

A message from your Councilmember, *Billy Derrick*:

In an effort to better communicate with our constituents, County Council asked the staff to develop a method to get information to anyone and everyone who wants to know what their Council member is doing as a member of Lexington County Council. The guidance we gave staff was: it cannot cost a lot and has to be interactive with the citizens who use the system. This is the results of this request. I am sending this first edition to the editor of the Twin City so they can help us get the word out about this newsletter and everyone who wants to be a subscriber can go to the County website and sign up. After you sign up you will get the information free and stay up to date on what your County Council is doing. Simply go to www.lex-co.com and sign up to get this information on a quarterly basis.

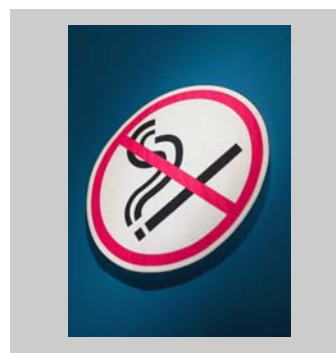
As you know, I had the honor of serving as Council chairman for the past two years. In January we held our election and elected a new chairman, Mrs. Debbie Summers. Mrs. Summers represents the Springdale area. She is only the second woman to serve on Lexington County Council and the first to serve as Chairman. She was my vice chair both years I served as chairman and I believe Mrs. Summers is ready to take this leadership role. At this same meeting the Council members with perfect attendance were recognized. This past year, five members were honored for their perfect attendance. I have been fortunate to have served on Council for ten years and have never been absent. My philosophy is: I can't represent the citizens of District #2 unless I attend the meetings.

Sincerely,

Billy

Council Continues to Discuss Smoking Ban

Recently the Council has been very involved in developing a **smoking ban**. I have been opposed to any kind of ban because; I believe the business owners of the effected businesses should have the right to determine if they allow or ban smoking in their business. I don't think anyone wants to be exposed to second hand smoke while eating in a restaurant, but several of us feel very strongly this is a decision the business owner should make, not the County Council. If there ever is a smoking ban, I hope it will come from the State and not the individual Counties or Cities. A statewide ban would offer a condition where a business in a non-smoking area isn't at a business disadvantage over a nearby business that allows smoking. During the public hearing about this issue we heard from numerous business owners begging us to allow them to make the decision which best suits their business, and I believe they should be allowed to make that decision.



News Around the County

There have been a couple items that seem to interest several people from this part of Lexington County.

1. There was some interest in **changing the animal control ordinance**. The changes requested were to make exceptions for working dogs in more rural areas. The Animal Control staff looked at the requested changes and referred the request to the Health and Human Service committee for consideration. The committee reluctantly rejected the request for changes to the current ordinance sighting the fact that it is impossible to determine the difference between a working dog running loose on a farm and a stray running loose in a rural area. The animal control staff was asked to offer



The animal control staff was asked to offer more public information to citizen in rural areas so they know what is acceptable and unacceptable regarding controlling pets and working animals. If you have a group who would be interested in getting more information about this subject call Animal Control office at 785-8149 and they will be glad to set up a program for your group.

2. Zoning is another issue I have received complaints about in the past few months. Zoning didn't go into effect until 2004, in this part of the county. Before then, there was nothing a resident could do about a neglected business or property. Now if someone complains about a business activity the compliance officer from the zoning department investigates the complaint. Many times the officer discovers there was never a zoning application filed. Many times after the application is filed the business is in compliance and if it is not in compliance, the officer can identify what needs to be done to make the property compliant. This usually solves the problem. However, sometimes the property owner being investigated get upset and starts complaining about his neighboring businesses where there are similar issues. When these complaints are made, the investigation is expanded to the other businesses. Most businesses want to comply but either didn't know about the zoning regulations or misunderstood the regulations. All zoning regulations can be found on the county web site and copies should be in all the County library branches.



3. Due to the unusual rainfall there have been a lot of complaints about the **conditions of dirt roads**. The public works staff tries to keep roads in the best condition possible considering the unusual rain fall. If you live on a dirt road and it becomes dangerous or extremely rough, please call Public Works Department 785-8201 and they will fix the problem as soon as possible. If the road is dangerous please tell them about these conditions so they give the work order the appropriate priority for the dangerous condition.

4. At the request of a number of constituents, the **Solid Waste Department** is making arrangement to offer a **"Tire Amnesty Day"**. On this day you will be able to take old tires to certain recycling centers at no charge. This is designed to allow people to get rid of their old tires without taking them to the Edmund landfill and being charged for disposal. Hopefully this will help stop people for throwing the tires out along our roads and causing environmental problems and reduce littering. Dates for the "Tire Amnesty Day" for 2009 are Saturday, May 2 and Saturday, October 3. Check at your local recycling center or call 785-3325 for more information about the "Tire Amnesty Day". This offer doesn't apply to tire dealers or other businesses.



More News...

- **Recently the State Legislature set aside a statute that required the State to give Counties money to fund State operations with-in the County.** The result of this action is that Lexington County's portion of this funding will be cut 45% or \$5.5 million. Due in part to the implementation of the County's strategic plan this year's requested budget, this was very close to the revenue estimates. However, because of this State cut we have a \$5.5 million revenue short fall. This cut represents about 5% of the County's general budget. We are about to start budget discussion and will need to find a way to fill this tremendous shortage. Obviously \$5.5 million is going to cause a cut in services or a tax increase. In these tough economic times, I am hopeful and will work very hard to avoid any tax increase.



- There have been a lot of questions about the progress of the **Farmers Market**. The site work is finally underway and hopefully in the next few months some building construction

Activities/meetings I Attended for 1st Quarter 2009

1. Attended six regular council meeting.
2. Attended two meetings as a Board member of Central Midlands Council of Governments.
3. Attended three meeting as special committee member to discuss and develop an amended post-employment insurance benefit for County employees.
4. Served on a committee to select an Architectural Firm for a new Communications and Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
5. Attended the Farm Bureau Legislative Breakfast to hear concerns from the farming community.
6. Met with Lexington County Delegation to discuss common goals for Lexington County and develop a closer working relationship.
7. Attended the South Carolina Association of Counties mid-year meeting and received information about the stimulus money and get an up-date briefing on Legislative matters effecting counties.
8. Attended press conference protesting the reduction of State Aid to Counties.
9. As a Board member of the South Carolina Association of Counties (SCAC) attended board meeting to discuss business pertaining to the Association.

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10. Attended numerous civic and community meetings.

Dates and events to remember:

May 7-9	South Carolina Poultry Festival	Batesburg-Leesville
July 4	Lexington County Peach Festival	Gilbert

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Council representative for the past ten years. Please feel free to call me at 513-8750 or write bderrick@lex-co.com anytime you have a problem or concern about Lexington County business. If you have strong feelings about issues being considered by Council let me know how you feel about that issue. The more input I get from you, the better decisions I can make on your behalf.

A publication of Lexington County Council.

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Questions or comments? E-mail us at countycouncil@lex-co.com or call 803-785-8103.



Thank you for reading this edition of County Council Quarterly. If you'd like to get in touch with me, I'd love to hear your comments. I'm proud to serve as your Lexington County Councilmember.

District 2 – Gilbert/Batesburg-Leesville/Summit

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Billy