

# Newberry Firehouse Conference Center

## An Economic Development Catalyst



Presented By:

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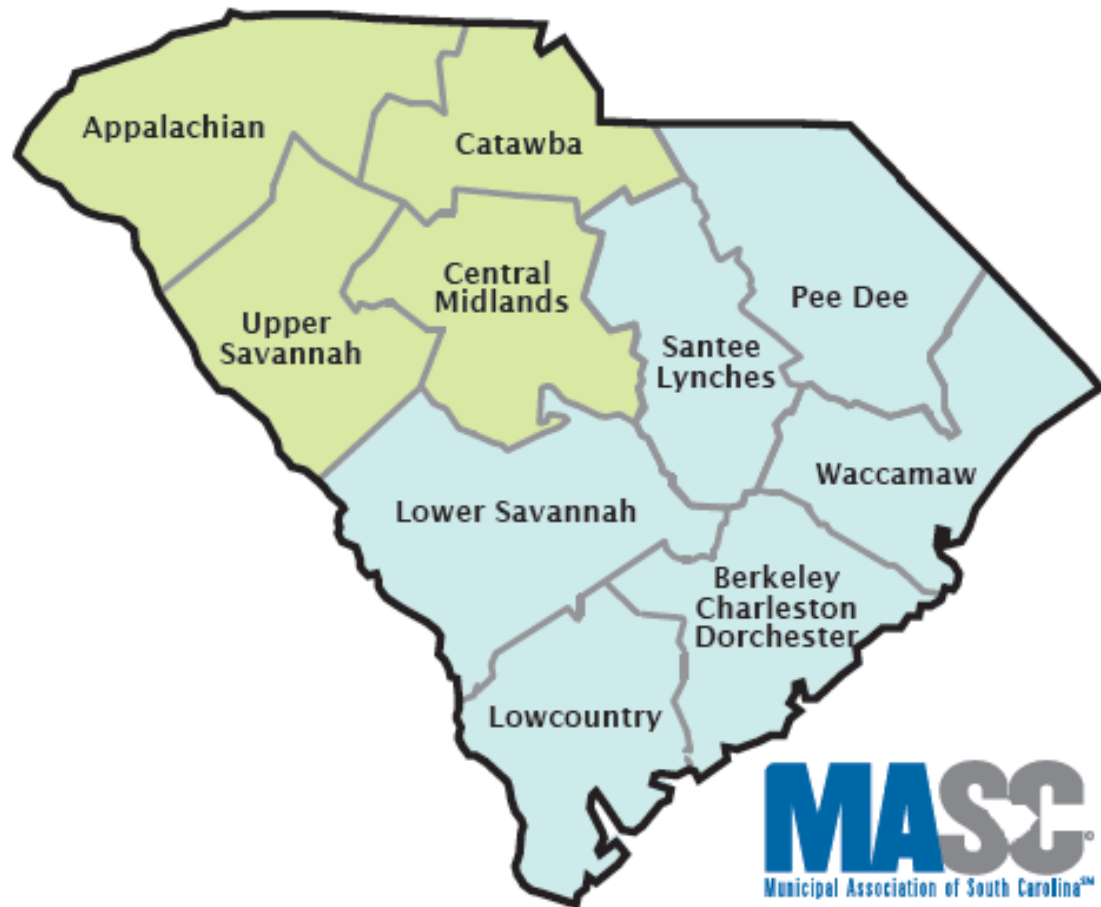
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**Region:** Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester, Lowcountry, Lower Savannah, Waccamaw, Santee-Lynches and Pee Dee

## Field Services Managers

Assigned a specific region of the state, two field services managers provide technical assistance, discuss municipal issues and coordinate resources with the Association's 270 cities and towns. Also, they communicate with municipal officials about key legislative issues.



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Municipal Association of South Carolina™  
Advocacy. Service. Innovation.

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### BUILDING HISTORY:

- **Constructed in the 1890s**
- **Housed Police and Fire Services for nearly a Century**
- **Reconditioned and expanded in the 1930s by the WPA**
- **Vacated in 1980s**
- **Underutilized and neglected during 90s**
- **Failed redevelopment initiatives**





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### **PROJECT FEASIBILITY:**

- **Community Needs Assessment performed in 2003**
- **Downtown meeting facility identified as a CD priority**
- **Licensed Business Appraiser engaged**
- **Feasibility Analysis conducted**
- **Business Case established**

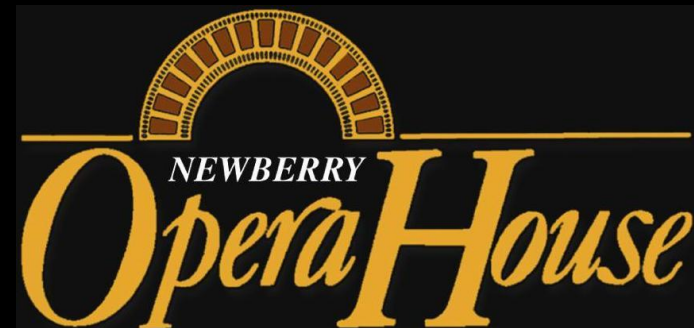


# **Newberry Firehouse Conference Center**

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### **STEERING COMMITTEE:**

- **Community Needs Assessment performed in 2003**
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### **PROJECT GOALS:**

- 1) To preserve and stabilize a local landmark eligible for National Register listing and stem its blighting influence on adjacent properties**
- 2) To convert the old fire station into a full-service, state-of-the-art conference center capable of accommodating small meetings of up to 150 and, when used in conjunction with the NOH auditorium, larger meetings of up to 400 people**

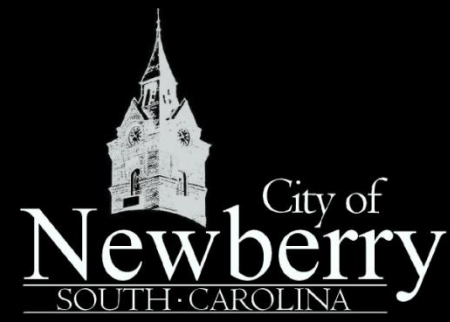
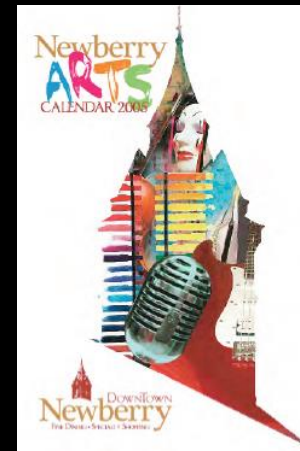
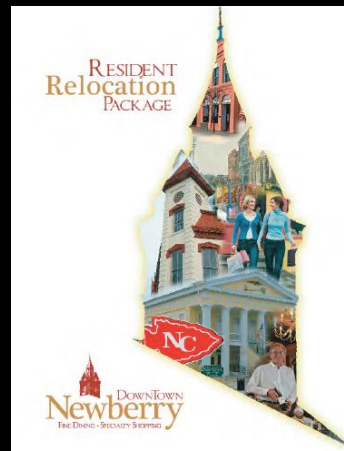


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### PROJECT GOALS:

- 3) To create a Tourism Division within Newberry Parks & Recreation to:
- Centralize local marketing efforts;
  - Encourage cooperative approaches to promotions;
  - Develop brand equity through deployment of uniform ads;
  - Administer a more effective visitors center function; and
  - Manage the conference center following construction



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### PROJECT GOALS:

- 4) To aggressively market downtown Newberry throughout the state and neighboring border areas with the objective of establishing Newberry as a tourism, conference & cultural arts destination





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### **PROJECT GOALS:**

- 5) To use the renovation of the fire station, along with public streetscape improvements, to stimulate a 2nd round of substantive & cosmetic improvements to downtown buildings**
- 6) And finally - to utilize the disposable income and consumer spending of conference center clients to support existing businesses as well as create opportunities for new businesses**



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### **LAYERED FINANCING:**

- **\$312,500 CDBG**
- **\$400,000 Capital Project Sales Tax appropriation**
- **\$242,000 Grant from CNNGA**
- **\$1.3 Million Lease-Purchase Financing**
- **\$500,000 CDBG, \$165,000 TEP and \$33,200 C-Funds**
- **Local Hospitality and Accommodations Fee**



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### NFCC FACILITY AND AMENITIES:

- **Renovated in FY06-07 at a cost of \$2.3 million, NFCC features:**
  - **2,200 square foot banquet room**
  - **Four adaptable breakout rooms and exec. conference room**
  - **Intimate outdoor courtyard with roofed connector to NOH**
  - **A/V systems, wireless internet & catering facilities**
  - **Staff – FT Management and PT event coordination / set-up**

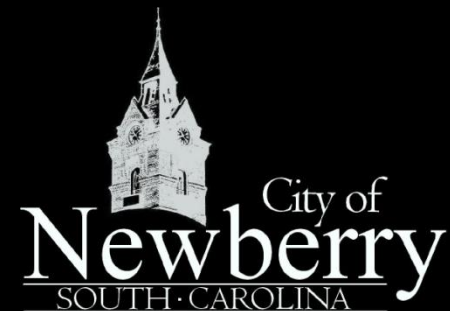


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### **Preliminary Results:**

- **In Sept 2007, the NFCC officially opened its doors**
- **Within 6-months of operation, the facility rented 62 times, of these, 12 generated overnight stays and 26 used local restaurants for on-site meal, break & reception catering**
- **Clients include Cola Metro Airport, USC, Palmetto Health, Home Builders of S.C., Farm Bureau and Health Sciences S.C.**
- **Additionally, SC Arts Council and SC Humanities Council made coordinated use of both the NFCC and NOH Auditorium**





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### **FINAL ANALYSIS:**

- Use of a tourism-oriented meeting facility as a catalyst for economic development in small town SC is a unique approach which has exceeded the original goals established by Council**
- Primary objective of encouraging groups based outside of Newberry to rent the facility, shop, dine, attend the NOH and stay in area hotels has been achieved**
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City of

**Newberry**  
SOUTH · CAROLINA

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### **LESSONS LEARNED:**

- 1) Identify a potential economic development asset in your community which will allow you to establish a unique market niche**
- 2) Be creative throughout the project and do not allow the initial vision to be unduly restricted by resource limitations**
- 3) Establish strong partnerships to develop the project concept, financing, implementation strategies and to sustain the effort**

**Taking this approach, there are many communities in S.C. that are capable of implementing highly successful projects**

