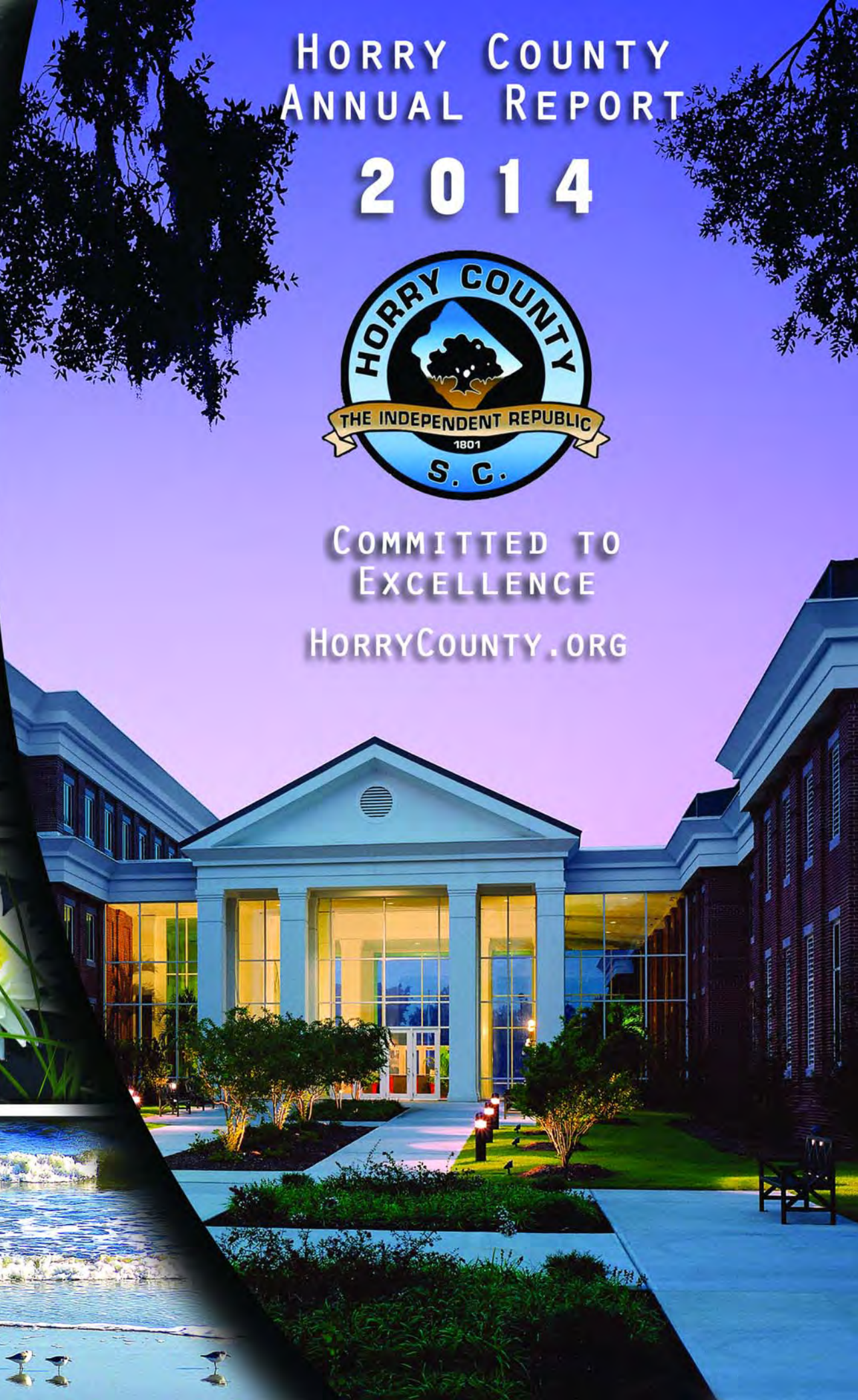
Horry County Annual Report

2014

HORRY COUNTY
THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC
1801
S. C.

Committed to Excellence

HorryCounty.org



Mark Lazarus

Letter to the Citizens

Welcome

It has been an honor to serve you as your Chairman of Horry County Council for the last year. It is our mission to provide a community environment in which the citizens and visitors of Horry County can enjoy the highest quality of life. Proper budgeting and financial management allows Horry County to achieve and exceed our goal of being good stewards of the taxpayer dollars.

I am pleased to present this annual report and share the good news about how your county is working for you. With the county's exceptional staff and County Council's leadership, we have made great strides over the years.

In the past year, Horry County residents have seen major road construction in our area, due to the Riding on a Penny one cent sales tax that was passed by voters in 2006. Work is well underway on SC 707 Widening, SC 31 Extension, and work has begun on the Glenns Bay Widening and Interchange Project. Our last project to widen International Drive is set to begin this year.

Horry County Council will continue to focus on public safety and providing top notch services to our residents and visitors. We will also continue to diversify our economy by staying competitive in economic development and strive to bring in more jobs for our community.

Horry County employees continue to look for ways to save money, while striving to improve the services in the community by keeping with our number one goal of "Committed to Excellence". As the county continues to grow, we will make every effort to enhance our services and make Horry County the best it can be.

Respectfully,

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 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

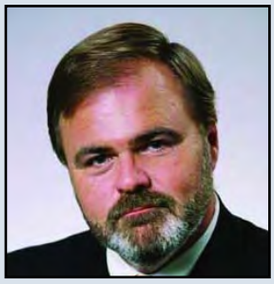
The Horry County Council represents 11 different districts in the county and the chairman is elected at-large. The council meets the first and third Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m. in Council Chambers located in the Horry County Government & Justice Center, 1301 2nd Avenue in Conway.

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. Archived video of the council meetings, agenda and minutes are available online at www.horrycounty.org.

Mark Lazarus
Chairman

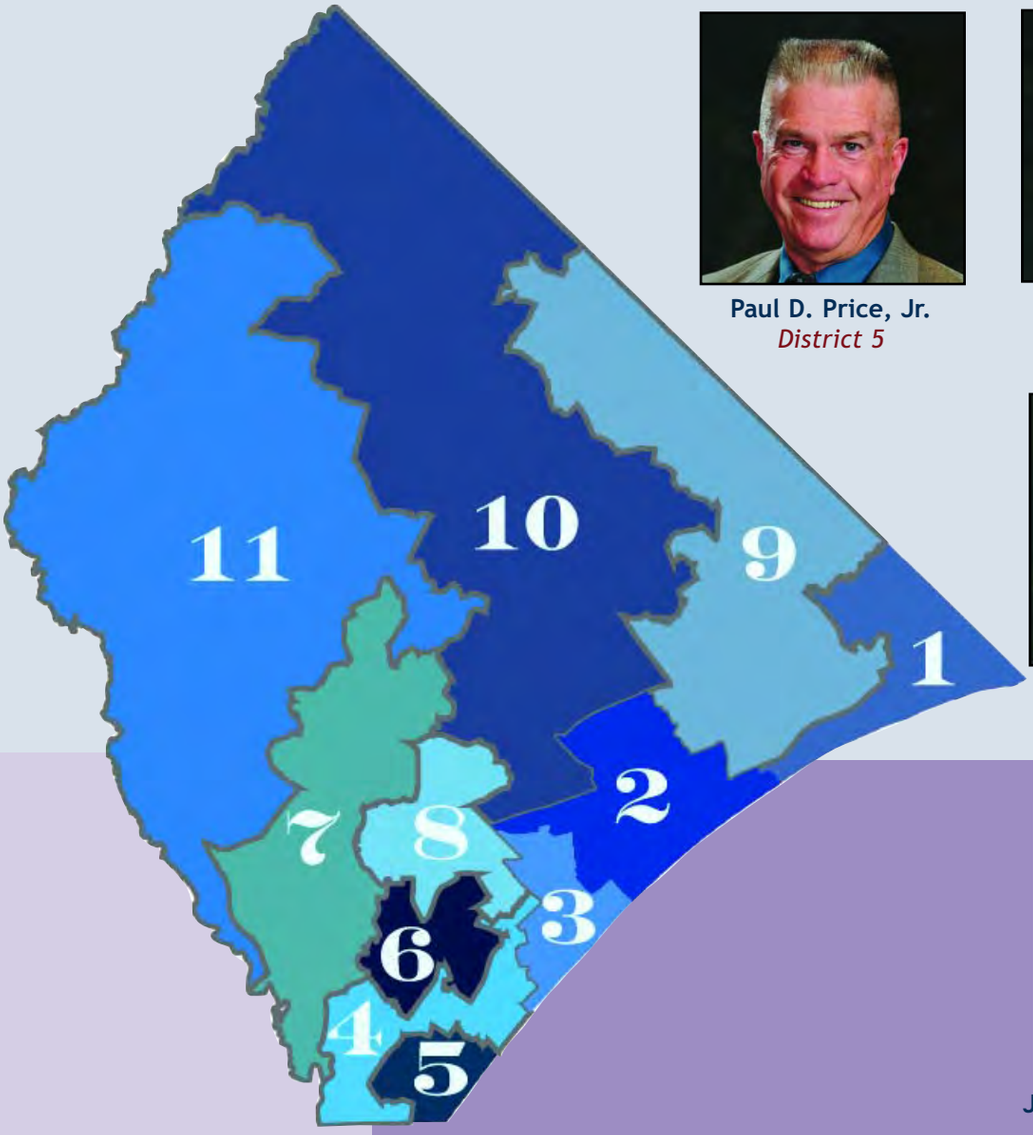
Harold G. Worley
District 1

Brent Schulz
District 2



Marion Foxworth, III
District 3

Gary Loftus
District 4

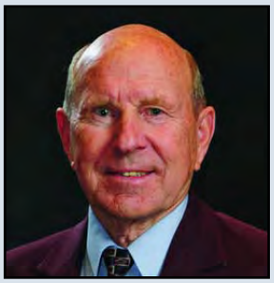


Paul D. Price, Jr.
District 5

Bob Grabowski
District 6

James R. Frazier
District 7

Carl Schwartzkopf
District 8



W.Paul Prince
District 9

Jody Prince, Vice Chairman
District 10

Al Allen
District 11

Horry County Implements CodeRED

In October of 2013, Horry County began utilizing the **CodeRED**® emergency notification system giving county officials the ability to deliver pre-recorded emergency telephone notification/information messages to targeted areas or the entire county at a rate of up to 60,000 calls per hour. Horry County Public Safety officials have used this system numerous times since its implementation to include local warnings of suspects on the loose, barricaded subjects, local burn bans, etc.

The **CodeRED**® system enables individuals and businesses the functionality to add their telephone numbers directly to the system's database. The system was recently updated which now allows users to add multiple addresses and as many phone numbers as needed for other family members or employees. The system also allows email addresses as the emergency notification can be broadcast via phone, text or email.

To date, the **CodeRED**® system has over 111,000 phone numbers registered in the database. Citizens that have not yet signed up for the free notifications may log onto Horry County's website, http://www.horrycounty.org click on "Departments" on the top menu. There are links to the **CodeRED**® system on the Fire/Rescue, Public Information, Sherriff's Office, Police Department and Emergency Management pages.

All contact information provided remains private and will only be used for emergency notifications. Anyone without Internet access may call the Horry County Public Information Office at (843) 915-5390, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to give their information over the phone to be added to the **CodeRED**® system. Required information includes first and last name, street address (physical address, no P.O. Boxes), city, state, zip code, primary phone number and additional phone numbers are optional.

Project E.A.G.L.E.

Horry County is halfway through extensive implementation activities to employ a new financial system that will support county staff in the delivery of government services and activities, take advantage of best practices, and significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the county's customer service and business processes. This project is called Project E.A.G.L.E. standing for Everyone Aligned to Generate Lean Efficiencies. When Project E.A.G.L.E. is completed, Horry County will have accomplished the following objectives:

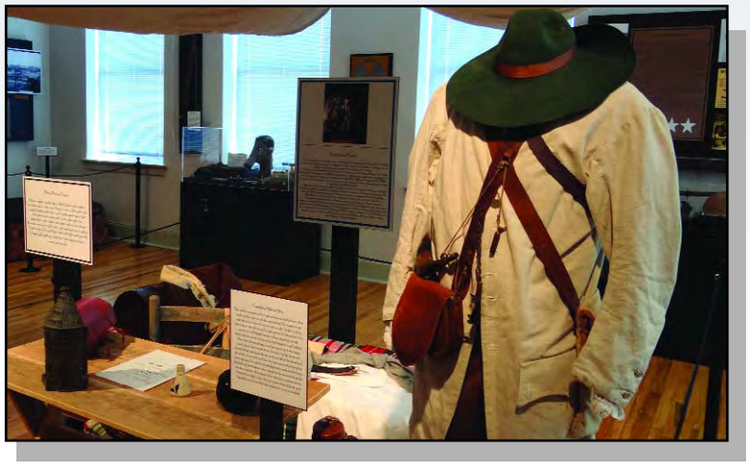
- Incorporate fully integrated "best business practices".
- Develop a system that is user-friendly, empowering departments to improve their business processes.
- Add and improve functionality in back-office functional areas.
- Improve quality and accessibility of information for decision support.
- Reduce redundant data entry, storage, and paper processing.
- Improve operational effectiveness and productivity.
- Enable e-procurement initiatives and web self-service.
- Retire existing legacy and back-office systems, shadow systems and tools.

Horry County used the new QS1 tax system for the mailing of 316,000 tax bills for 2014 and will go "live" in FY15 with the Tyler/Munis financial system (budget, accounts payable, e-procurement, financial reporting, fixes assets, etc.) as well as the business license module, and the payroll/human resource modules to include time and attendance.

Horry County Museum Renovations Completed

In spring of 2014, the Horry County Museum moved to its new location in the renovated Burroughs' School building on Main Street. In moving the museum, the goal was to not only preserve and renovate the historic building, but also to increase the level of service the museum could provide to the public.

The previous museum location had a total of 1,000 square feet of exhibit space while the new location provides 10,000 square feet of space. Due to the old location's limits, exhibits that told the story of Horry County had to be rotated in and out of display space. The new facility has nine permanent exhibit galleries, three changing galleries (photographic, textile and two temporary exhibit galleries), an auditorium that seats 642, a veteran's memorial, storage areas, a gift shop, enhanced parking and a breathtaking 2,500-gallon freshwater aquarium.



The showpiece of the museum, the freshwater aquarium was built by Acrylic Tank Manufacturing (ATM) famous for their hit show, Tanked, on the Animal Planet network. The aquarium is filled with fish from local rivers and represents natural history elements found in Horry County, which brings the museum's other exhibits to life. Excitingly, the tank installation was filmed as an episode of Tanked that aired on national television in September 2014. This exposure increased awareness of the museum and the Horry County area to prospective tourists all over the country.

There is no admission fee to visit the Horry County Museum. We do accept donations from the public that are used to enhance our exhibits and programs. There is a donation box in the museum for small donation or you can make large donations to the Museum Foundation.

Hours of Operation
Tuesday through Saturday: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

805 Main Street
Conway, South Carolina 29526

(843) 915-5320

HCGMuseum@horrycounty.org

2014 Winter Storm Re-Cap

Winter weather swept through Horry County in January and February 2014 and caused significant issues throughout the county. Along with freezing temperatures came heavy ice accumulations that caused widespread power outages, fallen power lines, dangerous road conditions, significant vegetative debris, canceled airline flights and school closures.

The last significant storm with similar conditions was recorded in 2004 by the National Weather Service.

The long term concern from the two winter storms was the debris removal from public properties, roads, and drainage facilities. The Horry County Public Works and Stormwater Departments inspected and removed debris from all 1,437 miles of county-maintained road rights-of-way and 20 miles of watershed canals. All winter storm debris removal was completed by March 21, 2014, and the total county expenditures on the two winter storms topped over $1million.

Fire Fund

During FY14, it was anticipated that revenue in the Fire Fund would not be enough to sustain operations at the current level. A tax millage increase was discussed for the unincorporated areas of Horry County to not only sustain current operations, but for the absorption of the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant.

Horry County Council voted for a 4.3 mill tax increase for fire operations and a 1.7 mill tax increase for fire apparatus replacement program. With this additional Fire Fund millage, Horry County Fire/Rescue has increased staffing to three employees on six engines and have purchased additional apparatus to include eight engines, a tanker, and a ladder truck with delivery beginning at the end of June 2015.

Horry County Fire/Rescue

# of Calls for Service	52,278
# of Structure Fires	540
# of Ambulance Transports	24,805

Operation Coastal Response Tested Local Incident Coordination

Horry County Emergency Management hosted a public safety exercise called Operation Coastal Response 2014 in February 2014. The exercise took place in and around the Bucksport Marina in Horry County, Sandy Island and the Wacca Wache Marina in Georgetown County.

Operation Coastal Response 2014 was a full-scale exercise designed to train and assess Horry and Georgetown Counties' ability to respond to a mass casualty/ fatality incident and to coordinate and integrate multi-agency and multi-discipline assets from local, state and federal agencies that would likely provide support and assistance in a large scale incident. Participating agencies included the following: Myrtle Beach International Airport, Horry County Emergency Management, Horry County Police, Horry County Fire/Rescue, Horry County E911 Dispatch, Horry County Sheriff's Office, Horry County Coroner's Office, Horry County Public Works, Horry County Public Information, Horry County Communications, Georgetown County Emergency Management, Georgetown County Fire/EMS, Georgetown Sheriff's Office, Georgetown County School District, Murrells Inlet-Garden City Fire Department, Midway Fire/Rescue, U.S. Coast Guard, SC Army National Guard, SC Emergency Management, SC Department of Health & Environmental Control, the American Red Cross, Grand Strand Regional Medical Center, Conway Hospital, Georgetown Memorial Hospital, Waccamaw Community Hospital, McLeod Loris Hospital, and McLeod Seacoast Hospital.

The scenario for the exercise was a commercial airliner crashing on approach to Myrtle Beach International Airport. The exercise included numerous casualties and fatalities, which included a debris field encompassing an area in both Horry and Georgetown Counties.

Measuring Proficiency

Proficiency in a certain capability is measured by a jurisdiction's ability to meet performance objectives through a combination of plans, personnel/teams, equipment, training, and exercises.

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, FY14 runs from July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014.

General Fund

FY 2014: $137 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 2014: $341 million

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

For a complete copy of the FY 2014 Budget, log onto www.horry.county.org/Departments/BudgetOffice

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
- Hidden Woods

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.

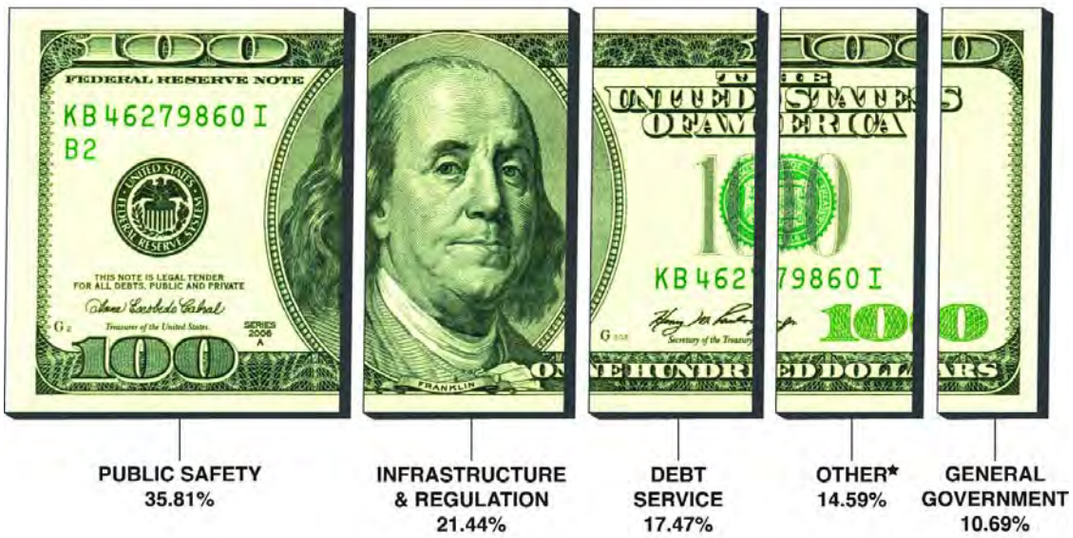
- Department of Airports
- Fleet Maintenance Internal Service

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

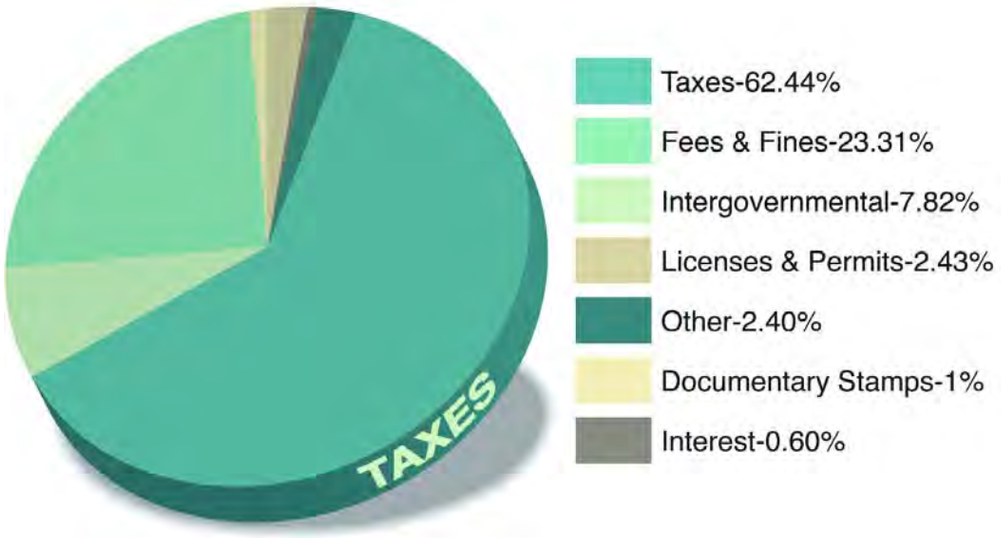
Fiscal Year 2014 (expressed in thousands)



*Other includes Capital Projects 6.77%, Health and Social Services 0.93%, Culture and Recreation 3.84%, Economic Development 0.97%, Tech and Higher Education 1.68%, and Other 0.40%

HORRY COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA
GENERAL GOVERNMENT REVENUES BY FUNCTION

Fiscal Year 2014 (expressed in thousands)



County General Fund FY14 tax revenue for property tax on real estate was projected to increase slightly from the tax levy collected in FY13. The personal property tax revenue for FY14 was expected to remain at the same revenue level of $4.5 million for FY13. Vehicle tax revenue for FY13 increased slightly to $4.5 million from $4.28 million in FY12. For FY14, vehicle tax revenue was projected to remain at $4.35 million from FY13.

In FY14 Horry County Council voted to include a 4.3 mill tax increase for fire operations and a 1.7 mill tax increase for fire apparatus replacement for the unincorporated areas of the county. This revenue not only sustains current operations for the Fire Fund and absorption of the SAFER grant, but allows for much needed three-man crews at the county's busiest fire stations.

The budget also included 77 new positions and deleted 10 positions. Some of the new positions were added to the Department of Airports, Human Resources, the Horry County Police Department, and 37 new positions in the Horry County Fire Department.

The FY14 budget also included the following:

- Continuation of the Local Road Improvement Program with an additional $750,000 funded primarily with road maintenance fees and the one percent hospitality fees.
- Continuation of the Recreation Program with 1.7 mills dedicated toward recreation.
- Continuation of the Stormwater Management Program funded by the stormwater fees assessed on all real property in the unincorporated areas of the county.
- Continuation of the Geographic Information System (GIS) and the county's investment in Information Technology (IT).
- Continuation of the multi-year improvement plan for public safety technology and the entire communications system.

The county's goal is to continue 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: $119,600,000 ($15M reim. grant acquired)
SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION DATE: November 2014
CURRENT STATUS:

- Work is underway to complete the final resurfacing and pavement markings on the ramps and Farrow Parkway.
- The dedicated U-turn will open after final resurfacing.
- Landscaping to begin in February/March 2015.

Glenns Bay Road

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

- Clearing and grubbing underway.
- Utility relocate work underway.
- Construction on second entrance into The Lakes to be completed in Spring 2015.
- Construction began Winter 2014.

Hwy. 707 Widening

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

- Clearing and grubbing/utility relocates complete.
- New lighted intersection at Big Block Road complete.
- Construction underway on main widening project.
- Construction to be completed in Spring 2017.

International Drive

ORIGINAL BUDGET: $6,500,000
ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE: Winter 2015/2016
CURRENT STATUS:

- Design is nearly complete, right-of-way acquisition is underway (over 60% complete), and environmental permit application was submitted.
- Construction estimated to begin early 2015.

Local Option Sales Tax

PASSED MAY 2007 – ENDED APRIL 30, 2014
PROJECTED REVENUE - $425,307,500
FINAL COLLECTIONS: $446M

From top to bottom: Backgate Interchange, SC-31 Expansion, SC-707 Widening and the Backgate Interchange.