in rates. The company also opened an office in Marion and hired local folks. Through their creativity with the pink roll carts, citizens contribute to cancer research at no extra cost.

And I saved the best for last! In December we announced and signed a memorandum of understanding with Francis Marion University, Coastal Car-

olina University, and Florence Darlington Technical College. This equates to classes being offered by all three institutions right here in Marion in our CD Joyner Facility. This is an initiative that I believe will evolve into something big for our entire region. We will be forthcoming with all developments as they happen.

Now that we've glanced briefly in the rear view mirror, I'm very excited to turn to our front windshield. I'm looking forward to exploring with Council and our citizens the opportunities of 2011. Many municipalities and organizations will rest on their laurels and say now is not the time to make moves. Often, statements like this are due to unwillingness to put forth the effort to find the right opportunities. There are always opportunities for those who diligently pursue them.

I trust that each one of you will physically, mentally and prayerfully prepare yourself for the blessings that await you in this New Year.

**Yours truly, Rodney Berry**



## New sign to help city communicate with citizens

The City of Marion has invested in a new sign at the intersection of U.S. Highway 76, Liberty Street, and Godbold Street and Jones Avenue Extension. The sign, like the one on Main Street, will feature city events, and items of interest.

### BE SAFE THIS WINTER:

## Follow these precautions to prevent home fires

Heating equipment is a leading cause of home fire deaths each year. The City of Marion Fire Department personnel offer the following safety tips and precautions to help prevent heating fires from happening this winter.

### Be Warm & Safe this Winter

- ⇒ Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, such as a furnace, fireplace, wood stove or portable space heater.
- ⇒ Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- ⇒ Never use your oven to heat your home.
- ⇒ Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year.
- ⇒ Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- ⇒ Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- ⇒ Make sure a fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- ⇒ Test smoke alarms monthly.

**For more safety tips, visit the National Fire Prevention Association web site at [www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education).**

## FLASHPOINT ..

*News from and about the City Fire Department*



## Fire Department substation nears completion

First the land was cleared, then the concrete slab was poured and electrical and plumbing conduits laid. Then the frame was put in place and the interior completed, or nearly so. The new City of Marion Fire Department Station II should be completed before the end of the month and a dedication ceremony is planned.

# SPORTS & RECREATION .....

## Basketball sign-up is over and the season is just ahead

The Recreation Department had a great turnout for basketball sign-ups; the coaches and players have practiced all the way to Christmas break and now it's time to play some ball!

Everyone looks forward to seeing the children having a great time while learning the fundamentals of basketball. The public is invited to come and support the community, your child, your neighbor's child and the coaches.

Below are 17 tips to help you be a better spectator.

- ⇒ I will not force my child to participate.
- ⇒ I will remember that children play to have fun.
- ⇒ I will learn the rules of the game and the league policies.
- ⇒ I and my guests will be positive role models and encourage sportsmanship.
- ⇒ I and my guests will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct.
- ⇒ I will not encourage anything that would endanger the athletes.
- ⇒ I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts peacefully.
- ⇒ I will demand that my child treat others with respect.
- ⇒ I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning.
- ⇒ I will offer praise for competing fairly and trying hard.
- ⇒ I will never ridicule or yell at my child or others for a mistake or losing.
- ⇒ I will emphasize skill development and practice and de-emphasize games and competition, especially in the younger age groups.
- ⇒ I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes.
- ⇒ I will respect the officials and coaches and their authority and decisions.
- ⇒ I will demand a sports environment free from drugs, tobacco and alcohol.
- ⇒ I will refrain from coaching, unless I am one, my child or others during games and practices.
- ⇒ I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that could affect the safety of my child or others.

**For more information about game times and schedules, call the Watsonia Recreation Center at 423-5410 and check with us on Facebook.**

## City employees to train for, take part in HISTORIC MARION RUNFEST

All citizens are encouraged to move 'From Couch to 5K' with the city employees

To encourage participation in the upcoming Historic Marion Runfest in February, and to promote better health of its employees, the City of Marion Wellness Program has created a way for employees to get involved in the special

event. Employees will train to participate in the 5K Run-Walk in February.

Preparing for any run can be a daunting task, so Personnel Director Elizabeth Ficik chose a program to help move employees from walking to running.

The program, "From Couch to 5K," is designed to ease participants into a running program. It takes a few minutes each week and participants can run for time or for distance.

Each session will take about 20 to 30 minutes, three times a week. Employee Training will be on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 4:30 p.m. The City's Recreation Department will also conduct training on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8:30 a.m.

Anyone interested in participating with the employees should contact Elizabeth Ficik at City Hall, [eficik@marionsc.gov](mailto:eficik@marionsc.gov) or 423-8614 or Cheryl Askins at Watsonia, [caskins@marionsc.gov](mailto:caskins@marionsc.gov) or 423-5410.

## Coming Up

### Check us out online!

The City of Marion Recreation Department now has a Facebook Page and is on the Internet, on the [www.Marionsc.gov](http://www.Marionsc.gov) web site.

Find us under "Residents" and then click on "Recreation." To find us on Facebook, search Marion Recreation Department! There are game times, photos and much more!

### Centers offer great places for gathering

**Parents:** Remember that the Watsonia and Grice Recreation centers are open in the afternoons as a place for students to gather. Hours are 2:30 – 4 p.m. Children will be under adult supervision and are expected to follow rules. There are plenty of games, such as pool, air hockey, board games and more, for them to enjoy. For more information call the Recreation Department at 423-5410.

### Same day, new time for Bingo at Watsonia

The time to play Bingo in Watsonia Recreation Center has changed to 8:15 – 9:15 a.m. Bingo is played on the first and third Thursday of each month and there are plenty of seats for newcomers to join the fun.



We have refreshments for you to enjoy while you play. So come on over and bring some friends! We look forward to seeing you here.

Bingo is free of charge and open to the public and prizes are awarded to winners.

### Get moving, keep moving: Join others for aerobics



Senior Aerobics is offered at the Watsonia Recreation Center Monday and Thursdays from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. The class is offered by Marion County Council on Aging and is FREE, however, donations are appreciated. For information about the class, call 423-4391.

### Visit [www.rmssports.com](http://www.rmssports.com) & register today!

Also, visit [www.racesonline.com](http://www.racesonline.com) ... HISTORIC MARION RUNFEST directed by Danny & Lesa White

February 26, 2011 9 a.m.

THIS INAUGURAL EVENT WILL FEATURE RUNNING & WALKING ACTIVITIES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT. POST RACE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE THE 2ND ANNUAL SWAMP FOX CHILI COOKOFF AND MANY OTHER FAMILY ACTIVITIES.

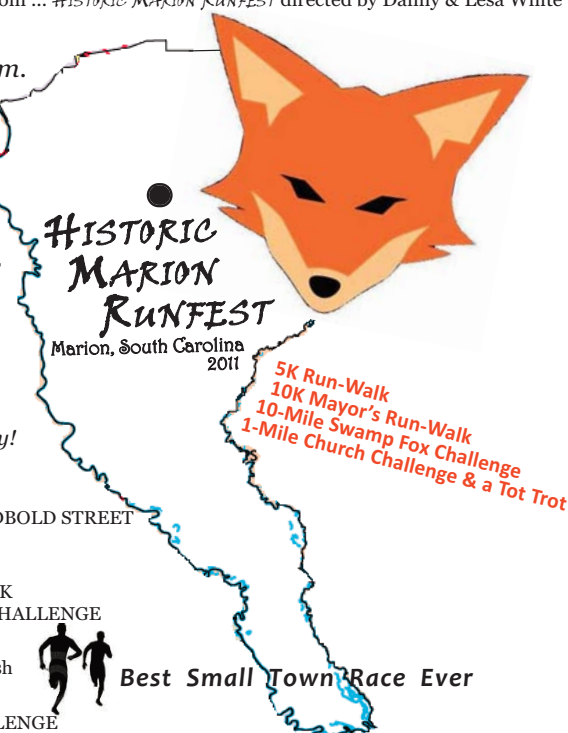
Experience True Southern Hospitality In the Swamp Fox City!

RACE SITE: MARION OPERA HOUSE, GODBOLD STREET

9 a.m. events include  
5K RUN-WALK  
10K MAYORS RUN-WALK  
10-MILE SWAMP FOX CHALLENGE

11 a.m. event features  
TOT TROT, a 50-yard dash

11:30 a.m. event features  
1-MILE CHURCH CHALLENGE



ALL COURSES ARE USATF CERTIFIED. VERY FLAT & FAST.  
ALL RUNNERS WILL RUN CONCURRENTLY THROUGH THE HISTORIC DISTRICT, DOWNTOWN AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS.  
VERY BEAUTIFUL SOUTHERN SCENERY THROUGHOUT.  
STICK AROUND FOR FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS AND THE AWARDS CEREMONY.

The HISTORIC MARION RUNFEST is a component of Celebrating Francis Marion Days, February 24-27, 2011