

# HORRY COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT

## 2 0 1 3



COMMITTED TO  
EXCELLENCE

[HORRYCOUNTY.ORG](http://HORRYCOUNTY.ORG)



# Letter to the Citizens



Mark Lazarus

## Welcome

I am pleased to present this Annual Report and share the good news about how your county government is working for you. While we cannot highlight all our accomplishments, this report will show how our economy is rebounding as we continue to make great strides in our community.

As a result of the tough economic times over the past few years and the resulting reduced county revenues, the Fiscal Year 2013 budget provided a leaner operating and capital plan. As Horry County's economy starts to rebound, we continue to be one of the financially strongest counties in South Carolina.

2013 has been another year of great progress in Horry County. Horry County residents have seen the continuation of major road construction. The Backgate Interchange Project is wrapping up and is scheduled to be completed in August 2014. Work is also underway on the SC 31 extension and Highway 707 Widening Projects, and miles of dirt roads in the rural area are getting paved.

Progress is also being made on International Drive as the environmental permit was submitted in November 2013 and Glens Bay Widening and Interchange Project will begin this summer. We still have much work to complete, but are positive we can get it done.

This report will also show the number of calls/incidents responded to by Horry County Fire/Rescue and the Police Department. The calls for service continues to be high, but thanks to our enhanced fire protection and additional firefighters this will assist with protection of life and property and help to maintain our low ISO ratings keeping insurance rates low. The Horry County Police continues to fight crime and added another street crimes unit, which works hand-in-hand with residents on community issues.

We will continue our aggressive economic development efforts to garner more high paying jobs for our citizens, which will dramatically improve our quality of life. The county's investment in the Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Develop-

ment Corporation (EDC) is paying off. Since January 2012, the EDC has announced over 650 new jobs including announcements in advance manufacturing, aerospace, forest products and technology, etc. Bauschlinnemann North American Headquarters has relocated to Myrtle Beach and PTR Industries has opened their new rifle manufacturing facility in Aynor, with more announcements slated for 2014.

It is our continued mission to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, while continually improving the quality of life of our citizens and visitors. With our exceptional staff and County Council's leadership, we continue to make great strides. As we continue to grow, your county government pledges to make every effort to make Horry County the best it can be.

Thank you again for allowing me to serve as your chairman.

**Mark Lazarus**

**Horry County Council Chairman**

## Form of Government

Horry County has been operating under the Council/Administrator form of government since 1975. Under this type of government each member of council is elected from the district in which he/she lives and a chairman is elected at-large. The council consists of a chairman and 11 council members; each elected for four-year terms. The council appoints a Clerk to Council, Register of Deeds Director and an Administrator.

## Mission Statement

Providing a community environment in which the citizens and visitors of Horry County can enjoy the highest quality of life.

## Motto

Committed to Excellence

# Horry County Council

## Guiding Our Future

The Horry County Council represents 11 different districts in the county and the chairman is elected at-large. The council meets the first and third Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m. in Council Chambers located in the Horry County Government & Justice Center, 1301 2nd Avenue in Conway.

The meetings are televised "live" on HTC Channel 14 and Time Warner Cable Channel 3. The meetings are also streamed "live" on the county's website at [www.horrycounty.org](http://www.horrycounty.org). Archived video of the council meetings, agenda and minutes are available online at [www.horrycounty.org](http://www.horrycounty.org).



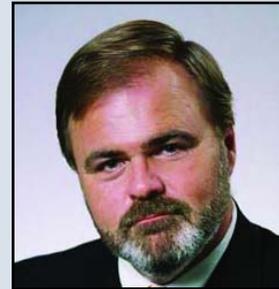
**Mark Lazarus**  
*Chairman*



**Harold G. Worley**  
*District 1*



**Brent Schulz**  
*District 2*



**Marion Foxworth, III**  
*District 3*



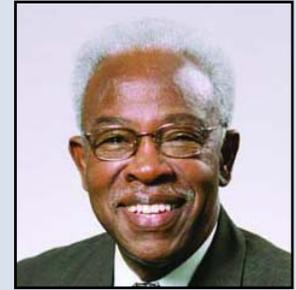
**Gary Loftus, Vice Chairman**  
*District 4*



**Paul D. Price, Jr.**  
*District 5*



**Bob Grabowski**  
*District 6*



**James R. Frazier**  
*District 7*



**Carl Schwartzkopf**  
*District 8*



**W. Paul Prince**  
*District 9*



**Jody Prince**  
*District 10*



**Al Allen**  
*District 11*

## Horry County Veterans Affairs



The Horry County Veterans Affairs Department assists veterans and their families in applying for all eligible benefits for which they may be entitled, including but not limited to, disability compensation, pension, death, educational, home loan guarantee and/or medical. They also assist veterans' survivors in filing for death benefits, survivor benefits annuity, burial benefits, and insurance annuity.

In FY 2013, \$84.6M in compensation and pension benefits were awarded to veterans, widows, and dependents in Horry County, according to the most recent information generated by the Geographical Distribution Index. From July 2012 to June 2013, the Horry County Veterans Affairs Department received over 9,000 visitors, wrote over 4,800 claims, and conducted 9,400 interviews and consultations.

# Planning and Zoning

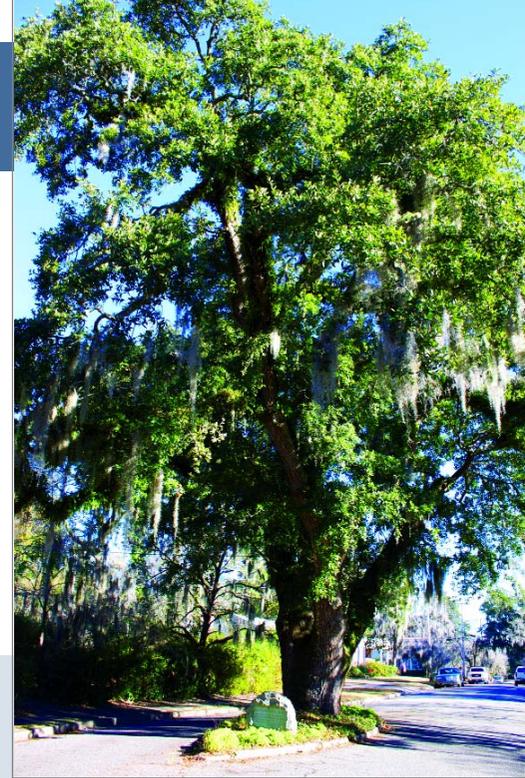
Horry County adopted four new Zoning Overlay Districts in 2013, all addressing corridors in the southern urban and suburban areas of unincorporated county. While each overlay is unique, the common themes of site design, building design, access management, and sign regulation are addressed in each overlay.

The Horry County Historic

Preservation Plan was adopted in February 2013. This document will guide historic preservation efforts throughout Horry County for the next 10-20 years. Horry County is the first county and one of only a handful in South Carolina to adopt such a plan.

The Horry County Patriot Tree Project was launched and this

project will pair Civil War soldiers from Horry County with majestic live Oak Trees. The Board of Architectural Review has partnered with Horry County Garden Clubs, the Horry County Historical Society, the Horry Archives Center at Coastal Carolina University, and the Sons of the Confederate Veterans to ensure the project's success.



## Code Enforcement

Horry County Code Enforcement issued 8,082 building permits in FY13, which were up 11 percent from FY12. The construction value of those permits totaled \$371,061,552 and Horry County collected over \$3 million in revenue from the permits, which were up 29 percent from FY12. Officials also conducted 64,211 inspections in FY13, which were up 10 percent from FY12.

## Corridor Beautification Projects for 2013

- Hwy 501 Median Improvements: Completed by J&S Landscaping - 80 Crepe Myrtles, 32 Sabal Palmettos, 216 Abelia, 126 Tea Olives and 496 Muhly Grasses were planted. Funded through Tree Mitigation Funds and Accommodations Tax Funds.
- Hwy 17 Business Median Improvements (Garden City): Completed by Waccamaw Landscaping - 98 Crepe Myrtles, 91 Abelia, 65 Tea Olives, 276 Saw Palmettos, 790 Muhly Grasses, and 525 Day Lilies were planted. Funded by Palmetto Pride Grants, private donation, and Tree Mitigation Funds.
- Hwy 17 & 544 Interchange: 100 small trees acquired through a Palmetto Pride Grant were planted. Horry County Parks & Recreation, Public Works and the Planning & Zoning Departments planted the trees and spread mulch. The mulch was donated by the Horry County Solid Waste Authority.

## Register of Deeds

The Register of Deeds is responsible for recording, indexing, and maintaining legal documents that establish ownership of real and personal property in Horry County. The office also records deeds, plats, mortgages, state and federal liens, and any document pertaining to real estate transactions in Horry County.

In FY13, the Register of Deeds Office recorded 153,410 instruments, compared to 142,085 recorded in FY12.



*Hwy. 17 Business Median Improvements*



*Hwy. 501 Median Improvements*

# Stormwater

The Horry County Stormwater Department is the lead office for the county's efforts to improve drainage and reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff. These activities, include drainage system maintenance and improvement projects as well as, public education, employee training, water quality monitoring, pollutant source identification, and watershed management. In addition, the Stormwater Department provides technical expertise and

guidance to all county departments and serves as the lead department for mosquito abatement in the county.

In FY13, the Horry County Stormwater Department mowed 69 miles of ditches, hand cleaned 39 miles of ditches, mechanically cleaned 101 miles of ditches and cleaned 450 catch basins throughout the county.



*USGS Monitoring Station on Long Ave. Ext.*



*Crabtree Restoration Project*

## OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDED:

### Pollution:

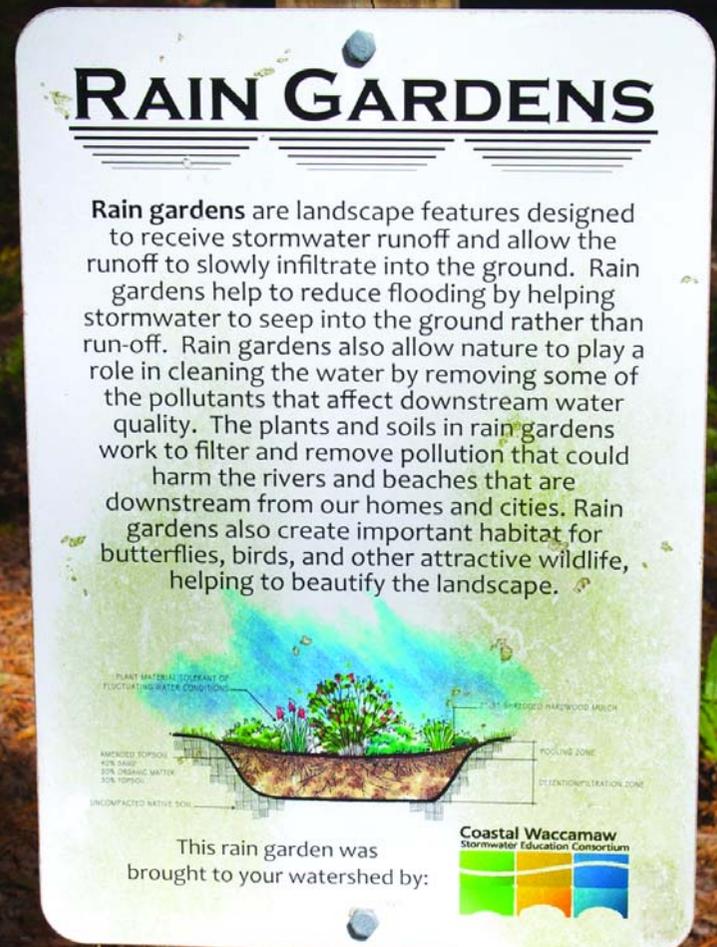
- Responded to 27 reports of suspected illicit discharges.
- Completed Annual Stormwater Reports to SC Department of Health & Environmental Control for Horry County, Town of Atlantic Beach, and Briarcliffe Acres.
- Conducted Bacteria Source Tracking testing in the Murrells Inlet watershed.

### Installations:

- Installed bioretention area (rain garden) at Loris Recycling Facility (1125 sq. ft. x 3.5 ft. deep).
- Planted 45 native trees, 60 native shrubs, and 30,000 sq. ft. of native grasses at Crabtree Swamp restoration site in Conway.
- Planted 100 native wetland plants at a regional stormwater pond near Surfside Beach.
- Planted 19,200 sq. ft. of native grasses at River Oaks Elementary School's rain garden with students, teachers, and parents.

### Mosquito Control:

- Mosquito larvicide – 6,000 catch basins were treated.
- Mosquito aerial spraying – 300,000 acres
- Mosquito ground spraying – 122,668 acres



# Probate Court Case Management System and Digitalization of Court Records

Following the award of a bid to Spartan Technology Solutions, Inc., the Horry County Probate Court implemented its new probate court case management system in October 2012.

The new integrated system provides more

detailed information regarding court cases and files, allows for easy maneuverability among different agencies, and has the capability to provide a web-based search for public records. The new system also incorporates the digitalization of all Probate Court filings and, in January 2013,

the Probate Court began digitally scanning all new court filings. Through the new case management system, court staff and the public can access case files and court documents via imaged documents allowing for quicker, easier and more secure access to court documents and information.

## Library

Libraries and library staff across our state continue to respond to the needs of their communities. Access to free technology, the ability to borrow books, and the availability of reference librarians are the key services now offered by many public libraries.

The Horry County Memorial Library system features 10 branches throughout the county and one bookmobile that circulated 976,122 items. In FY13, the library featured over 339,000 books/serials/volumes, over 640 print subscriptions like newspapers/periodicals, and over 27,000 audio materials for the public to view or checkout. This material was enjoyed by over 130,000 registered library users and the libraries had over 269,000 annual physical library visits in FY13.



*One of the high points of FY13 was opening the new Carolina Forest Library. In the picture above, new Carolina Forest staff members are completing training on the Horizon Integrated Library System (ILS). The ILS provides the circulation modules as well as cataloging, acquisitions, patron database, and the online catalog that is accessed by the public.*

The public was also introduced to the 3M Cloud Library feature, which provides citizens with downloadable e-books that can be used on almost all e-reader devices and multiple platforms. Over 2,000 citizens took advantage of this new program in FY13 and those numbers continue to increase daily.

## Human Resources

Employee salaries and benefits comprise the vast majority of the county's operating expenses. The Horry County Human Resources Department's mission is to develop and administer programs designed to increase the county's effectiveness as an employer -- its hiring processes, pay, benefits, human resource policies and others -- the whole spectrum of creating and managing the employer-employee relationship.

In FY13, Horry County averaged a staffing level of over 2,000 employees to include the Department of Airports. Keeping employees well-trained and up-to-date on procedures and protocols is a priority. In FY13, 2,684 sessions were attended regarding various risk management classes to include first aid/CPR, OSHA building maintenance and grounds keeping, safety orientation, scaffold safety, and drivers training. Mandating training for employees also include discrimination and harassment, ethics, and privacy. Employees are also offered a wide-array of other training opportunities to include classes on supervision, customer service, etc.



# Horry County Public Safety

## Fire/Rescue

Horry County Fire/Rescue is a combination career and volunteer department tasked with fire protection to the unincorporated areas of Horry County and emergency medical care for the entire county.



*Firefighter Ethan Gibbins*

responded to 26,739 fire/medical assistance calls, which included 19,042 for medical responses and 2,663 motor vehicle accidents.

In FY13, Horry County Fire/Rescue staff completed 39,906 hours of medical training to include specialty classes, American Heart Association courses, Rapid Sequence Intubation classes, and emergency medical training and first responder courses.

Horry County Fire/Rescue has also established a partnership with Horry Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) for people to earn degrees with an emphasis in fire science technology.



Staffing for the department consists of over 320 full-time career staff and over 300 volunteers. Currently, the department operates 19 Advanced Life Support ambulances throughout the county. The county operates 39 stations between the career and volunteer staff.

In FY13, Horry County Fire/Rescue responded to 44,879 medical calls, which included 4,480 cardiac calls and 4,503 respiratory calls. The department also

## Police

The Horry County Police Department is a full-service law enforcement agency. The agency has worked very hard to become a contemporary law enforcement agency constantly striving to improve technology, training, cultural diversification, education, physical fitness, youth orientation, and high morale.

The department considers their work environment and profession as a major factor in the stability of our community and our personal welfare. They are committed to providing career opportunity based upon merit, skill, self-improvement, performance and initiative for their staff of 315 employees.

In FY13, the Horry County Police Department responded to 121,107 calls for service, which included over 15,000 calls for alarms, over 9,000 were traffic stops, and 8,974 were domestic calls.

Those calls generated 23,089 case reports on various crimes to include, 2,444 destruction/vandalism, and 458 drug violations.



*FANTastic Senior Program with  
Cpl. Thomas McMillan*

**In FY13,  
E911 answered  
363,390 calls  
for service.**

# Budget Basics

## Fiscal Year

A fiscal year (FY) is the 12-month budget cycle; it's usually different than a calendar year. In Horry County, FY13 runs from July 1, 2012, to June 30, 2013.

## General Fund

**FY 2013: \$131 million**

When people talk about the county's budget, they usually mean the General Fund. The General Fund revenue is a combination of real and personal property taxes, vehicle taxes, documentary stamps, business licenses, building permit fees, Master-in-Equity fees, and other fees and fines.

## Other Funds

The balance of the county's budget is made up of Special Revenue Funds, Capital Projects Fund, Debt Service Funds, Proprietary Fund and Internal Service Funds. All of these funds are generally restricted for a particular purpose. Examples include Parks & Recreation Fund, Waste Management Fund, Fire Fund, Road Maintenance Fund, Beach Renourishment Fund and Senior Citizens Fund.

## Horry County Total Budget

**FY 2013: \$314 million**

This combined total includes the General Fund and all other funds.

*For a complete copy of the FY 2013 Budget, log onto [www.horry.county.org/Departments/BudgetOffice.aspx](http://www.horry.county.org/Departments/BudgetOffice.aspx)*

## ASSESSED VALUES

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| Primary Residence                                | 4 percent of market value    |
| Rental & Secondary Property                      | 6 percent of market value    |
| Agricultural Real Property (privately owned)     | 4 percent of market value    |
| Agricultural Real Property (corporate owned)     | 6 percent of market value    |
| Commercial Real Property                         | 6 percent of market value    |
| Manufacturing Real & Personal Property           | 10.5 percent of market value |
| Utility Real & Personal Property                 | 10.5 percent of market value |
| Personal Property (other than airplanes & boats) | 10.5 percent of market value |
| Airplanes  | 4 percent of market value    |
| Boats  | 6 percent of market value    |
| Personal Vehicles                                | 6 percent of market value    |

## Special Funds

The General Fund provides for many county services, but other Special Funds also provide services to residents. These funds can be described in these broad terms:

**Special revenue funds** are largely restricted to a specific purpose, service, or program and may include tax-based revenues. For example:

- Fire Fund
- Waste Management
- County Recreation
- GIS/IT Special Revenue
- E-911 Emergency Telephone
- Tourism and Promotions (Accommodations Tax)
- Victim Witness Assistance
- Road Maintenance
- Socastee Community Recreation
- Beach Renourishment
- Watersheds
- Arcadian Shores
- Senior Citizens
- Baseball Stadium
- Economic Development
- Cool Springs Business Park
- Stormwater Management
- Higher Education
- Horry-Georgetown Tech
- Mt. Gilead

### Enterprise Funds/Internal Service Funds

Enterprise funds come from the collection of fees associated with providing the service or program. Internal Service funds account for the goods and services provided by one department to other departments of the government on a cost reimbursement basis.

- Department of Airports
- Fleet Maintenance Internal Service

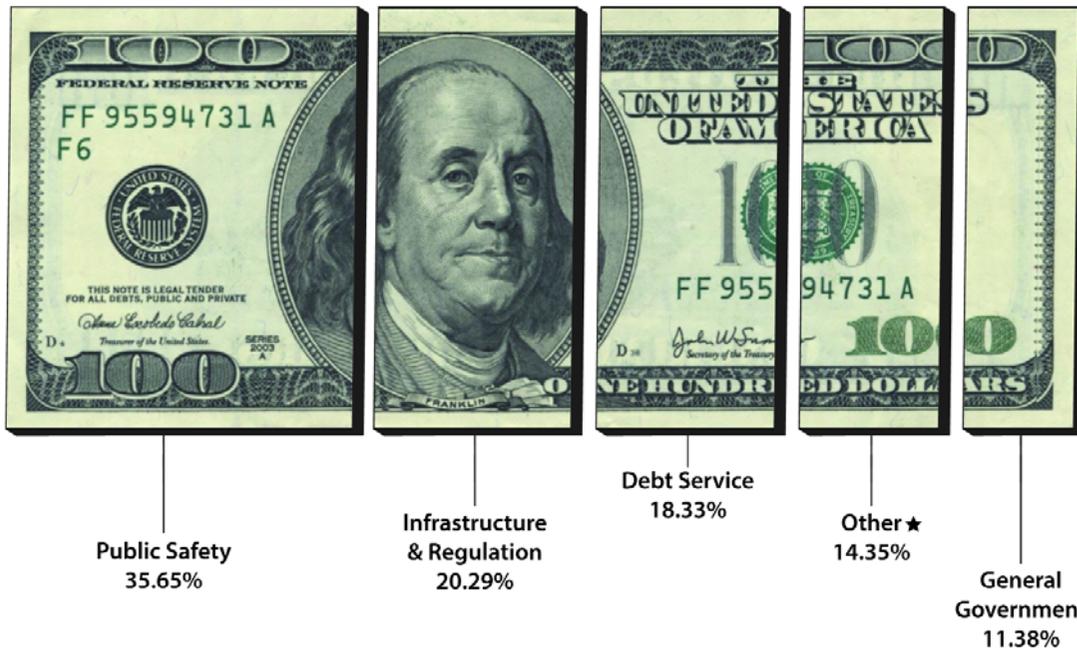
# Budget-in-Brief

The county's revenue comes from many places, including state funds, real and personal property taxes, business licenses, and restricted funds like parks and recreation, beach renourishment, fire fund and road maintenance fees. When people talk about

the budget, they usually mean the General Fund, but the services that residents receive actually come from other sources (see Budget Basics). These charts reflect the different types of revenue the county receives and how it is spent by function.

## HORRY COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA GENERAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES BY FUNCTION

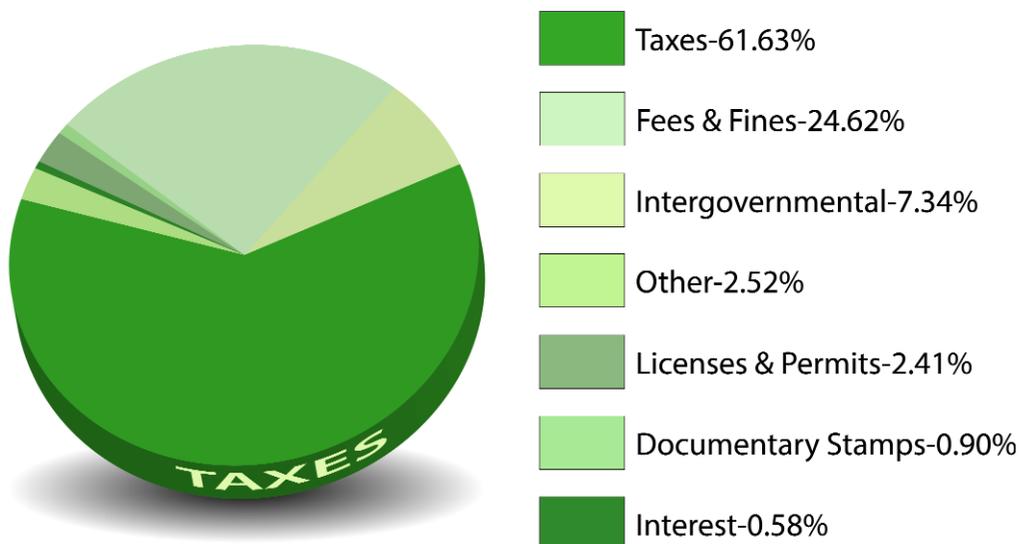
Fiscal Year 2013 (expressed in thousands)



\*Other includes Capital Projects 6.42%, Other 0.046%, Tech and Higher Education 1.78%, Economic Development 0.67%, Culture and Recreation 4.05%, and Health and Social Services 0.97%

## HORRY COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA GENERAL GOVERNMENT REVENUES BY FUNCTION

Fiscal Year 2013 (expressed in thousands)



County General Fund FY13 tax revenue for property tax on real estate was projected to be the same revenue from the tax levy collected in FY12. The personal property tax revenue for FY13 was expected to exceed FY12 revenue of \$4.52 million and was budgeted at a level of \$4.66 million. Vehicle tax revenue for FY12 increased slightly to \$4.28 million from \$4.11 million in FY11. For FY13, vehicle tax revenue was projected to continue to increase to \$4.35 million.

The FY13 budget included the un-funding of 79 positions as an ongoing cost savings measure. These positions were not funded in the FY13 budget and could not be refilled unless approved by County Council.

The FY13 budget included the addition of 36 new positions, but also deleted 35 positions from the prior budget. The Administration Division received 23 new positions in the following departments: Assessor, Master-in-Equity, Library (four positions for the opening of the Carolina Forest Library), and the Airport.

The Infrastructure and Regulation Division received one position for the Solid Waste Authority and deleted one position in Code Enforcement.

The Public Safety Division received 12 new positions throughout the following departments: E-911 Communications, Veterans Affairs, Public Defender, Clerk of Court, Sheriff, and Beach Services.

A couple of months after finalizing the budget, the county was appropriated an additional \$1.45M from the Local Government Fund by the state legislature. The funding was used for additional employee compensation, funding for three new employment positions, funding towards retiree insurance and the remainder as a contingency. The council also deleted 49 unfunded positions.

The county's goal is to use its resources to maintain quality of life for the residents and to have reserve funds to help us respond to future fiscal challenges and natural disasters. To keep moving projects forward, the county also aggressively pursues other sources of funding, including federal and state grants.

# RIDE Project - Status Update



## Backgate Interchange

**ORIGINAL BUDGET:** \$49,500,000  
**REVISED BUDGET:** \$119,900,000 (\$15M reim. grant acquired)  
**ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:** Fall 2014  
**CURRENT STATUS:**

- Temperance Connector complete
- Withers Connector, Portland Drive and Macklen Road complete
- Ramps on the east side of the intersection and the west side ramps are complete
- Bridge work is underway
- Construction 65% complete



## Glenn's Bay Road

**ORIGINAL BUDGET:** \$76,000,000  
**REVISED BUDGET:** \$75-\$80 million  
**ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:** Summer 2017  
**CURRENT STATUS:**

- Preliminary engineering complete
- Right of way acquisition in progress
- Development of construction plans in progress
- Permit package has been submitted to the USACE
- Coordination with utility providers is ongoing



## Hwy. 707 Widening

**ORIGINAL BUDGET:** \$105,000,000  
**REVISED BUDGET:** \$100-\$105 million  
**ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:** Spring 2017  
**CURRENT STATUS:**

- Preliminary engineering complete
- Development of final construction plans and specifications are substantially complete
- Right of way acquisition ongoing
- Clearing and grubbing/utility relocates underway
- Construction on main widening to begin Spring 2014



## International Drive

**ORIGINAL BUDGET:** \$6,500,000  
**REVISED BUDGET:** \$15.5 million (currently in the process of being validated due to changes in the Horry County / SC DNR (IGA)  
**ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE:** Fall/Winter 2015  
**CURRENT STATUS:**

- Design is nearly complete, right-of-way acquisition is underway (50% complete), and environmental permit application was submitted November 2013. Receipt of the permit is expected approximately nine months to one year after submittal.
- Construction will begin in late 2014 or early 2015.



## Local Option Sales Tax

**PASSED MAY 2007 – SUNSETS APRIL 30, 2014, OR EARLIER WHEN WE COLLECT \$425,307,500**  
**PROJECTED REVENUE - \$425,307,500**  
**COLLECTIONS TO DATE: \$ 413,030,740 (1/02/2014)**