



RURAL DEVELOPMENTS

GEORGETOWN AND CAYCE PARTICIPATE IN CHARRETTES

STORY BY WALTER HARRIS

The cities of Georgetown and Cayce both recently participated in an innovative planning project sponsored by the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development (CIECD) during the last couple of months. Cayce completed the initial phase in May, while Georgetown completed their initial phase in July. A Charrette is a fancy word for an intensive short term planning project. The CIECD's version focuses on branding and marketing, community design, commercial opportunities and most important, implementation. A typical Charrette starts with CIECD assembling a team of professionals who represent various disciplines including architecture, landscape architecture, planning, marketing research, community branding and economic development. The team works with the sponsoring organization to schedule a 3 day series of local input sessions with

community leaders, merchants, local government, economic development professionals and local employers to learn as much about the community and their leadership, history, culture, and local assets as possible. The visiting professionals then combine this local knowledge with their professional skills and experience to come up with a PowerPoint presentation on the final evening. The PowerPoint is amazingly comprehensive and details specific recommendations for marketing the community based on detailed analysis of the local and secondary market. The report details specific signage recommendations, intersection design enhancements, building design improvements and branding recommendations. The presentation also addresses implementation. Without implementation the best plans are worthless.

This presentation is generally delivered in a public forum with

the entire community invited to participate. The purpose of this final meeting is to let everyone know what has been developed and to initiate the process of implementation. A follow up written report contains more detailed information that will prove useful in the process. The strength that Clemson University brings to the process is that Clemson professionals are available to work with community leadership to assist in the important implementation phase. Locally based Community Development Agents as well as CIECD professionals working out of their Columbia office are available to facilitate meetings and identify resources necessary to carry out recommendations.

Other recent communities that have participated in the Charrette process include the town of Ninety Six, Hampton County, Gaffney and Lake City.

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THE CAYCE CHARRETTE EXPERIENCE

STORY BY JOHN DOE

Cayce began its Charrette experience when the newly elected Mayor, Elise Parton, called the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development in Columbia. She had heard from other community leaders about the Charrette program and wanted to know if it would fulfill her expectations. After several discussions and presentations to Cayce City Council the Council gave a unanimous vote of support for the process with the caveat that only private monies would be used for the process.

Several questions came up during the Council's deliberations about any potential conflict or confusion between the Charrette process and the ongoing comprehensive planning process. The comprehensive planning process is a required periodic re-examination of the vital services a community provides, whereas a Charrette is focused on branding and marketing and community design. If properly coordinated, both processes can and should work

together seamlessly with the public being involved in both processes.

The process began with a visit by team member Aaron Arnett of the Arnett Muldrow Group out of Greenville. He visited a number of retail businesses in Cayce and asked them to participate in a zip code survey. This survey is designed to identify where the primary and secondary markets are for Cayce businesses.

During May 19, 20 and 21st, the team, made up of Land Plan South, Arnett Muldrow and Clemson University personnel, visited Cayce and held public meetings with numerous groups of people including merchants, city government, economic development organizations and citizens. Their aim was to find out what the citizens wanted for Cayce and to determine what they thought was important.

After lots of public input and several late night work sessions, the team presented their final report to a packed house at Cayce City Hall on May 21st.

The report presented lots of technical data to support the recommendations, but the parts that excited the crowd focused on those elements that the Cayce Citizens had indicated were important to them. The team discovered that one of Cayce's important challenges was the misunderstanding primarily among visitors, about exactly where Cayce begins and ends. While it was strategically placed in the center of everything, outsiders consistently confused Cayce with neighboring West Columbia and Springdale. With specific recommendations about signage, intersection design and a new branding and marketing scheme, the team directly addressed the issue.

The new logo is designed to be used in many forms, but is symbolic of the fact that Cayce is at the center of everything. Different applications for the logo were recommended with all being designed to improve the image of Cayce and promote a better understanding of all of the good things and people in Cayce.



GEORGETOWN'S CHARRETTE EXPERIENCE

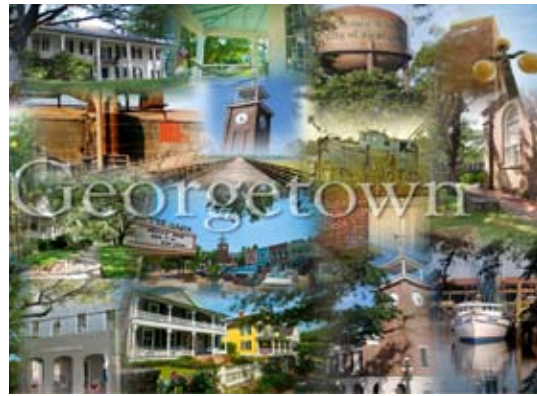
STORY BY JOHN DOE

The City of Georgetown is a wonderful city filled with history and wonderful folks, but the average visitor doesn't experience the real Georgetown. They typically ride down US 17 and miss out on Front Street with its wide variety of shops, harbor walk and its wonderful local restaurants.

The Georgetown Business Association was the primary sponsor of the Charrette which was supported by a variety of organizations and individuals and businesses including the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce. After the merchants were contacted about the zip code survey in early July, the Charrette Team spent 3 wonderful days in Georgetown. The primary concern was two-fold. The first was to get visitors to spend some additional time in Georgetown by visiting Front Street. The second concern was about jobs. Prominently located at the end of Front Street is a huge, recently closed steel mill. Citizens were concerned both about the loss of good jobs and

the potential re-use of the mill property in the event of a permanent closure.

The team focused on these two issues as well as an overall plan for branding and marketing. The results were delivered on a stormy Thursday night to an enthusiastic audience. Based on the reaction of the crowd, they seemed impressed and groups formed almost immediately to start



implementation. Beth Steadman and Clemson personnel from the Clemson Institute for Economic Development out of Columbia will be available to both Cayce and Georgetown to help in the implementation phase of the project.



USDA-RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING ANNOUNCED

WASHINGTON, Aug. 3, 2009 - Deputy Agriculture Secretary Kathleen Merrigan today announced that USDA is accepting applications for more than \$6.25 million in competitive grants under the Rural Community Development Initiative program administered by USDA Rural Development. To be eligible for the Rural Community Development Initiative, applicants must provide matching funds equal to the grant they receive. This leveraging requirement increases the impact of the funding received from USDA. Grant awards are contingent upon the recipient meeting the conditions of the grant award. Eligible applicants include public or private (including tribal) organizations at least three years in existence that have experience working with eligible recipients. Recipients can be private non-profit organizations, community-based housing and development organizations, low-income rural communities, or federally recognized tribes. These funds underscore the importance the Obama Administration places on helping rural business to develop the capacity to address critical housing, community and economic development needs. For more information, please see the June 26, 2009 Federal Register, page 30510. The deadline to apply for funding is Sept. 24, 2009. Applicants may also visit www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/rcdi/index.htm to obtain an application and program guidelines.

RURAL DEVELOPMENTS is a publication of the SC Rural Development Council and the SC Community Development Collaborative. It is designed to promote awareness of the issues confronting rural South Carolina. Rural Developments is supported by the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development and a grant from USDA-Rural Development.

The South Carolina Rural Development Council is a federally recognized organization made up of federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations and other organizations which have interests or responsibilities in rural areas.

The SC Community Development Collaborative is made up of organizations interested in effective community development practices in South Carolina. It is facilitated by Clemson's Institute for Economic and Community Development.