

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

GEORGETOWN COUNTY, S.C.



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[gtcounty.org](http://gtcounty.org)

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Georgetown County made meaningful progress in 2025 by focusing on the fundamentals of good government: strong fiscal management, thoughtful planning, responsive public services, and transparent communication with residents. Throughout the year, County staff worked collaboratively across departments to meet both daily operational needs and long-term community priorities.

One of the most significant milestones of the year was the launch of projects funded through the Capital Project Sales Tax approved by voters in late 2024. While much of this work remains in planning and early implementation phases, these efforts are laying the groundwork for visible improvements in public safety, drainage, recreation facilities, and emergency response infrastructure. These investments reflect a shared commitment to addressing longstanding needs while preparing for future growth.



In addition to advancing capital projects, the County undertook targeted organizational restructuring in 2025 to strengthen internal alignment and service delivery. These changes were designed to improve coordination among departments, clarify reporting relationships, and ensure the County is well-positioned to manage increasingly complex operations. At the same time, we worked to preserve continuity of service for residents while navigating leadership transitions and welcoming new team members.

Georgetown County also continued to emphasize accountability and transparency. Our Finance Department once again earned national recognition for excellence in financial reporting, and departments across the organization worked diligently to provide timely access to public information, support open meetings, and engage residents through a variety of communication channels.

As we look ahead, Georgetown County remains focused on turning plans into action. The coming year will bring increased construction activity, continued infrastructure investment, and expanded opportunities for community engagement. None of this work would be possible without the dedication of our employees, the guidance of County Council, and the trust of the residents we serve.

I am proud of what our team accomplished in 2025 and confident that Georgetown County is moving forward with purpose, integrity, and a clear vision for the future.

**Angela Christian**

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

# Executive Summary

## *Building Momentum*

In 2025, Georgetown County continued the work of building a strong, resilient and forward-looking community. Major infrastructure investments – including new drainage systems, recreation facilities and technological modernization – advanced across every district. County teams strengthened public safety capabilities, expanded public services and made significant progress toward long-term facilities and economic development goals.

This past year reaffirmed the County's commitment to responsible fiscal stewardship, transparency in government operations, and high-quality service delivery. Georgetown County continued to plan strategically for growth while safeguarding natural resources and enhancing essential infrastructure needed to support current and future residents.

Newly approved Capital Project Sales Tax (CPST) funding began flowing into major county initiatives that will soon move into visible construction phases. The County advanced projects that reduce flood risk, improve recreation access, strengthen emergency response readiness, and stimulate business investment.


As Georgetown County looks ahead, this year's progress forms the foundation for a decade of transformation. Our mission remains clear: deliver essential services efficiently, protect the health and safety of residents, and enhance the quality of life in every community we serve.

## *Organizational Alignment*

In 2025, Georgetown County implemented targeted organizational restructuring designed to improve efficiency, clarify reporting relationships, and support long-term service delivery goals. These changes focused on strengthening coordination among operational departments, enhancing internal

## OUR YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

**65,731** residents served  
countywide 

 **\$121.4** million budget supporting  
essential services  
& infrastructure

**2,000+** acres of recreation lands  
/athletic fields managed 

 **319,640** website visitors

communication and ensuring that leadership structures align with evolving community needs.

Key adjustments included the creation of two Assistant Administrator positions, filled by Emergency Services Director Brandon Ellis and Public Services Director Carla Harvey. Both will also retain their duties as directors. Changes also included realignment of several departments' command chains, and continued collaboration among Finance, MIS and administrative teams to support technology modernization and capital project implementation. The County also navigated several leadership transitions, including the retirement of longtime employees whose institutional knowledge and service shaped county operations for decades.

Organizational updates were implemented with an emphasis on continuity, ensuring residents continued to receive uninterrupted services while positioning the County for future growth and innovation.

# Community Investment & Partnerships



Rendering of the proposed new Emergency Operations Center.

## *Capital Project Sales Tax*

In late 2024, Georgetown County voters approved a Capital Project Sales Tax referendum to support major public safety, recreation and infrastructure upgrades. Revenue collection began in mid-2025 and quickly exceeded projections.

More than \$6.2 million was collected in just over two quarters.

Dedicated funding enables the County to fast-track:

- Construction of a new Emergency Services Complex (Emergency Operations Center + 911 Communications Center)
- Drainage and stormwater resiliency improvements in multiple communities
- Recreational facility expansions including court renovations and trail development
- Transportation and multi-modal access improvements

Most projects completed design and early procurement work in 2025, with groundbreaking and visible construction expected throughout 2026.

The CPST will fund over \$100 million in voter-approved projects over its 8-year lifespan, including major public infrastructure work in rural communities

This long-term investment helps public safety, mobility and recreation access keep pace with growth.

## *A Year of Progress*

Across all departments, Georgetown County advanced services and strengthened operational capacity. Highlights include:

### **Public Safety Enhancements**

- Continued professional accreditation and equipment upgrades
- Enhanced emergency communication systems
- New technology for detention safety and crime deterrence

### **Infrastructure and Facility Improvements**

- Grants and construction management for drainage upgrades
- HVAC, fire safety and accessibility improvements in public buildings
- Expanded airport support for residents and business travel

### **Community Services Growth**

- Higher participation in parks programs and library offerings
- Expanded support for seniors through nutrition and transit programs
- Public engagement through events, transparency initiatives and education programs

### **Operational Excellence**

- National recognition in communications, safety, and financial reporting
- Expanded service hours and efficiency through new technology tools
- Continued workforce development initiatives

# Administration and Human Resources

## *Operational Excellence and Employee Support*

Administrative Services continued to strengthen county-wide internal operations in 2025, advancing initiatives that protect employees and improve service continuity. The department led key updates to internal safety procedures and supported a smooth year of personnel transitions, including executive leadership onboarding.

## *Awards for Workforce Safety and Efficiency*

The County earned the High Performance Employer Award for responsible management of employee health insurance benefits — an achievement reflecting both financial stewardship and care for workforce well-being. The department also received the Outstanding Safety Achievement Award for strengthening physical readiness standards for firefighters. Additionally, the Central Safety Committee earned recognition for Sustained Excellence in Risk Management, demonstrating long-term commitment to injury prevention and operational safety.

## *Strategic Planning and Administrative Coordination*

Administrative Services continued to align policies and administrative workflows with organizational goals, ensuring transparency and high-quality service delivery. The team helped coordinate major technology upgrades, facility improvements, and interdepartmental support that positioned the County for ongoing success.

## *Reassessment Support*

Administrative Services also contributed to the successful completion of the countywide reassessment process, which was finalized approximately 45 days sooner than the 2020 reassessment cycle. This accomplishment reflects improved coordination, efficiency and commitment to timely service delivery across county operations.



Georgetown County received the High Performance Employer Award in May.

## *Supporting a Strong and Resilient Workforce*

Through these achievements, Administrative Services and Human Resources played a central role in supporting Georgetown County's workforce, enhancing organizational effectiveness, and ensuring the County remains a safe, responsible, and high-performing employer.

As part of the county's efforts to streamline its organizational structure and increase efficiency and effectiveness, Human Resources and Administrative Services were separated at the very end of 2025. The Tax Assessor and Register of Deeds offices, which previously fell under Administrative Services were transferred to fall under the Building, Planning and Zoning Director. Going Forward, Human Resources will be a standalone department, continuing to house Risk Management and payroll, and oversee the county's employee health clinic.



In late 2025, Georgetown County's employee health clinic was rebranded as GtWell under a new service provider, the facility was renovated and all new staff was hired. These all work together to improve the performance of the clinic, the health of staff and the county's bottom line.



## *Aviation Infrastructure and Economic Opportunity*

In 2025, Georgetown County Airports advanced major capital improvements that strengthen safety, support aviation business growth, and expand the county's long-term economic development potential. Key projects at the Georgetown County Airport were completed on time and under budget, reinforcing the airport's role as a growing regional asset.

A major milestone was the completion of the Sherpa Economic Development Administration (EDA) project, which delivered a new Group III lighted taxiway capable of supporting larger and heavier aircraft. The project also brought critical utility infrastructure inside the airport fence on the western side of the airfield, creating capacity for up to five new aviation businesses to locate at the airport.

## *Job Creation and Private Investment Growth*

These improvements are already generating economic returns. Georgetown County welcomed its first new tenant under this expansion, employing 25 skilled, high-wage workers. A second major tenant, Winyah Aerospace, is breaking ground on a 30,000-square-foot FAA Part 145 Repair Station hangar and is expected to employ 30 people within three years. These two projects represent a \$15.5 million investment in Georgetown County's Aviation Economic Development Area.

## *Runway Improvements and Enhanced Safety*

The Runway 11/29 reconstruction project reached 94% completion by October and is projected to finish ahead of schedule and under budget. This investment significantly

improves operational safety, reduces long-term maintenance liability, and increases the airport's ability to attract additional aviation activity.

The County is also working with the FAA on approach survey and tree removal efforts that will support the addition of two new instrument approaches, dramatically increasing the runway's functionality and year-round reliability.

## *Modernization and Growth*

Additional progress included refurbishment of the airport's oldest maintenance hangar through private investment by the parent company of the fixed base operator, improving building function and restoring exterior infrastructure.

At Robert F. Swinnie Airport, runway and taxiway lighting upgrades are replacing older systems with efficient LED technology, reducing long-term operating costs and positioning the Andrews airport for continued growth.

While no new hangars were completed in 2025 due to permitting timelines, five privately owned hangars are planned for construction in 2026, increasing county revenues through property taxes, ground licensing fees, and aviation investment.

Georgetown County Airports also expanded service availability with two locally based charter operators now serving the community and ongoing efforts to rebrand the Georgetown County Airport as a premier flight training destination. Two additional flight training facilities are expected to locate at the airport in 2026, further strengthening aviation workforce development and regional accessibility.

Through these investments and partnerships, Georgetown County Airports are playing an increasingly vital role in economic growth, workforce opportunity, and transportation infrastructure across the region.

# Assessor's Office

## Countywide Reassessment

The Georgetown County Assessor's Office successfully completed the county's required five-year reassessment cycle and received formal compliance certification from the S.C. Department of Revenue. This major milestone supports equity and accuracy in property valuation across the county.

As part of this effort, the Assessor's Office mailed 57,605 assessment notices to property owners, ensuring residents were informed of updated property values.

## Growth and Data Updates

The county's assessment rolls continued to expand in 2025 with the addition of 200 newly built homes and 124 new manufactured homes.

To maintain accurate and current property records, staff processed 4,226 deeds through the County's Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal system including 2,153 deed transfers valued over \$10, reflecting ongoing property activity and growth throughout Georgetown County.

## Customer Service and Support

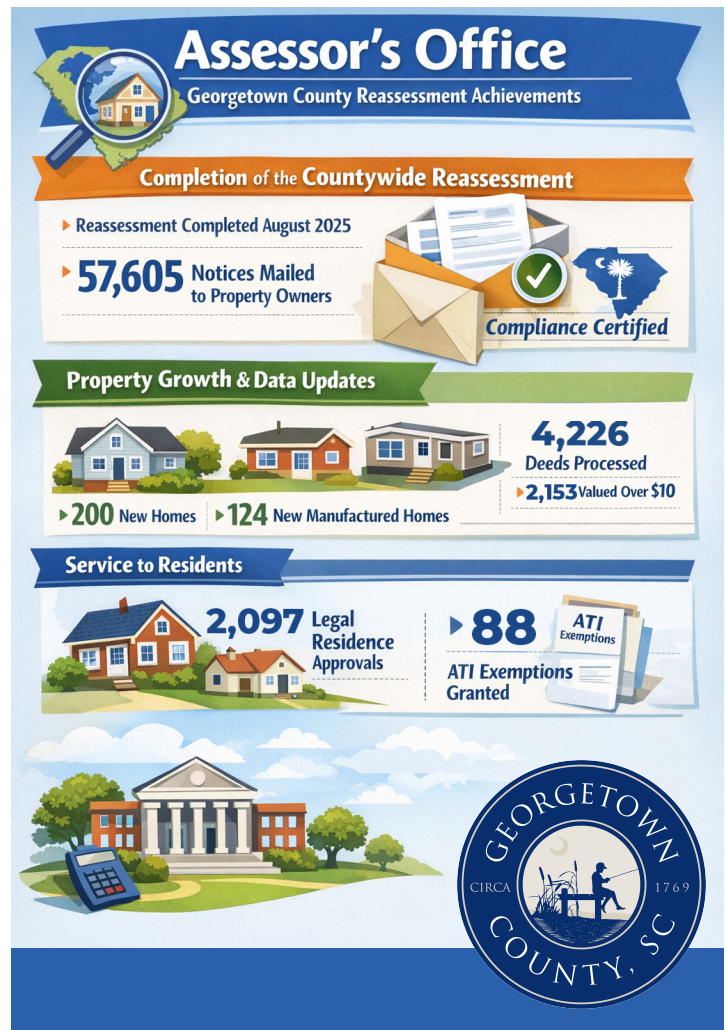
The Assessor's Office also played a key role in helping residents access appropriate exemptions and classifications. In 2025, 2,097 properties were approved for the Legal Residence 4% assessment ratio, ensuring qualifying homeowners received the correct tax rate.

Additionally, 88 ATI (Assessable Transfer of Interest) exemptions were applied, further supporting fairness and accuracy in property taxation.

## Appeals and Public Engagement

Following reassessment notifications, the office received 258 appeals, reflecting the department's continued engagement with property owners and commitment to transparency in the assessment process.

Through these efforts, the Assessor's Office ensured Georgetown County's property records remain accurate, compliant, and reflective of current market conditions—supporting a fair and balanced taxation system for all residents.



## Why Reassessment Matters

Property values change over time as markets shift, new development occurs, and communities grow. Reassessment is a state-required process completed every five years to ensure property values are updated consistently across Georgetown County.

This adjustment of values helps maintain fairness in the property tax system, so that all property owners are assessed equitably based on current market conditions. Reassessment supports accuracy, transparency, and an even distribution of the tax responsibility countywide.

Importantly, reassessment is designed to be revenue neutral — it does not generate additional revenue for the County, but rather redistributes the tax responsibility based on updated values.

# Economic Development

## *Strengthening Business and Workforce Growth*

The Georgetown County Economic Development Department made significant strides in strengthening the county's long-term economic competitiveness through business recruitment, site development, and workforce-focused partnerships. With the hiring of Kelly Robertson-Slagle as Director of Economic Development in May, the department entered a pivotal new chapter, building momentum at a critical time of transformation for the community.



**Robertson-Slagle**

The department supported both new prospect recruitment and the expansion of existing employers, targeting key growth sectors including advanced manufacturing, logistics, aviation, marine technology and agribusiness. Business Retention and Expansion visits were launched to better understand employer needs, identify opportunities for growth and strengthen the county's commercial tax base.

## *Major Projects and Site Readiness Advancements*

Economic Development advanced several high-impact initiatives aimed at positioning Georgetown County for future job creation and investment. A major milestone was the launch of the RFQ process for the Georgetown Port Redevelopment Master Plan, a long-range roadmap for mixed-use, maritime, and industrial revitalization. Seventeen submissions were received, with consultant selection anticipated in early 2026.

Industrial site readiness remained a central priority. At Georgetown Business Park, only two lots remain available, and a 100,000-



Zilmet had a ribbon cutting for its facility at the Andrews Industrial Park on July 25.

square-foot speculative industrial building was completed in October, with a second under construction. The park also celebrated the grand opening of Zilmet USA's new manufacturing facility, marking a major success in industrial recruitment.

The department also advanced negotiations for the potential acquisition of Highmarket Business Park, a 400-acre site with rail access, and submitted a \$2.5 million LocateSC Site Enhancement Grant application to support infrastructure and readiness improvements.

## *Infrastructure and Industry Growth Opportunities*

Strategic infrastructure investments continued to support broader economic opportunity. Planning and upgrades at the Georgetown County Airport progressed throughout 2025, including runway resurfacing, lighting enhancements, and drainage improvements to meet FAA standards and attract aviation-related industry and corporate travel.

The department also supported renewable energy expansion through the Silicon Ranch Lambert I & II solar projects, representing over \$250 million in private investment and an estimated \$14.4 million in new tax revenues over 40 years. Both sites were energized in fall 2025 and began commercial operation in late 2025.

# Economic Development



Maya Morant of Georgetown County Economic Development gives participants in the county's Taxpayer Academy a tour of the Port, discussing visions for the property. An RFQ for a Port Redevelopment Master Plan attracted 17 submissions in late 2025.

## *Redevelopment and Long-Term Economic Transformation*

Economic Development also worked to position Georgetown County for transformative redevelopment opportunities. Two of the county's most significant industrial properties — the former International Paper mill site and the Liberty Steel facility — remain key targets for future reinvestment, offering extensive infrastructure assets and long-term potential for industrial and employment growth.

In addition, the County continued coordination with federal and state partners on the Georgetown Harbor Dredging Project, a critical infrastructure priority that will support port redevelopment, maritime commerce, and regional competitiveness.

## *Marketing, Partnerships and Inclusive Economic Development*

2025 also marked progress in modernizing how Georgetown County markets itself for investment. The department initiated a rebranding and messaging campaign, along with a full website relaunch expected in early 2026, and expanded its

outreach through regional collaborations and civic engagement.

In partnership with the Georgetown County Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development supported the Minority-Owned Business Accelerator program, helping minority-owned businesses strengthen operations, expand access to capital and build long-term capacity.

Plans are already underway to continue the program in 2026.

## *Preparing for Future Industry Success*

Looking ahead, Georgetown County is poised for continued advancement through the relaunch of the Economic Development Alliance in 2026. The refocused Alliance will strengthen public-private collaboration, support workforce development initiatives, expand business recruitment efforts, and help guide long-range planning and policy priorities.

Through these combined efforts, 2025 served as a pivotal year in laying the groundwork for Georgetown County's next phase of economic growth — one rooted in strategic investment, inclusive opportunity, and long-term prosperity.

# Emergency Services

## *Strengthening Preparedness and Continuity of Operations*

In 2025, Georgetown County Emergency Services continued to enhance the County's readiness for disasters and large-scale emergencies through major equipment upgrades, training initiatives, and coordinated response planning. Georgetown County Emergency Management added two deployable Starlink satellite internet kits to ensure continuity of operations during disasters when cellular or traditional communications may be disrupted.

Additional communications enhancements included the purchase of Motorola radios through grant partnerships, along with a new shelter support kit secured through an agreement with the American Red Cross. This resource provides critical supplies, including cots and emergency shelter materials, strengthening the County's ability to support residents during evacuations or extended emergencies.

## *Training, Outreach and Community Engagement*

Emergency Management staff led and participated in numerous hurricane readiness and disaster response exercises throughout the year, including the annual Emergency Operations Center (EOC) hurricane tabletop, Governor McMaster's statewide hurricane exercise, and Operation Flashpoint, a full-scale joint training exercise with 3V Sigma USA.

The department also expanded public outreach through the "Be Ready!" Youth Preparedness Initiative, developed in partnership with Black River United Way to educate elementary students in Andrews, Kensington and Maryville on disaster preparedness.

## *Emergency Response and Incident Coordination*

Georgetown County Emergency Management responded to multiple significant incidents in 2025, including the January winter storm, the Prince George wildfire and several tropical weather threats.

During Tropical Storm Chantal, the EOC was



prepared and key officials were briefed ahead of landfall near Litchfield Beach. Later in the year, Emergency Management coordinated preparedness efforts for Tropical Storm Imelda, including a local emergency declaration before the forecast track shifted away from the coast.

The department also supported response coordination during an October flash flooding event in the City of Georgetown, assisting first responders and posturing the EOC for potential activation.

## *New Emergency Services Building Investment*

A major milestone for the future of public safety was the advancement of a new, state-of-the-art Emergency Services Building. Voters approved in 2024 a \$10 million Capital Sales Tax Project to construct a facility that will house both the County's

# Emergency Services

Emergency Operations Center and 911 Communications Center. In September 2025, County Council approved MRB Group for architectural design and began the procurement process for a Construction Manager at Risk. The facility is expected to reach substantial completion in June 2027.

## *Fire/EMS Equipment Modernization and Workforce Development*

Georgetown County Fire/EMS made significant investments in firefighter safety, emergency response capability, and personnel development throughout 2025. Safety upgrades included the purchase of 20 dry suits for flood rescue operations, new firefighter turnout gear, and specialized washer and dryer systems to reduce cancer risk and hazardous exposure.

The department also implemented new reporting technology to improve documentation and operational efficiency.

Fire/EMS welcomed eight new recruits through the County's Joint Recruit School, expanded in-house medical training through an EMT-Advanced class, and supported paramedic advancement for current staff.

## *Apparatus Expansion and Future Readiness*

2025 included the delivery of major emergency response vehicles, including two new fire engines, remounted ambulances, and specialized UTV units for forestry firefighting, medical transport and Sandy Island operations.

The department also placed significant apparatus orders to meet growing service demands, including the first-ever purchase of two aerial fire trucks, a new tanker/pumper for rural firefighting support, and additional ambulance capacity.

## *Facility and Training Improvements*

Midway Fire Rescue also completed key station improvements, including concrete repairs, new covered apparatus protection, updated kitchens and



In April, County Fire/EMS responded when a roll-off container truck carrying bulk waste caught fire on Brick Chimney Road.

flooring, expanded firefighter cancer-prevention gear, and nationally accredited water rescue training for all employees.

Midway additionally received the Campbell Award from the South Carolina State Fire Chiefs Association for excellence in fire prevention programming.

Midway and County Fire/EMS also swept Countywide awards:

- Midway volunteer Ed Mills was named Georgetown County's Volunteer of the Year.
- Lt. Alex Roman of County Fire/EMS was named the County's Employee Volunteer of the Year for his work on the annual Toys for Tots collection.
- County Fire/EMS Assistant Chief Aaron Bostic was selected as the County's Manager of the Year.

## *Serving Residents Through Life Safety and Emergency Response*

Through these combined investments in infrastructure, training, equipment, and preparedness, Georgetown County Emergency Services continues to advance its mission of life safety, property conservation and resilient emergency response for residents and visitors across the county.

## *Excellence in Financial Reporting and Transparency*

Georgetown County's Finance Department continued its commitment to accountability, transparency and responsible stewardship throughout the year. The County earned its eighth consecutive Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada, reflecting national recognition for clear and comprehensive financial reporting practices.

In addition, Georgetown County received an unmodified FY2025 audit report (the gold standard), reinforcing the County's strong internal controls and sound financial management.

## *Strategic Budget Planning and Countywide Investment*


The adopted FY2025–2026 budget totaled \$121.4 million, representing a 15.9% increase over the prior year. This growth included approximately \$16 million in targeted investments supporting improvements to public safety facilities, county parks and recreation spaces, and technology modernization efforts.








Finance staff supported a forward-looking budget that also incorporates multi-year initiatives such as beach management planning and the dredging of Murrells Inlet, ensuring Georgetown County remains prepared for both current needs and long-term priorities.

## *Supporting Workforce Stability, Emergency Readiness*

To remain competitive in attracting and retaining skilled employees, the budget included strategic adjustments to employee compensation. The County also significantly increased its Disaster Recovery Fund to strengthen readiness for unforeseen emergencies and recovery needs.

### Finance By the Numbers



-  **8th consecutive year** receiving the **Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (GFOA)**
-  **FY2025 Audit: Unmodified Opinion**  
(Clean audit confirming **strong financial practices** and internal controls)
-  **\$121.4 million** total FY2025 County budget  
**+15.9% increase** over prior year
-  **\$16 million** in strategic investments supporting:
  - Public safety facilities
  - Parks & recreation improvements
  - Technology modernization and cybersecurity
-  **Expanded Disaster Recovery Fund**  
to strengthen readiness for unforeseen events
-  **Capital Project Sales Tax revenues** supporting major countywide improvements
-  **Millage rates adjusted during reassessment**  
to remain **revenue neutral**

## *Capital Improvements and Revenue-Neutral Taxation*

As Capital Project Sales Tax revenues continue to come in, approved projects are moving forward and supporting major improvements across Georgetown County. Finance also played a key role in supporting the completion of the County's five-year reassessment cycle, including the adjustment of millage rates to ensure the process remained revenue neutral, maintaining fairness for taxpayers as property values increased.

## *Responsible Stewardship for a Strong Future*

Through award-winning reporting, clean audits, strategic budgeting and long-range planning, the Finance Department continues to ensure Georgetown County's resources are managed effectively to support high-quality services, infrastructure investment and community resilience.

# Libraries

## Connecting Residents to Learning, Technology and Community

In 2025, the Georgetown County Library System continued to serve as a vital community resource, providing access to information, educational programming, technology services and welcoming spaces across the county. With five physical branch locations and a growing digital presence, the Library remains a hub for lifelong learning, creativity and connection.

During the year, the Library recorded 183,350 visits and supported 35,499 library cardholders, reflecting strong engagement from residents throughout Georgetown County.

## Expanding Access to Materials and Services

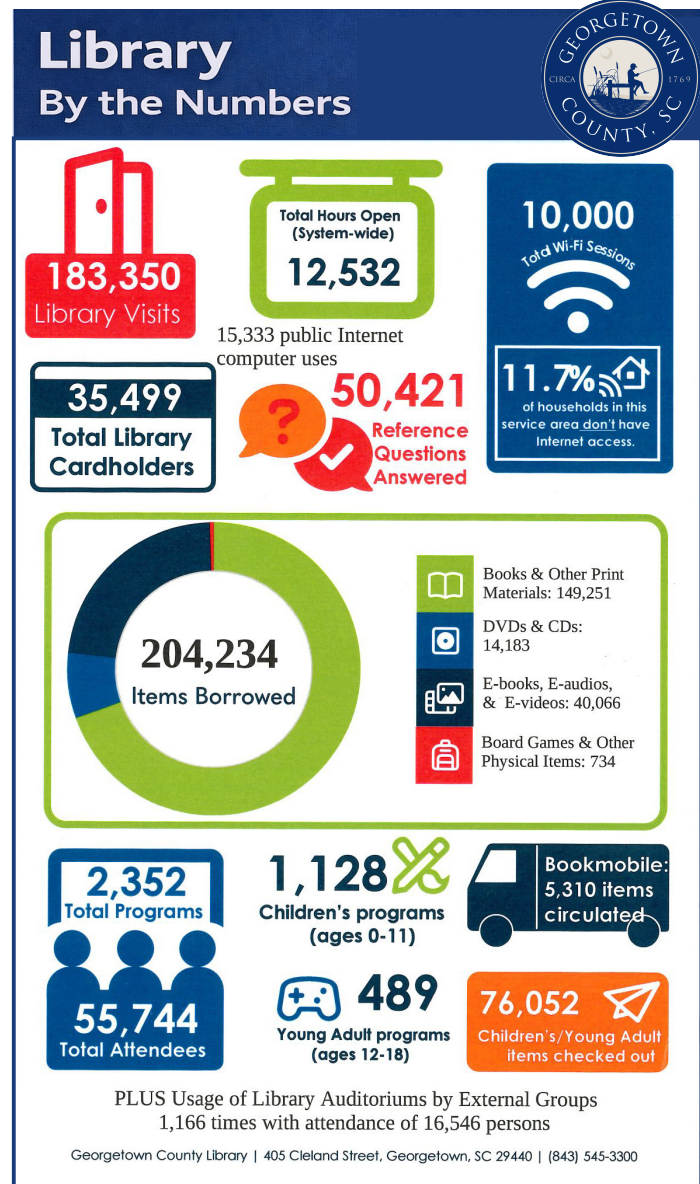
Library users borrowed more than 204,234 items in 2025, including print materials, digital resources, and media collections. Staff also answered 50,421 reference questions, helping patrons navigate research needs, technology challenges, and everyday information requests.

Technology access remained a critical service, with 15,333 public computer uses and approximately 10,000 Wi-Fi sessions, supporting residents who rely on the Library for internet connectivity, job searches, and online learning.

## Programs, Outreach, and Public Gathering Spaces

The Library System offered a robust calendar of educational and cultural programming, hosting 2,352 programs with 55,744 total attendees. These programs served children, teens, adults, and seniors across all branches.

Library facilities also served as important community gathering spaces, with auditoriums



used 1,166 times by external groups, drawing more than 16,546 attendees for meetings, presentations, and civic events.

## Strengthening Digital Services and Statewide Partnerships

Georgetown County's Virtual Library continued to grow, with strong usage across multiple platforms including the Digital Library (housing historical photos and newspapers), Kanopy streaming, YouTube programming, and a Facebook audience exceeding 400,000

# Libraries



The Southern Georgetown branch introduced Fandom Fest, a Comic-Con style event in October, drawing fans of all kinds countywide.

engagements.

Looking ahead, the Library is preparing to join the SC Lends Consortium by July 1, 2026. This transition will save more than \$12,000 annually in catalog costs while providing residents access to a vastly larger shared statewide collection.

## *Grants, Innovation and New Opportunities*

In 2025, the Library secured major grant support to expand services and programming. Projects included:

- “A Glorious Cause: South Carolina and the American Revolution,” supported by a \$39,300 LSTA grant for books, public programs, and AI transcription software
- A \$10,000 HTC Digital Health Literacy initiative for children at the Carvers Bay Branch, completed in August
- Expanded teen technology and maker space programming, including 3D printers and laser cutters across branches
- “Shared Traditions” presentations and collection enhancements highlighting African American cultural contributions

The Library also successfully implemented self-checkout improvements at the

Georgetown and Waccamaw branches before the end of FY2025.

## *Capital Improvements and Facility Enhancements*

Capital improvement projects underway in 2026 will further strengthen library spaces for the future. Planned upgrades include new flooring at the Carvers Bay Branch, acoustic improvements in the Georgetown Library auditorium and video production suite, Heritage Center renovations, conversion of the former bookmobile garage into climate-controlled processing space, and ADA-compliant walkway enhancements.



The 2025 Summer Reading Program attracted kids for a wide range of fun, art- and book-themed activities. The theme for Summer 2025 was “Color Your World.”

# Management Information Systems

## *Strengthening Cybersecurity and Technology Infrastructure*

In 2025, Georgetown County's MIS Department continued to modernize critical technology systems that support county operations, public services and data security. Major infrastructure upgrades included the replacement and refresh of the County's primary firewall, improving security posture, network throughput and operational resilience.

The department also replaced four remote site firewalls, further strengthening cybersecurity protections across multiple county facilities.

Additional technology improvements included upgrading nine UPS battery backup units with network monitoring cards and replacing five network switches to enhance reliability and continuity of service.

## *Supporting Countywide Connectivity and Sandy Island Services*

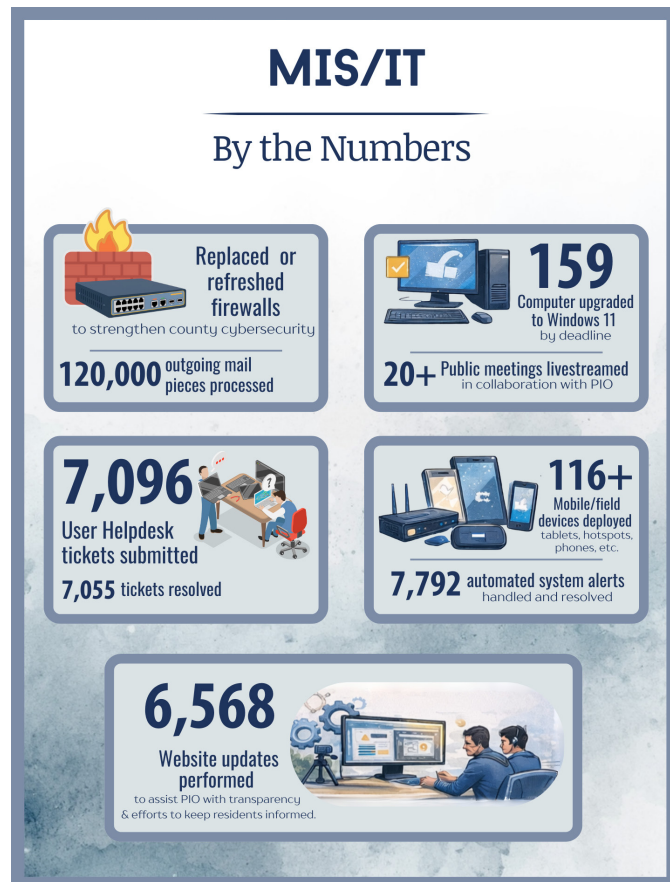
MIS expanded connectivity and service capacity in rural areas by adding internet service at the Sandy Island Schoolhouse/Community Center and Sandy Island Fire Station.

To further support community programming, the department designed and built two mobile AV/TV carts for Sandy Island use.

## *Operational Support, Communications, and Award-Winning Collaboration*

MIS helped maintain the County's public-facing digital presence with more than 6,568 website actions and updates completed in 2025.

In collaboration with the County Public Information Office, these efforts contributed to Georgetown County receiving an "Excellence" award from the National Association of County Information Officers for its website. MIS also partnered with the PIO to produce the County's monthly "First Friday" podcast, which earned a "Superior" NACIO award.



## *High-Volume Service Delivery and Helpdesk Support*

The MIS Helpdesk managed an exceptionally high volume of service requests throughout the year. As of October 2025, staff received 7,096 user-submitted tickets and resolved 7,055 of them.

The department also addressed 7,792 automated monitoring tickets tied to email security, endpoint protection, patch management, and network health – ensuring proactive response to system needs.

To meet federal and software compliance deadlines, MIS successfully upgraded 159 PCs to Windows 11.

## *Technology Modernization Across Departments*

MIS collaborated with departments countywide to deploy and configure 10 new multifunction scanner/printer/copier systems, improving workflow efficiency and document management.

# Management Information Systems



The department also supported specialized system improvements, including enhanced deed access tools for the Register of Deeds Office and streamlined scanning integration for the Magistrates Office.

In partnership with Finance and Environmental Services, MIS helped migrate and upgrade to a new municipal waste management system, supporting modern service delivery.

## *Public Meeting Technology and Countywide Event Support*

MIS provided extensive A/V and livestream support for public meetings and civic engagement. In 2025, staff supported three County Council workshops and livestreamed 17 regular Council meetings, with additional meetings scheduled.

The department also supported Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, committee meetings, and numerous county events ranging from trainings to community programs.

## *Training, Innovation, and Future Systems*

MIS supported internal workforce development through technology-enabled training spaces, including preparation of a Finance Department AP training room.

The department also continues its collaboration with the Treasurer, Auditor, and Finance teams on implementation of new county tax software — a major multi-year modernization effort.



Georgetown County MIS oversaw upgrades to the audio system in County Council Chambers in 2025.

Looking ahead, the MIS Department remains focused on strengthening Georgetown County's technology foundation while protecting critical systems and data. Through reliable service delivery, proactive system management, and strong interdepartmental collaboration, MIS plays a vital role in supporting daily County operations and long-term strategic goals.

# Parks and Recreation

## *Expanding Public Access*

Georgetown County Parks and Recreation continued to provide high-quality recreational opportunities, community programming and facility improvements that support health, wellness and quality of life for residents of all ages. The department maintains more than 2,000 acres of parkland and recreation space, including five regional recreation centers, nine community centers, 30 playgrounds, and more than 40 miles of multi-use trails.

The county's recreation system also includes 67 beach accesses, 21 boat landings, fishing piers, and a regional track and field complex, ensuring broad access to outdoor activity and community spaces throughout the county.

## *Participation, Programs and Community Engagement*

Parks and Recreation facilities saw strong resident participation in 2025, with more than 95,000 recreation center check-ins and continued growth in outdoor and wellness programming, including the Georgetown Outdoor Adventure Trails (GOAT) initiative.

Youth athletics remained an important focus, with organized programs in basketball, cheer, flag football, volleyball, track and baseball/softball serving hundreds of participants and generating tens of thousands of contact hours.

Community use of facilities also remained strong, with parks such as 8 Oaks and Retreat Park, as well as Rocky Point Community Forest and others serving as high-traffic destinations for recreation and events.

## *Capital Improvements and Park Development*

In 2025, Georgetown County advanced numerous park improvement projects that enhance safety, accessibility and recreational capacity. Completed and underway projects included:



- Tennis court expansion and renovation at the Waccamaw Regional Tennis Center
- Multisport courts and pavilion development at regional facilities
- Playground renovations and outdoor fitness upgrades across multiple parks
- Construction of a 24,000-square-foot off-leash dog run
- Phase 1 improvements at Rocky Point and 8 Oaks parks, including picnic shelters and parking upgrades

Future projects include Murrells Inlet docking development, additional ADA beach accesses and long-range park redevelopment initiatives supported through impact fees and Capital Project Sales Tax funding.

# Parks and Recreation

## *Conservation and Outdoor Legacy Projects*

Georgetown County also continued major conservation and trail initiatives that position the county as a leader in outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship. The Black River Trail Initiative is developing a 70-mile corridor linking Kingstree to Rocky Point Community Forest, with 13 public access points already established.

At Rocky Point Community Forest, Phase 1 improvements funded by an \$880,000 HUD grant include kayak launches, restroom facilities, picnic areas and paddle camping platforms.

Additional conservation milestones include future Black River State Park sites, the protection of 62,000 acres through the Pee Dee Basin Project, and the planned opening of thousands of acres for public recreation in coming years.

## *Supporting Older Adults Through Nutrition, Transportation and Wellness*

Georgetown County's Bureau of Aging Services continued to deliver essential programs that help older adults remain healthy, active and connected. In 2025, the county provided:

- 19,200 congregate meals served across six program sites
- 43,800 home-delivered meals for homebound seniors
- 60,000 rides providing door-to-door access to services
- 900 evidence-based wellness and fitness programming units countywide

These programs are supported through the Older Americans Act and Community Long Term Care funding, along with continued investment from Georgetown County.

## *Building a Healthier, More Connected Community*

Through parks, athletics, conservation and senior services, Georgetown County Parks and Recreation and the Bureau of Aging Services continue to strengthen community well-being, expand access to outdoor spaces, and deliver vital resources that improve daily life for residents across every generation.



In the summer, the county partnered with the YMCA to build a mobile pool and bring it to Regional Recreation Centers in the western areas of the county and bring swimming lessons to youth ages 5-15.



During its first full tourist season of use, a compacting trailer improved efficiency for staff who remove trash from beach accesses, parks, landings and other recreational facilities. It kept 60,000 plastic bags out of the landfill and made public spaces cleaner. Switching to bright yellow trash cans also reduced bin thefts by 95 percent!

# Planning, Zoning and Building

## *Guiding Responsible Growth and Community Development*

Georgetown County's Planning, Zoning and Building Department continued to play a central role in managing growth, protecting community character and ensuring safe development across the county. Through long-range planning, ordinance updates, code enforcement and permitting services, the department supported both neighborhood quality of life and future economic opportunity.

## *Neighborhood Revitalization and Land Use Protection*

A major milestone this year was the completion of Phase 3 of the Spring Gully Blight Removal Program, which resulted in the removal of 14 dilapidated structures in the Little Italy, Graves Station and Pee Dee areas. This final phase brought the program's total impact to 36 structures removed countywide, leaving clean, graded lots that support reinvestment and redevelopment.

The department also advanced land use protections through key rezoning actions, including the creation of a new Neighborhood Amenity Zoning District for the Litchfield and Founder's Club golf courses, helping preserve recreational and open space adjacent to established neighborhoods.

## *Modernizing Zoning and Comprehensive Planning*

Following adoption of the County's Comprehensive Plan, the department completed an RFQ process to select a consultant for a full update of Georgetown County's zoning ordinance and maps. A public kickoff meeting and community tour were held in September, with the ordinance modernization effort expected to take up to 16 months.



Planning staff also conceptually approved multi-phase plans for the Crown Pointe development along Highway 701, supporting coordinated residential growth near the northern city limits of Georgetown.

## *Strong Public Engagement and Community Input*

Public participation remained a cornerstone of the County's land use planning process. During development of the Land Use Element, the department hosted:

- Three open houses attended by more than 300 residents
- Five focus group meetings with key stakeholders
- Four rural "roadshow" meetings led by staff
- Additional open houses, virtual sessions, and listening opportunities

# Planning, Zoning and Building



Phase 3 of the Spring Gully Blight Removal Program resulted in the removal of 14 dilapidated structures from communities.

- A dedicated webpage that generated more than
- 60 online comments

Altogether, the process collected 1,770 individual data points, ensuring countywide voices were reflected in future planning decisions.

## *Zoning Enforcement and Development Review*

The Zoning Division investigated approximately 35-40 complaints per month, issuing an average of 10-15 Orders to Remedy monthly. Code enforcement remained active, with roughly 20 court cases resolved during the year involving property maintenance, use violations and nuisance issues.

The department also maintained a high volume of development review activity, including:

- 307 plats reviewed for recording
- 32 rezoning requests processed
- 22 subdivision reviews completed
- 18 variance requests evaluated
- 57 zoning enforcement cases opened

## *Building Safety and Inspection Services*

The Building Division ensured safe construction standards across Georgetown County by performing more than 6,490 inspections and issuing 2,382 building permits in 2025. The department also processed 868 contractor registrations, supporting accountability and compliance in the building industry.

Building inspectors further strengthened county expertise by completing and passing three professional certifications during the year.

## *Professional Leadership and Regional Collaboration*

Planning leadership remained engaged statewide and nationally, with staff participating in the American Planning Association conference, presenting at regional APA events, and providing educational sessions for groups such as the county's annual Taxpayer Academy and Coastal Carolina Association of Realtors. The department also partnered with organizations like the Coastal Conservation League to share best practices on greenbelts and publicly funded land programs.

# Public Information

## *Strengthening Transparency and Public Trust*

In 2025, Georgetown County's Public Information Department continued to advance the County's commitment to transparency, resident engagement and timely communication. Through strategic storytelling, emergency messaging, digital outreach and public education initiatives, the department served as a vital connection between county government and the community.

A major milestone this year was the redesign and modernization of the County's long-running monthly newsletter, launched in 2012. While the publication's format has evolved to be more readable and engaging, its mission remains unchanged: keeping residents informed about county services, events, leadership messages, and the work happening behind the scenes across Georgetown County Government.

## *National and Statewide Recognition for Excellence*

Georgetown County's communications efforts earned significant recognition in 2025 at both the state and national levels.

Public Information Officer Jackie Broach received six awards from the S.C. Press Association, including first place for feature writing and multiple honors for photography and publication excellence.

On the national stage, Georgetown County received four National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO) Awards of Excellence, recognizing outstanding work in:

- Photo storytelling
- Printed publications (newsletter)
- Podcasting ("First Friday with Georgetown County")
- Website communications (gtcounty.org)



These awards highlight Georgetown County's ability to compete alongside some of the nation's largest counties in professional public communication.

The department also celebrated the renewal of Broach's professional PIO credential through the Center for Public Safety Excellence Commission on Professional Credentialing.

## *Expanding Digital Reach and Engagement*

Georgetown County's social media presence continued to grow substantially in 2025, reflecting a more strategic, quality-driven communications approach.

- 1,716 total posts
- 6.15 million impressions
- 39,804 followers (8.7% increase)
- 276,934 video views (up 161%)
- 38,409 reactions and 6,905 comments
- 17,039 link clicks, driving residents to county resources and services

Despite fewer posts overall, engagement and visibility increased, confirming the effectiveness of a focused, audience-centered strategy.

## *Public Education and Community Engagement*

The Public Information Department also hosted

# Public Information



Students in the third annual Taxpayer Academy tour the County Fire/EMS headquarters station with Chief Jim Falkenhagen.

another successful Taxpayer Academy in April. The third annual program welcomed 14 residents for an interactive behind-the-scenes experience exploring the departments, facilities and services supported by local tax dollars. Participants toured major county operations, met with directors, and gained deeper insight into the scope of county government responsibilities.

## Supporting Open Government Through FOIA

Public Information also plays a central role in supporting open government through Freedom of Information Act coordination. In 2025, Georgetown County received 289 new FOIA requests and closed 268, with an average closure time of 10.8 business days and a median of 6 days, reflecting strong responsiveness across departments.

## Looking Ahead

As Georgetown County continues into 2026, the Public Information Department remains focused on strengthening digital storytelling, enhancing emergency communication capacity and completing a five-year update of the County's award-winning website to ensure residents remain informed, engaged and connected.

GEORGETOWN COUNTY  
**MONTHLY**  
A publication for our residents and visitors MARCH 2025

**Collins brings passion, innovation to new role as library's head of children's services**

For Silvana Collins, returning to the Georgetown County Library System as its new head of Children's Services felt a lot like coming home. Collins, who previously spent a decade working in Hispanic outreach and as an assistant in the library system, stepped into her new role in November. She brings with her a wealth of experience, a deep love for working with children and a vision to expand library programming and accessibility for the county's youngest readers. "I really enjoy working with children," Collins said. "Their response to learning—especially when you introduce them to something new, like another language—is incredible." Collins also brings to the job an energy and enthusiasm for her work that's positively contagious. Collins' library career began in Hispanic outreach, where she helped families navigate the library system, obtain library cards and access educational resources. She later became an assistant to the former head of Children's Services, Sheila Sullivan, before stepping away for a time to attend to family matters. Collins missed the library, and she especially missed the kids, she said. So, when Sullivan retired last fall, leaving her position vacant, Collins knew it was the perfect opportunity to return to her passion. →] Continued on Page 3

**Inside this issue:**

<p>Kelly Robertson-Slagle has been named as the county's new Economic Development Director.</p>	<p>What residents need to know about this year's property reassessment.</p>	<p>"Shared Traditions" series resumes at Library on April 16 with poet Glenis Redmond.</p>
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The County's monthly newsletter unveiled a new, more modern look in March, changing its name to Georgetown County Monthly.



A photo series from a parade honoring Melissa Jefferson won a national award.

# Public Services

## *Infrastructure, Resilience and Daily Operations*

In 2025, the Georgetown County Department of Public Services delivered an exciting and transformative year of progress, guided by its commitment to "People, Purpose and Presence." Across every division, staff worked to enhance quality of life through infrastructure improvements, facility modernization, flood resilience, and responsive community service.

The department also marked a major leadership transition with the retirement of longtime Director Ray Funnye, whose vision shaped Public Services for more than three decades. Georgetown County welcomed Carla Harvey as the incoming department head, bringing new energy and experience to lead the department forward beginning November 17. Harvey was named an Assistant Administrator, in late December, along with Brandon Ellis of Emergency Services, in addition to her other duties.

## *Advancing Major Countywide Infrastructure Investments*

Public Services' Capital Projects Division continued to advance major drainage and infrastructure improvements across Georgetown County, with multiple FEMA-, EDA-, and Capital Project Sales Tax-funded projects underway.

The division maintained close coordination with key state and federal partners, including FEMA, the Economic Development Administration, SCDOT, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

In total, the County secured or managed more than \$40 million in active grant and earmark funding across more than 15 major projects, representing one of the most significant infrastructure investment periods in recent years.



A major highlight was continued progress toward Murrells Inlet dredging, with \$19 million in funding secured and additional modeling prepared for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers review.

The division also presented Georgetown County's updated Beach Management Plan to County Council in August, supporting long-term coastal resilience and shoreline protection.

## *Strengthening Standards and Flood Resilience*

The Stormwater Division implemented updates to the County's Stormwater Design Manual, improving clarity in the permitting process and strengthening alignment with state and federal regulations. These revisions help streamline compliance, improve review consistency and support responsible development and capital improvement planning.

Stormwater staff also remained engaged in professional development, attending the APWA PWX 2025 Conference and earning certifications

# Public Services

that strengthen technical expertise across the division.

Stormwater staff also remained engaged in professional development, attending the APWA PWX 2025 Conference and earning certifications that strengthen technical expertise across the division.

## *Innovation and National Collaboration*

Georgetown County's Mosquito Control Division gained national recognition in 2025 through collaboration with CDC personnel on resistance testing and field research. Despite a small staff size, the division earned praise for operational excellence and participated in the evaluation of "Mosquito Magician," a non-insecticide alternative supporting environmentally friendly control methods.

Facility resilience improvements also included installation of a backup generator at the Mosquito Control Garage at the Georgetown County Airport, ensuring safe chemical storage during outages and providing an alternate operational site during catastrophic events.

## *Maintaining Safe, Reliable County Buildings*

The Facilities Division continued maintenance and modernization efforts across county buildings to ensure safety, reliability and comfort for employees and the public. Key upgrades included:

- Installation of four new HVAC units at the Voter Registration Building
- New fire alarm panels at the Department of Social Services and Litchfield Exchange
- Planned HVAC improvements at Waccamaw Regional Recreation Center gym
- Remodeling of the new Public Services Administration office



Ray Funnye, the County's first Public Services Director, retired after 33 years of service. Carla Harvey joined the team as the new director in November.



The department's administrative staff moved into a new building on Screven Street at the end of the year.

## *Building a Stronger Georgetown County*

Through major infrastructure investments, innovative environmental health initiatives, and essential facility improvements, Georgetown County Public Services continues to strengthen community resilience, protect public health, and deliver the foundational services that residents rely on every day.

# Sheriff's Office

## *Service, Safety and Community Trust*

In 2025, the Georgetown County Sheriff's Office, led by Sheriff Carter Weaver, continued its mission of protecting residents, strengthening community relationships, and advancing innovative public safety programs. Through proactive law enforcement, modern technology and nationally recognized rehabilitation initiatives, the Sheriff's Office remains a cornerstone of safety and accountability across Georgetown County.

## *Nationally Recognized Reentry and Rehabilitation Success*

One of the Sheriff's Office's most impactful achievements continues to be its award-winning Reentry Program, which has expanded educational and workforce opportunities for qualifying inmates. Participants have earned GEDs, completed leadership and character development courses, and enrolled in college-credit programming through Coastal Carolina University.

With more than 200 graduates over two decades, the program has achieved a recidivism rate of under 2%, far below the statewide average of 22% over three years. Graduates also earn journeyman certifications in high-demand trades such as HVAC, welding, engine repair and electrical work—supporting long-term reintegration and workforce success.

## *Innovative Correctional Health and Recovery Programs*

In 2025, the Sheriff's Office became the first agency in South Carolina to deploy OverWatch, a real-time biometric monitoring system designed to reduce overdose risk and enhance safety in correctional environments. The technology continuously monitors indicators such as heart rate, oxygen levels, respiration,



stress, and skin temperature, alerting staff before a crisis becomes fatal.

The Sheriff's Office also grew the Damascus House program. Launched in 2024, it provides an intensive, faith-based addiction recovery option for inmates battling substance abuse and is one of the first programs of its kind in the state.

## *Real-Time Technology and Community Safety Tools*

Flock safety cameras continued to strengthen crime prevention and investigative capacity, assisting in cases ranging from stolen vehicles to major violent crime apprehensions. The Sheriff's Office has deployed cameras in key community locations, including Bromell Park and the Choppee Road/Peters Creek area.

## *Accredited Excellence and Responsible Resource Management*

The Georgetown County Sheriff's Office earned

# Sheriff's Office



The Sheriff's Office team participated in National Night Out at East Bay Park on Oct. 7, interacting with residents from across the county.



A deputy directs traffic during the Tour de Plantersville in the fall.



The Marine Patrol unit conducted training in April to get ready for a busy summer season.

its National Law Enforcement Accreditation in 2024 through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). This accreditation is a national gold standard. It aims to improve the delivery of public safety services, primarily by maintaining a body of standards developed by public safety practitioners, covering a wide range of contemporary public safety topics and responsibilities; establishing and administering an accreditation process; and recognizing professional excellence. The Georgetown County Sheriff's Office also accepted its fifth Certificate of Accreditation from South Carolina Law Enforcement Accreditation (SCLEA), making our agency one of the few dually accredited agencies in South Carolina.

The Sheriff's Office also managed \$2.8 million in grants which helps provide enhanced service at the lowest cost possible. The grants defray costs for construction, specialized equipment including cars and computers, and 14 full-time positions within the Department.

# Veterans Services



## *Supporting Veterans and Their Families*

In 2025, the Georgetown County Veterans Affairs Office continued its commitment to assisting local veterans and their family members with benefits guidance, paperwork support and service-related questions. Staff work daily to help veterans navigate available resources and connect with the programs they have earned through their service.

## *Strengthening Office Capacity and Outreach*

After the retirement of Veterans Services Officer David Murphy in the summer, the office welcomed Paige Sawyer to the role. He was joined by Patricia Walton, who is also new to the department. Both are dedicated to serving veterans efficiently and compassionately.

In the last quarter, the new team focused on improving the office environment, incorporating military-related décor, uniforms, and memorabilia to create a more welcoming and veteran-centered space.



David Murphy, left, retired as Veterans Services officer and Paige Sawyer, right, was appointed as his replacement.

## *Community Engagement and Recognition*

Veterans Services increased its public presence throughout the year by participating in both the Andrews and Georgetown Veterans Day Parades. Staff also engaged with local civic organizations, providing presentations about the office's role and the services available to Georgetown County veterans.

Looking ahead, the office is planning a Veterans Affairs Fair in early 2026 to further expand awareness and connect more veterans with available support and benefits.

# Voter Registration and Elections

## *Supporting Fair, Secure, and Accessible Elections*

In 2025, Georgetown County's Voter Registration and Elections Office continued its essential role in supporting the democratic process through accurate voter records, reliable election administration and responsive public service. The office works year-round to ensure residents have access to clear information and well-managed election processes.

## *Serving a Growing Voter Population*

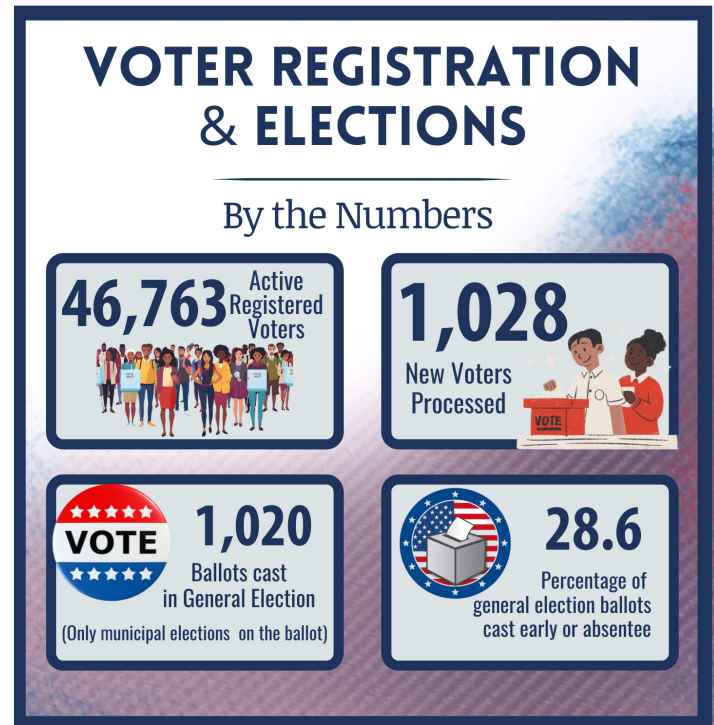
Georgetown County maintains 46,763 active registered voters, reflecting the ongoing growth and engagement of the community. The office processed 1,028 new voter registrations in 2025, ensuring eligible residents are added promptly and accurately to the voter rolls.

## *Facility Improvements and Operational Readiness*

To support staff and safeguard the reliability of election operations, the County completed a major facility upgrade with the installation of four new HVAC units, replacing systems that were approximately 15 years old. These improvements strengthen the office's long-term operational readiness and provide a more stable environment for both staff and election-related equipment.

## *Expanding Public Education and Voter Resources*

One of the most significant accomplishments of the year was the development of a new voter guide, providing residents with clearer, more accessible information about elections, voting procedures and available resources. This effort reflects Georgetown County's continued commitment to transparency, voter



Pollworker training took place in October to get pollworkers ready for the general election.

education, and informed participation.

## *Commitment to Service and Integrity*

Through accurate registration services, improved facilities, and expanded voter outreach tools, Georgetown County's Voter Registration and Elections Office remains dedicated to ensuring elections are conducted with professionalism, integrity and public confidence.

# In Closing

Georgetown County is proud of the progress reflected throughout this Annual Report. Across every department, county employees delivered essential services, advanced major infrastructure and capital projects, strengthened public safety and emergency readiness, expanded recreation and community programming, and continued to improve how we communicate and serve residents.

This year's accomplishments represent more than individual initiatives – they reflect a shared commitment to responsible stewardship, transparency and long-term planning. From reinvestment in facilities and technology to innovative programs that improve quality of life, Georgetown County remains focused on meeting today's needs while preparing for tomorrow's opportunities.

We are grateful to County Council for its leadership, to our dedicated staff for their professionalism and service, and to the residents of Georgetown County for their continued trust and engagement. Local government works best when it is grounded in community, guided by accountability and driven by the goal of making life better for the people we serve.

Thank you for taking time to review this year's report. We look forward to continuing this work together in the year ahead.

## *Looking Ahead*

In the coming year, Georgetown County will continue building on this momentum through:

- Major capital investments in public safety, parks, and infrastructure
- Continued drainage, flood resilience, and coastal management initiatives
- Expanded digital services, website modernization, and public engagement
- Ongoing economic development and redevelopment planning
- Sustained focus on workforce excellence and customer service

Together, we are moving Georgetown County forward – with purpose, progress, and community at the center of everything we do.



Created by Georgetown County Public Information  
January 2026