

Mayor: James Howell

Council:

Angele Bradley
Tyler Cook
Inez Lee
Mary Ann Mack

Town Administrator:

Tim Dargan
Police Chief:
Carl Scott

Lamar's Monthly Connection

February 2024

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Business Office: 843-326-5551 Police Department: 843-326-5555

Mayor: jameshowell@lamarsc.org

Egg Srcmaelb

March 23 – Taste
April 5-6 - Festival

**Mayor James Howell presents**

2023 State of the Town Address LAMAR, SOUTH CAROLINA



On behalf of Town Council and the Town Administrator, it is my pleasure as Mayor to report on the progress, accomplishments, and events of Lamar in 2023. The Lamar you see today is stronger and more prepared to meet our needs and the challenges to come than ever before. I contribute this success to this administration thinking smarter, taking care of problems as they arise, proactively planning, growing stronger relationships between citizens, adding businesses, and listening to you, Lamar's citizens--your opinions, comments, and solutions.

In 2023, this administration diligently worked with our water and sewer systems, our public safety department, our infrastructure needs, and housing. The administration knows these are the areas to improve and maintain to build a successful town full of citizens and businesses. Your commitment as citizens to our well-being is your willingness to support local shops and businesses and your decision to make Lamar your home—a home of which you are proud.

Take a look at this report on the progress, accomplishments, and events that the Administration—Town Council, Town Administrator, and I—your Mayor—approved, achieved, or accepted during 2023e, B Street, and Pearl Street

- ✓ The Lamar Police Department advertised for certified and non-certified police officer positions. From these positions Officer Hayley Silva and Officer Lindsay Lorenzo were selected from multiple candidates and were hired. Officer Silva was previously certified and Officer Lorenzo attended the SC Criminal Justice Academy and graduated on Dec. 22, 2023.
- ✓ The \$150,000 grant to the Police Department from the SC Department of Commerce was used to purchase two police cruisers, three radios, security cameras, and upgrade firearms.
- ✓ Pete's Development presented plans in February to build four duplexes on Helen Lane. They will be completed in 2024.
- ✓ The Revised Business Ordinance License was approved in February. The new business license year started on May 1, 2023, and ends April 30, 2024. The fee is based on the class rate schedule.
- ✓ The Pearl Street and Grooms Center Water Tanks were cleaned.
- ✓ Penalties were set for water meter tampering.
- ✓ The sidewalk paving project by SCDOT was completed on Main Street.
- ✓ Sparrow Swamp Bridge on N401 was closed for three months for repair. Although not in town, it caused major havoc for citizens traveling north.
- ✓ The Great American Clean-up took place in March.
- ✓ April was proclaimed as "Sexual Assault Awareness Month."
- ✓ The Zion Road Pump Station and the town's lift stations are now being serviced by Clearwater Solutions who bought out Don Johnson in 2023.
- ✓ A new business, the Beehive Hair Salon, had its ribbon cutting ceremony in April.
- ✓ The 39th Egg Scramble Festival was the first weekend in April with a record-setting crowd.
- ✓ Parts of Main Street, Davis Avenue, Bee Street, and Pearl Street were resurfaced.
- ✓ Alvin Chambers, the town's Code Enforcer, identified and started notifying residents of properties that need repair, etc. Fifty-five (55) structures were identified as unsafe or dilapidated.
- ✓ June 12-18, 2023, was proclaimed "Men's Health Week."
- ✓ Fireworks on Main, sponsored by First Baptist Church, took place on July 3.
- ✓ Lamar received \$5,000 from Duke Energy as part of the Duke Energy Storm Resiliency/Emergency Preparedness Grants.
- ✓ The Lamar Planning Commission survey named water and sewer as areas in need of improvement.
- ✓ LAMAR'S MONTHLY CONNECTION received favorable comments in relation to a communication tool.
- ✓ Darlington County Roads and Bridges started replacing street signs missing or damaged at a cost of \$1,200.
- ✓ The dog and cat ordinances were stressed due to these animals roaming town. Eighteen (18) animal traps were set in September. Thirteen (13) dogs and one cat were picked up. In October nine dog traps and five cat traps were set. Fifteen (15) dogs and thirteen (13) cats were picked up.
- ✓ An LED sign to show notifications for town was bought and installed behind the clock on Railroad.
- ✓ October was declared "Domestic Violence Awareness Month."
- ✓ Angele Bradley and Inez Lee were re-elected to serve another term on Town Council.
- ✓ The American Legion and the Civitan furnished a new flag and installed a light on the flagpole.
- ✓ Christmas on Main decorated Main Street for Christmas and held a festival on Dec. 2 and parade on Dec. 9.

Grants (other than the police grant listed above), Budget, and Audit

- ✓ Construction was complete and the Zion Road Pump Station was started up on May 31, 2023. This RIA (Rural Infrastructure Authority) Grant in the amount of \$500,000 was closed out on August 31. The cost was actually \$498,883 and the work was done by Site Concepts.

-Address continued from front

- ✓ A SRF (State Revolving Fund) Grant in the amount of \$423,652 was awarded to the town to conduct a Sanitary Sewer Survey of our sewer system. This survey is still ongoing.
- ✓ A SCDHEC Grant in the amount of \$350,000 awarded to the town before 2023 to support improvements to the town's water and sewer systems was closed in 2023.
- ✓ A SCOR (South Carolina Office of Resilience) Grant in the amount of \$145,200 was awarded to Lamar to develop a Stormwater Master Plan. The study focused on the most critical areas of town. Three recommended areas of study are now being discussed as part of the Stormwater Plan.
- ✓ A grant application to SCIP (South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program) was submitted by Lathan Consulting Corporation to upgrade and replace the Railroad Pump Station. It was approved and the town was awarded a total of \$986,626 (\$942,438 SCIP and \$44,188 RIA state funds). The matching fund for the town is \$122,124 (\$78,000 SRF Grant and \$44,124 Lamar). Darlington County Council agreed to give the town the matching funds of \$44,124 for the grant. Pee Dee Cog will manage this grant at no cost to the town. It is in progress but will not be completed until October 2024.
- ✓ The town, along with Jannie Lathan and pertinent others, was and is searching for grant(s) for a new water system.
- ✓ The budget for Lamar for 2023-2024 was adopted In June. The total is \$1,044,672.
- ✓ The millage rate for property tax was increased from 75 mills to 81 mills.
- ✓ Foster McKinney of Hamilton McKinney & Moss presented and explained in November the financial statements of the Town of Lamar's Fiscal Year Ending 2022. The town received a favorable rating on the municipal audit.

2023 was a busy year! 2024 is already proving to be just as busy. We are prioritizing, working together, and looking to make strides in all areas of our town. We're striving to make wise choices for the present and the future. Peter Drucker, (Management Consultant, educator, and author) said, "The best way to predict your future is to create it." We know what we want and so we're setting that goal and moving toward it. Our strength continues to lie in the dedication of you—our citizens, our employees, the business community, resident volunteerism, Town Council, and me, your Mayor.

Thank you and pray for the success of our TOWN OF LAMAR.

Mayor James Howell



2024

- Library TAKE & MAKE – ALL MONTH SPINNING TOP KIT
- Library After School Art Club Feb. 13 4:00 pm
- Library BOOK SALE – Feb. 15-17 Bring a bag, fill it up, \$5.00
- Library Pop Art – Feb. 20 - 4:00 pm
- Library Book Club Feb. 21 – 11 am
- Library ANIME Game Club Feb. 24 11 am
- Library Pre-School Story Time Feb. 27 – 10 am

- Day of Prayer & Fasting – 1st Monday
- Beautification Com. Mtg. Feb. 9 – 9 am
- Lamar Town Council Feb. 12 – 6:15 pm
- VALENTINE'S DAY February 14
- Water Bill Due Feb. 20

WHAT'S TO COME:

Starting in March, LAMAR'S MONTHLY CONNECTION will include a column called "Council Report Card."

This column will give a summary of what each Council Member reports at the monthly Town Council Meeting.

If you don't get to attend the meeting in person or on Facebook, you will get it here.



Graduation Dec. 22, 2023
SC Criminal Justice Academy
Officer Lindsay Lorenzo



Chief & Robin Riggs from the Durant Center – Toy Donation



Letter to the Editor

Writing for Climate Change

To Everyone,

I am here to advocate for the problem of climate change, which has affected our earth for many years. Climate change can cause many problems for us and the earth, like skin cancer, droughts, and wildfires. Human activity accounts for a lot of it, reducing some of our ways like consuming too much or excessive use of transportation can lower the contributions to greenhouse gas emissions, which impact climate change and hurt our earth. If we work together to reduce our harmful ways, then we will receive back a greener, healthier, and cooler Earth.

Thank you,
Sharon Jiang

NOTICE: If you would like to include information in the newsletter, text Janie Howell at 843-326-5224 or Inez Lee at 843-230-7137.



←
This is the correct way to tie up your trash bags!!! Please tie them and keep your can clean. Picking up trash is a job! When your bags are not tied and the can is smelly, it is worse! I know: I've been driving the truck. *James*

THANKS



United Sewer Solutions will be cleaning and televising gravity sewer lines throughout the Town of Lamar over the next 4 to 8 weeks. Their trucks will include their name/logo and may pose temporary partial blockage of road travel lanes. In addition, due to the nature of the work, it is suggested that toilet lids be closed when not in use while this work is underway."