



GEORGETOWN COUNTY MONTHLY

A publication for our residents and visitors

JULY 2025



Public Services Director to retire

Funnys will leave a legacy of leadership rooted in service and community

For more than 30 years, Ray Funnys has been a steady hand guiding Georgetown County's largest department, and a quiet force helping shape the community he calls home. As he prepares to retire at the end of August, his impact is visible not just in roads, buildings and stormwater projects, but in the lives of people — colleagues, residents, and the hundreds of youth whose futures he has helped nurture.

A Georgetown County native, Funnys was the county's first – and thus far only – Public Works Director. His last day is slated to be Aug. 29, with a retirement drop-in open to the public tentatively scheduled for Aug. 22. He will leave behind a legacy of transformational leadership and a pair of shoes that will be near-impossible to fill.

"The time has come for a new chapter in my life," Funnys shared from his office on Screven Street. "These past 33 years in Georgetown County have been nothing short of extraordinary. I could never have imagined the range of opportunities I've been given through my service to the County. It has truly been a blessing."

He uses his own career path as a hiring tool these days.

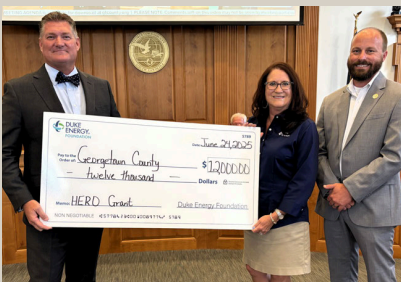
"When I interview candidates, I often say, 'Look at me—I'm a living example of the opportunities that exist right here in Georgetown County,'" he said. "I began my journey here, and that's something I believe is especially important for young people to see and believe in."

Funnys grew up on a small farm in the Plantersville community of Georgetown County. He picked so many cucumbers in his youth that he said he still refuses to eat them. →] Continued on Page 8



From top: A portrait of Ray Funnys; Funnys with County Administrator Angela Christian and Council Chairman Clint Elliott celebrating National Public Works Week; Funnys and his team being recognized for receiving reaccreditation from the American Public Works Association.

Inside this issue:



Georgetown County Emergency Services receives \$12,000 HERO grant from Duke Energy.



Auditor, Treasurer take oath of office as they begin second 4-year term.



SC7 expedition explores Georgetown County nature and history with GOAT program.

New hands-free law goes into effect in S.C. on Sept. 1



Holding a phone while driving will be illegal under a new state law.

A new South Carolina law aimed at reducing distracted driving will go into effect on Sept. 1. The Hands-Free and Distracted Driving Act prohibits the use of handheld mobile devices while operating a vehicle and is designed to make roadways throughout the Palmetto State safer for everyone.

What the new law says

Under the new law, drivers may not:

- Hold or support a mobile device with any part of their body while driving. That means it can't sit on your lap either. (Note: This does not apply to the use of earpieces or wrist-worn devices used for voice communication.)
- Read, write or send text messages, emails or other electronic communications.
- Interact with apps or browse websites.
- Watch videos, play games or participate in video calls on a mobile device.

"Mobile electronic device" means a cellular telephone, portable computer, GPS receiver, electronic game, or anything substantially similar. It does not include a citizens band radio, amateur radio, ham radio, commercial two-way radio or its functional equivalent, subscription-based emergency communication device, or prescribed medical device.

The law does not apply when someone is legally stopped or parked.

Drivers can initiate a voice-based communication that is automatically converted by the device and sent as text, provided that the device is not held by the operator or supported with any part of the body by the operator.

What to expect

For the first 180 days after the law takes effect, law enforcement officers will issue warnings for violations. After this grace period, violations may result in fines and points on your driver's license.

Why it matters

Distracted driving is one of the leading causes of traffic accidents, according to the S.C. Department of Public Safety. This law is an important step in improving safety on South Carolina roadways by encouraging drivers to stay focused on the road, not their screens.

Landfill tipping fee increases

On July 1, Georgetown County implemented the first in a series of annual increases to landfill tipping fees. The per-ton fee increased by \$1 on July 1 and will increase by \$1 annually over the next two years. The fee will then increase by \$1.50 annually in 2028 and 2029 before moving to an annual 3% increase.

The updated fees will help align the cost of disposal with actual expenses.

The tipping fee schedule is as follows:

Effective Date	Increase	New Rate Per Ton
July 1, 2025	\$1.00	\$46.00
July 1, 2026	\$1.00	\$47.00
July 1, 2027	\$1.00	\$48.00
July 1, 2028	\$1.50	\$49.50
July 1, 2029	\$1.50	\$51.00

This fee adjustment applies to both solid waste and construction and demolition debris. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2029, tipping fees will be adjusted annually by 3%.

For more information, contact Georgetown County Environmental Services at 843-545-3463 or email jdorsey@gtcounty.org.

About this publication

At Georgetown County, we want our residents and property owners kept abreast of what's going on inside their local government. That's why we created Georgetown County Monthly.

It's a vehicle for information about county services and events, important messages from county officials and behind-the-scenes glimpses at how government works. You can find our newsletter on our website at www.gtcounty.org/newsroom or through our social media accounts. If you'd rather have it delivered to your inbox, sign up at gtcounty.org by clicking the "News & Alerts" icon on the home page.

If you have questions or comments about this newsletter, please contact Jackie Broach at (843) 545-3164 or jbroach@gtcounty.org. We welcome your feedback.

Tips for staying safe in the water this summer

As the intensely hot and humid weather drives more people to cool off at the beach, lakes, rivers and pools, the risk of drowning increases. Tidelands Health, along with partners Midway Fire-Rescue and the YMCA of Coastal Carolina, is urging residents and visitors to take precautions to stay safe.

“We’ve had several near drownings come into our emergency department already this season,” said Lynne Benco, assistant vice president of acute care operations at Tidelands Health. Additionally, a man drowned earlier this month on Pawleys Island while trying to assist other swimmers in distress, and another person drowned in June.

“We want people to enjoy their time in the water, but be mindful of the water conditions, closely supervise kids and remember other key tips to help keep you and your family safe,” Benco said.

Before entering the water, keep these tips in mind:

- Always keep younger children within arm’s reach. For older children, remain actively engaged and avoid distractions, like your phone, as you supervise them in the water.

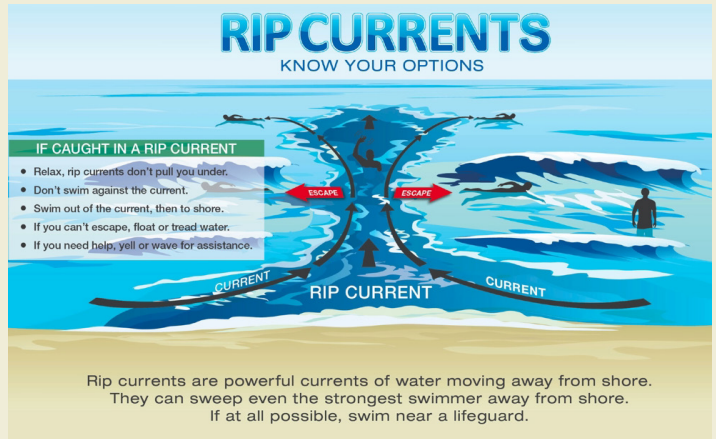
- Teach your children to always ask permission before entering the water.

- Take swim lessons, and learn basic swimming and water safety skills.

- Never swim alone.

- Watch for hazards like rip currents and rough water.

- Use proper flotation devices, such as U.S. Coast Guard-approved lifejackets. “Floaties” and water wings are



toys, not safety gear.

- Learn CPR. A quick response can save a life.

“Every child and adult should have the skills and confidence to be safe around water,” said Hatton Gravely, chief development officer at the YMCA of Coastal Carolina. “The YMCA of Coastal Carolina offers swim lessons, water safety education and programs to help families prevent drownings and enjoy the water safely.”

One of the biggest risks at the beach is rip currents, which are powerful, narrow channels of fast-moving water that can quickly pull swimmers away from shore.

“Many of the calls we’ve responded to this summer have involved swimmers caught in rip currents,” said Matt Smittle, division chief at Midway Fire-Rescue. “These currents are fast and powerful. Knowing how to recognize and escape a rip current can save your life.”

If caught in a rip current:

- Stay calm. Rip currents don’t pull you under.

- Don’t swim against the current.

- Swim parallel to the shoreline or toward breaking waves, then angle back to shore.

- If you can’t escape, float or tread water until help arrives.

- Signal for help by yelling and waving.

Knowing how to spot someone drowning is key. Often, drowning is silent – there’s no splashing or yelling. Common signs of drowning include:

- Head low in the water, mouth at water level

- Head tilted back and mouth open

- Glassy or unfocused eyes

- Vertical position with little or no leg movement

- Gasping or hyperventilating

- No response to verbal cues

If someone appears to be drowning, call 911 immediately.

Find more information on swim lessons offered at the YMCA of Coastal Carolina at

<https://www.coastalcarolinaymca.org/swim-lessons/>. As the exclusive health system partner of the YMCA of Coastal Carolina, Tidelands Health collaborates with the YMCA year-round to support swim lessons and programs such as Safety Around Water.

FOWL Presents: 2025 Fall Luncheon



SAVE the DATE & DONATE

PAWLEYS PLANTATION CONFERENCE CENTER

October 21st

This luncheon helps us continue our support of our Waccamaw Neck Branch Library by funding the following:
~ Children’s & Adult Programming
~ New Books, DVDs, Supplies, Technology & Furniture
~ Special Projects like the Backyard Patio & Accessible Entry Doors

WE NEED DONATIONS

Trendy accessories for the home and stylish woman...
Clothing, Jewelry, Scarves, Purses,

Home Decor including items for the Holidays

Donation deadline Friday, September 26th

Donations may be dropped off at the Friends Center

For pick up, call Diane Stern: 908-310-2953



Friends of the Waccamaw Library is a non-profit organization under the Internal Revenue Code (c) (3), ID #57-0855359. Your donation may be tax deductible.

County awarded \$12k Hero Grant from Duke Energy Foundation

Georgetown County has been awarded a \$12,000 grant from the Duke Energy Foundation's 2025 Helping Emergency Response Organizations (HERO) Grant Program to improve emergency communications and disaster preparedness.

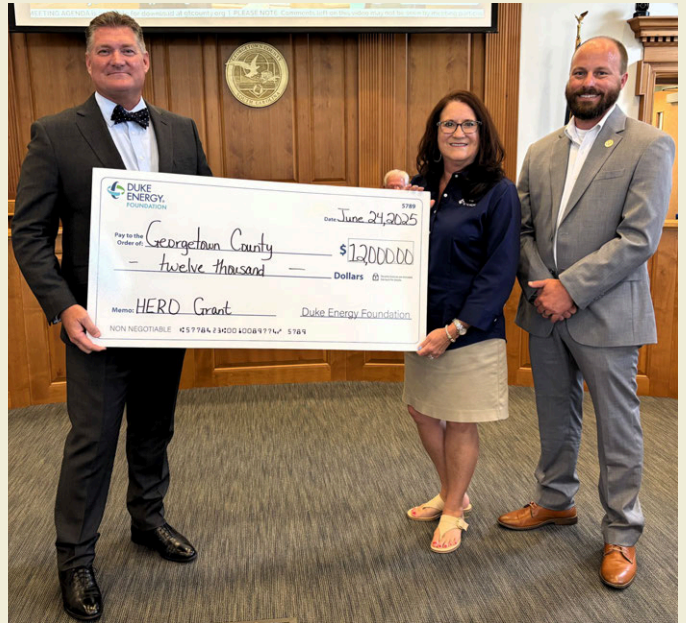
The grant was formally presented to Georgetown County Council last month by Mindy Taylor, Duke Energy's Director of Government and Community Relations for the area.

"Several months ago, the Duke Energy Foundation issued a request for proposals to our emergency management partners offering them the opportunity to apply for a grant for state of the art life-saving equipment, innovative technology and training. It was a pretty competitive grant process," Taylor told the council. "I have to share with you that Brandon Ellis (Georgetown County Emergency Services Director) wrote one of the best grants that we received. Kudos to Brandon for doing that. Tonight, I'm here to share that the Duke Energy Foundation is granting Georgetown County \$12,000 to purchase state-of-the-art radios that will really enhance their ability to respond to emergencies."

The funds will be used to purchase advanced communications equipment that will enhance operations both in the field and in the county's Emergency Operations Center during severe weather and disaster events.

"This will allow for continuity of emergency communications when it matters most," Ellis said. "We are grateful for the support from Duke Energy and their commitment to supporting emergency operations in Georgetown County and across South Carolina."

Georgetown County is one of 38 government agencies



Pictured from left: Georgetown County Council Chairman Clint Elliott, Duke Energy Area Director of Government and Community Relations Mindy Taylor; and Brandon Ellis, Director of Georgetown County Emergency Services.

and nonprofits across South Carolina selected to receive a HERO Grant this year. Now in its fourth year, the program awards a total of \$500,000 annually to fund emergency preparedness efforts including training, equipment and innovative technology.

Georgetown County Council Chairman Clint Elliott thanked Taylor and Duke Energy during the meeting and applauded the collaboration between private industry and local government to improve public safety.

Duke Energy serves a portion of Georgetown County in the Andrews region.



REGISTER NOW
GTCPARKS 2025 FALL SPORTS

NFL Flag Football
Ages 5-12
\$40

CHEERLEADING
*CUSTOM UNIFORMS INCLUDED
Ages 5-12
\$50

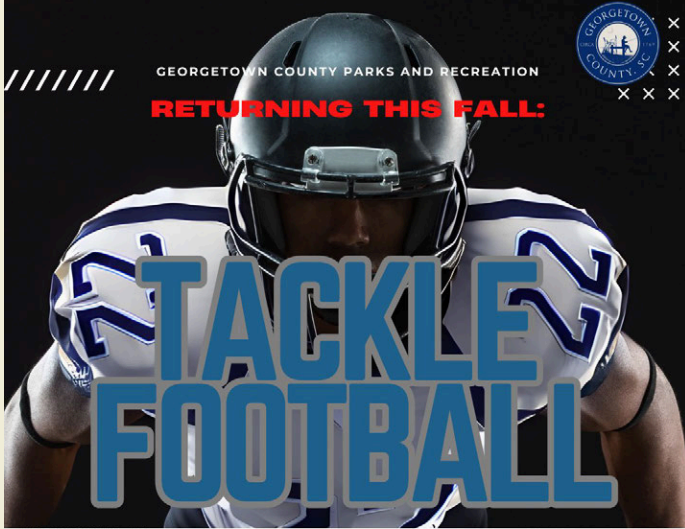


Registration ends July 31st, 2025
Player evaluations August 4th-7th, 2025
Practice begins August 11th, 2025

Register at GTC Parks.org or at your local recreation center.

Georgetown County Parks & Recreation
2030 Church St. Georgetown, SC 29440
(843) 545-3320 | www.GTCParks.org




GEORGETOWN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION
RETURNING THIS FALL:

TACKLE FOOTBALL

COACHES & OFFICIALS NEEDED ****LIMITED SLOTS AVAILABLE****

2025 SEASON
TACKLE FOOTBALL
\$50
REGISTRATION ENDS SEPT. 26, 2025

REGISTER AT GTC Parks.org OR AT REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER



Phase 2 of Andrews drainage project under way

The Georgetown County Capital Projects Division began administering Phase 2 of a drainage improvement project in the Town of Andrews this month. This phase of the project includes clearing and grubbing, installation of a storm drain system, utility work, grading and paving.

The drainage improvements will involve the demolition of sections of the existing drainage system and the construction of a larger, more efficient system. The new system will begin with the primary outfall ditch north of the Hwy. 521 Bypass. The existing drainage ditch will be cleared, filled, and sections piped to connect to the proposed outfall ditch. New drainage pipes and stormwater structures will be installed along Myrtle Road to Pine Street.

Additionally, the project includes the replacement of roadways and concrete driveways, the construction of a gravel access road, and the relocation of water mains, sewer force mains, underground gas mains, and telecommunications infrastructure.

As the project progresses, updates will be provided to the public regarding work zones, lane or road closures, and any utility interruptions. Updates will be available at gtcounty.org, but workers will also send some communications directly to impacted residents.

Our staff appreciates your patience and understanding throughout this process and are committed to completing this project safely and efficiently while being mindful of property owners' needs.

Wave That Flag event rescheduled for Labor Day weekend, Aug. 31



Free Wave That Flag event will culminate in a laser-light show.

It was meant to be part of the Fourth of July events on Georgetown County's Hammock Coast, but a tropical storm moved Wave That Flag, a laser-light show and family-fun event, from July 6 to Labor Day weekend.

Now in its third year, the event will light up the sky on Aug. 31, taking place from 6-10 p.m. at Retreat Park, located at 633 Wildcat Way in Litchfield.

After garnering rave reviews in its first two years, the third Wave That Flag Festival will feature a Bocce Ball tournament, live music, vendors and food trucks, culminating in the spectacular laser-light show produced by Stone Entertainment and sponsored by South Carolina's Hammock Coast and the Georgetown County Chamber of Commerce.

The free festival is hosted by Georgetown County Parks and Recreation and coordinated by VibeTime.

The music lineup will include Channel Bluff, JP Taylor and headliner Elise Testone.

Read more at gtcounty.org.

Watercolor and Science

NORTH INLET - WINYAH BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE

AUGUST 29TH
2PM-4PM

JOIN US FOR A GUIDED WATERCOLOR PROGRAM THAT WILL TEACH YOU ALL ABOUT OUR LOCAL ESTUARIES. PROGRAM WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE WACCAMAW NECK LIBRARY. ADULT AUDIENCES.

Logos: Friends of the Waccamaw Library, Georgetown County, SC, North Inlet - Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

REGISTER BY EMAIL OR PHONE
MALLEN@GTCOUNTY.ORG
CALL: 843-545-3623

August Children's Programs

@ the Waccamaw Neck Branch Library

Mondays Toddler Time 10:30 AM	Wednesdays Storytime 10:30 AM	Thursdays Crafternoon 3:30-4:30 PM	Fridays Legos Free Play 9am-5pm
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Special Event! → **Wednesday August 27th Pond Life**

with the North Inlet - Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve!
3:30-4:30 PM

Logos: Friends of the Waccamaw Library, Georgetown County, SC, North Inlet - Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

County honored for excellence in communications

Georgetown County's Public Information Department has been awarded with the 2025 Award of Excellence in four categories by the National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO).

NACIO's Awards of Excellence program honors the innovative, creative, and outstanding work of county government communicators and state county associations communications departments throughout the nation.

"We are incredibly proud to see Georgetown County's public information efforts recognized on the national stage," said Angela Christian, Georgetown County Administrator. "Winning four awards from the National Association of County Information Officers—especially in a competition without size divisions—speaks volumes about



Jackie Broach



Randy Akers

the talent and dedication of our communications team. To be honored alongside and even above some of the nation's largest counties is a tremendous achievement. These awards reflect our ongoing commitment to keeping residents informed, engaged, and connected to their local government."

Georgetown County won the following in this year's Awards of Excellence:

Public Information Officer Jackie Broach won the Best in Category Award in the Photo/Photo Series category for a series of photos of the Melissa Jefferson celebratory parade.

Broach won the Superior Award in the Printed Publications - Newsletter category for the Georgetown County Chronicle, which was rebranded earlier this year to Georgetown County Monthly.

Broach and Deputy Public Information Officer Randy Akers won the Superior Award in the Podcast Series category for First Friday with Georgetown County.

Broach and Akers won the Excellence Award in the Electronic Communications – Websites category for gtcounty.org.

"At NACIO, we are honored to recognize the exceptional talents of our Awards of Excellence winners. The innovative approaches and compelling storytelling efforts of county communicators across the country are commendable," said Schuyler Harding, NACIO President. "These awards underscore the impact of the work that shapes effective and meaningful public communication. We congratulate and celebrate all winners in this year's program for their outstanding contributions to their communities."

As an active affiliate of the National Association of Counties (NACo), NACIO works to promote the value of professional PIOs and communicators to county governments. NACIO members serve as judges for NACo's annual National County Government Month contest, and NACIO experts present workshops on media relations best practices at the NACo Annual and Legislative conferences.



Greetings Everyone! I hope you enjoyed your July 4th celebration. The U. S. Army celebrated their 250th birthday on June 14. Let's give our soldiers a big Happy Birth-

day shout out and thank them for their service.

For those who are have trouble with login issues with VA.GOV, I have provided the following information to help assist you:

- Assistance with VA.GOV: 1-800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411, option 9)

- Login.gov help desk (844) 875-6446, <https://login.gov/help/>

- VA has transitioned from four online sign-in account options (Login.gov, ID.me, MyHealthVet, and DS Logon) to two sign-in account options: Login.gov and ID.me accounts.

Last but not least, many may have heard that I'm retiring from the Georgetown County Veterans Affairs Office. I want to greatly thank all the citizens of Georgetown County for allowing me to serve. I enjoyed my time working here but it's time that I now set off into a new journey.

During this transition period if you have questions about claims or need income statements, please call the VA Call center at 800-827-1000.

If you need copies of DDFM 214, please make your request either through VA.Gov or the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC);

<https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center>

Again Thank you Georgetown!
Blessing to all of you!!

Dr. David A. Murphy



Baker, Mace take oath of office



Congratulations to Georgetown County Auditor Ken Baker and Treasurer Miriam Mace, who began their second 4-year terms on July 1. Both took their oaths during small, family ceremonies in their respective offices. Baker's oath was administered by his mother, the Rev. Sherry Minatra. His wife, Brandy, was by his side, along with their children Brandon, Brayden, Mason, Brody and Hayden. To make it a true family affair, the family's dog, Baylor, was also in attendance. Mace's oath was administered by Coroner Chase Ridgeway. Her husband Bill stood by her side. Baker and Mace were re-elected last November, but unlike most elected offices, their terms begin at the start of the fiscal year rather than the calendar year.

NATIONAL PARKS & REC MONTH



July is National Parks and Recreation Month. County Council recognized the occasion with a proclamation. Above, Chairman Clint Elliott (right) presents a framed proclamation to Parks and Recreation Director Beth Goodale and Parks and Recreation Board Member Marvin Neal, recognizing the incredible impact of our parks, programs and recreation professionals. This year's national theme, "Build Together, Play Together," celebrates 40 years of Park and Recreation Month — and the countless ways parks strengthen our health, happiness, and sense of community.

RISE UN YOUTH CORPS INTERN RECEPTION AND RESEARCH POSTER WALK

Please join us to learn how CCU RISE Center Interns and Georgetown County businesses and organizations are building a more sustainable community.



JULY 29, 2025 • 4-6 P.M. • GEORGETOWN COUNTY LIBRARY
405 CLELAND STREET, GEORGETOWN, SC

Georgetown County Main Branch

August 2025

Week 1- 3D Printing
5th, 6th, 7th @3PM-5pm

Week 2-Table Top Games
12th, 13th, 14th @3pm-5pm

Week 3- Free Play
19th, 20th, 21st @3PM-5PM

Week 4- Lego Robotics/Coding
26th, 27th, 28th @3PM-5PM

Fridays- Anime Manga Trivia
1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th

Saturdays- Anime Manga Club
* Starting in September



For more information, call (843)545-3300

Georgetown County Main Branch

August 2025

Mondays- Fitness Class with Diane Pringle
@ 11am-12pm

Tuesdays- Bilingual Storytime
@ 10:30am-11am

Wednesdays- Music Time with Kathy Newton
@10:30 am-11am

Thursdays- Book Club (3rd-5th Grade)
@3pm

Fridays-Playdoh Playtime & Crafts
@10am-5pm

Saturdays- Lego Free Build, Puzzles, and Board Games
@10am-5pm



For more information, call (843)545-3300

→] Ray Funnye

He attended Savannah State University, where he earned a degree in civil engineering technology, then went directly to Atlanta, where he had a successful career in design and construction management. During that time, he helped construct the first Georgia Dome, along with train stations and track systems for Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority.

He came to work for Georgetown County in 1992, after moving back home for family reasons with his then-fiancée, Queen Dease. He started as a plans examiner in the Planning Department. Now, he manages a \$22 million departmental budget, \$90 million in capital and road projects, and more than 120 employees across multiple divisions.

“At the time, I understood that Georgetown County didn’t offer the same level of financial opportunity as places like Atlanta, Charlotte, or the Virgin Islands,” Funnye said. “But what it did offer was something far more meaningful—the opportunity to return home and play a role in the growth and development of the community that raised me. That opportunity was a gift. In hindsight, I believe I was meant to be here. Georgetown is where I could make the greatest impact, and for that, I am sincerely grateful.”

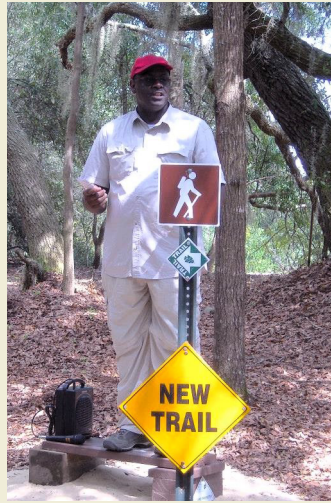
When Opportunity Knocks

Funnye had been on the job for about 18 months when Gordon Hartwig, the county administrator at the time, approached him with an opportunity. He recalls working at his desk when Hartwig came walking by.

“He said, ‘I’ve got this plan. I’m going to change Roads and Bridges to Public Works. I want you to lead it.’” Funnye remembers.

That moment marked the beginning of a decades-long journey during which Funnye would shape, lead, and ultimately reimagine Georgetown County’s public infrastructure operations. The early years were not without challenges—particularly as a young professional stepping into a well-established environment. Earning the trust of long-tenured employees, some of whom had been with the County for decades, required patience and persistence. For example, introducing new practices—like continuing with indoor assignments instead of ending the workday when it rained—challenged longstanding norms. Understandably, changes like these were initially met with resistance, but they marked the start of a cultural shift toward greater efficiency and accountability.

The department and Funnye’s responsibilities grew over the years to include everything from the original “Roads and Bridges” to solid waste, environmental services, fleet services, capital projects, stormwater management,



At left: Funnye speaks during a ceremony opening a new public trail. Above: Funnye at a county event in the 1990s with a representative from the Soil Conservation Agency.

facilities, mosquito control, and even the Georgetown County Airport. At one point, it also included Parks and Recreation, which is when it was renamed to Public Services.

Components have come and gone over the years. Some Funnye was surely happy to see taken back off his plate. But every new addition was greeted as an opportunity, no matter how much work, mastery of new information, or trouble it brought with it.

The airport, which fell under his purview for about 15 years was a particularly interesting challenge. It took a lot of research, but Funnye is ultimately responsible for much of the transformation of the Georgetown Airport into its current form as an important component of economic development in Georgetown County and something the county can be proud of. He helped build hangars and a new terminal building, improve taxiways, add a fixed-base operator and more.

“One of the most significant outcomes of this project was our ability to bring Georgetown County into the 21st century with a modern, welcoming facility,” Funnye said. “Now, when people arrive by air—particularly prospective investors—their first impression of Georgetown reflects the progress and professionalism of our community. We recognized that investors don’t arrive by Greyhound bus; they fly in. It was essential to create an arrival experience that accurately represents the County’s potential and character. I believe our new airport accomplishes that—it presents Georgetown County with the dignity and appeal it deserves.”

An accredited Agency

From the long-ago “Roads and Bridges” department that sent staff home when it rained, Funnye has built – literally and organizationally – an internationally-accredited agency with a forward-thinking mindset. One of Funnye’s proudest achievements is having his department receive accreditation from the American Public Works Association.

→] Ray Funnye

Georgetown County Public Services first received APWA accreditation in 2011. It was the result of a rigorous process that required extensive improvements to policy, procedures and operations.

“Initially, we were about 40% compliant,” Funnye said. “But we put in the work. Accreditation gave us a way to evaluate our policies and procedures and put into place operating standards more representative of a professional organization.”

Part of that professionalization was his creation of the department’s Career Improvement Program (CIP), which provides a structured path for employees to grow their careers and move into leadership roles.

“We sit down with folks and ask, ‘What are your goals? Where do you see yourself going?’” Funnye explained. “If someone wants to remain a truck driver, our goal is to help them become the safest, most efficient operator possible. But if they aspire to become a crew chief, section supervisor, or even a division manager, we’re committed to supporting their growth every step of the way. Our mission is simple: we want our people to succeed.”

Over the years, many of Funnye’s team members have gone on to successful positions elsewhere – becoming directors themselves, starting their own businesses or just “moving on to do great things.” Funnye said that has been one of the best things about his career.

Funnye’s leadership was also driven by a deep concern for safety and well-being. He developed an active safety culture to protect his employees — many of whom operate heavy equipment and work in physically demanding conditions. He still recalls the heartbreak of one employee whose career was cut short by an accident on the job.

“It doesn’t take much for something catastrophic to happen,” he said. “Our people come to work to provide for their families. I want them to be able to go home to those families every day.”

Throughout his tenure, Funnye led or had a hand in nearly every major infrastructure initiative the county undertook. That includes the long-range Capital Improvement Plan (also known as Visions), expansion of solid waste services, the launch of stormwater and capital project divisions, and an environmentally conscious shift to non-toxic mosquito control methods. The growth of the department — and its reach — mirrored Funnye’s own philosophy of always pushing forward.

It Takes A Village

But Funnye’s contributions didn’t stop at the gates of the Public Services compound. His impact on the broader community is equally significant.

Twenty years ago, he and his wife Queen founded The Village Group, a nonprofit based in Plantersville. Its mission: to equip youth with the tools to build a sustainable community through college and career readiness, cultural education, and economic development. Its values — harmony, habitat, health and history — reflect Funnye’s lifelong commitment to giving back.



Funnye shakes hands with former County Administrator Sel Hemingway at Hemingway’s retirement party in February 2020.

“I look at myself as a conduit — someone who connects kids to the resources that are right in their own backyard, but they might not even know exist,” he said.

The Village Group hosts after-school programs, summer enrichment camps, and mentorship opportunities for underserved youth. It has grown steadily over the past two decades and recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. During the celebration, Funnye was surprised with a tribute ceremony featuring community leaders and colleagues.

“I do this work for the children,” he said. “Some families simply need a bit more support—and we strive to provide that, to give them a fighting chance at a brighter future.”

Even in retirement, Funnye won’t be slowing down. He plans to dedicate more time to growing The Village Group and its programs. His current goal? Raise \$6 million to expand the organization’s facilities and reach.

Ray and Queen raised their own children in Georgetown County, and today he’s a proud grandfather of three. His sons work in construction and his daughter is an epidemiologist based in Houston.

As he prepares to hand the reins to a new director — one who has yet to be named — Funnye says he’s proud of the team he’s helped build and confident in their ability to carry the department forward. He plans to stay available to support the transition in any way he can.

When asked what advice he’d give to the next generation, his answer is simple and generous — just like the man himself.

“It’s never just about you,” he said. “There’s always enough to share—whether it’s your resources, your time, or the knowledge you’ve gained along the way. There’s always an opportunity to give something back.”

And after 33 years of giving — to his team, his neighbors, and the next generation — Ray Funnye’s name will remain synonymous with service in Georgetown County.

“I’m deeply grateful to the residents of Georgetown County for entrusting me with the opportunity to serve all these years,” he said. “It has been the honor of a lifetime, and I will always cherish the legacy we built together. As I step into this next chapter, I encourage others to continue investing in our community—lead with integrity, serve with heart, and never stop believing in what Georgetown can become.”

<< Numbers >>
TO KNOW

(All begin with area code 843)

Directory, 545-3063

Animal Control, 546-5101

Assessor, 545-3014

Auditor, 545-3021

Clerk of Court, 545-3004

County Council, 545-3058

Coroner, 546-3056

Elections, 545-3339

Finance, 545-3002

Parks & Rec., 545-3320

Planning/Zoning, 545-3116

Public Works, 545-3438

Probate Judge, 545-3077

Recycling/Solid Waste
545-3463

Register of Deeds, 545-3088

Sheriff, 546-5102

Stormwater, 545-3524

Treasurer, 545-3102

P.O. Box 421270
129 Screven Street



Kayakers travel up Choppee Creek with the SC7 Expedition July 22.

Celebrating the Great Outdoors with SC7

The South Carolina7 Expedition — back for its fifth year — spent two days this month in Georgetown County, exploring with the Georgetown Outdoor Adventure Trails (GOAT) program.

The group took to the Black River on July 22, launching from Rocky Point Community Forest and paddling up the river and down Choppee Creek. The following day, participants joined SC7 and GOAT for a walk through the City of Georgetown's historic district, leaving from the Historic County Courthouse and heading toward East Bay before turning back and walking down the Harbor Walk to the Kaminski House. Yuka Greer, Director of Outdoor Wellness Programs for the S.C. National Heritage Corridor, took the group

through one of her SC Calm "Walkshops" and taught forest therapy techniques, including "forest bathing in an urban setting."

The SC7 Expedition is 31 days of adventure, education and history across the state. It's a movement to encourage people to explore the outdoors statewide. This year's journey takes in-person participants and online followers across some of the Palmetto State's most iconic landscapes, spotlighting the connections between healthy people, healthy places, and a healthy economy.

For more information about SC7, visit southcarolina7.com. For more information about the GOAT herd, visit gtcounty.org/goat. It's free to participate in GOAT and its sponsored activities.

