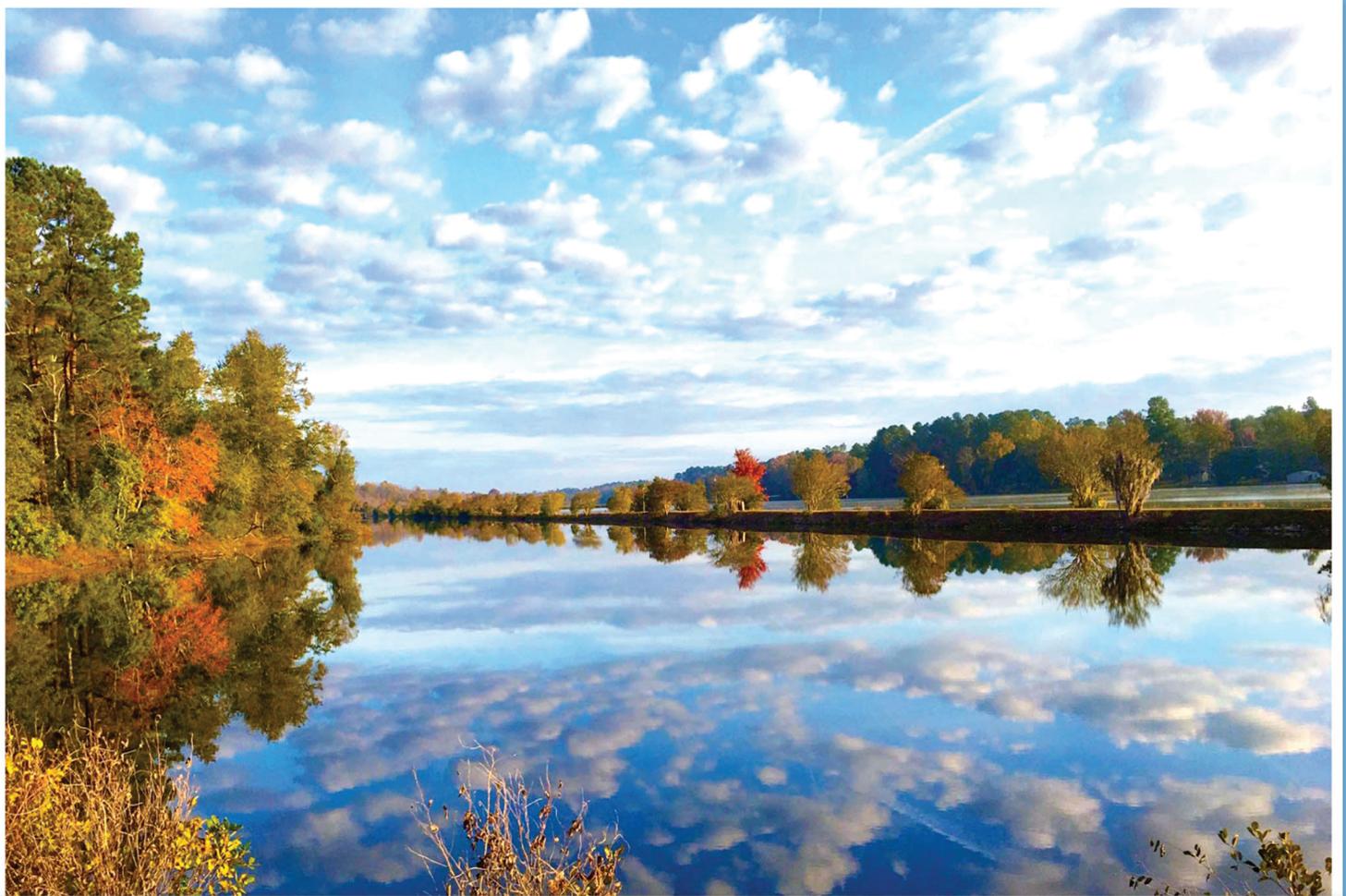
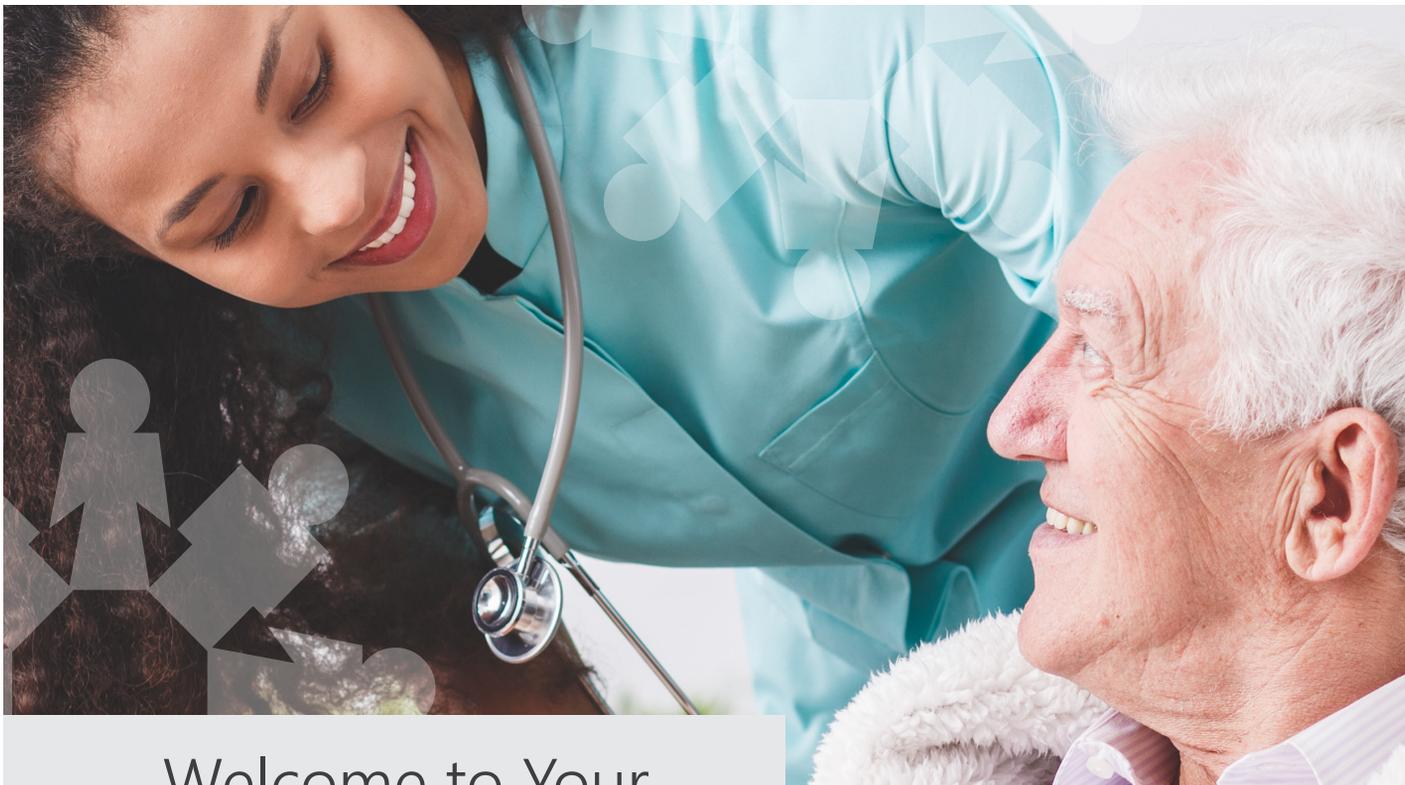


2024 **FACES & PLACES** *of Barnwell County*

Your Guide To Local Living



A special publication of **The People ♦ Sentinel**



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Faces & Places of Barnwell County is published by **The People-Sentinel**

P.O. Box 1255 • 22 Burr St. • Barnwell, S.C. 29812 • (803) 259-3501 • Fax (803) 259-2703

Email: news@thepeoplesentinel.com • Website: www.thepeoplesentinel.com • Facebook: [f /thepeoplesentinel](https://www.facebook.com/thepeoplesentinel)

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ON THE *Cover*

Lake Edgar Brown is just one of many beautiful places in Barnwell County. Also featured are some of the smiling faces of residents who call this community "home."

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A note from the publisher



Our *Faces & Places of Barnwell County* is back - bigger and better than ever!

This year's edition has 56 colorful pages highlighting our beautiful community. For comparison, last year's magazine had 40 pages.

Just as this magazine has grown since its last publication, so has our community. Barnwell County has experienced growth by welcoming new residents, new businesses (and jobs), new recreational opportunities,

and new resources. As you peruse the following pages, you'll learn more about these changes and how they make Barnwell County a better place to live, work, and play.

Barnwell County exemplifies South Carolina's motto of "Smiling Faces, Beautiful Places." This year's cover is a small reflection of that. Lake Edgar Brown is one of many beautiful places we are blessed to have in our community. The 10 smiling faces you see on the cover represent just a fraction of the thousands of wonderful people of all races, ages, cultures, and backgrounds who call Barnwell County home.

We have always been a close-knit community filled with people who are friendly and caring. We come together in times of need. Barnwell County is a small community with a big heart.

The community also has many beautiful places to explore, such as Barnwell State Park and Lake Brown. Don't forget to take a bottle to Healing Springs so you can enjoy the refreshing, cool water that is said to have healing powers.

Yes, we are a small community, but that doesn't mean there's nothing to do here. There's always something going on, such as a play at Circle Theatre, a festival, church event, school activity, fundraiser, and athletic games. You can also check out local amenities like the YMCA pool, Fuller Park splash pad and playground, disc golf courses, pickleball courts, and more.

No community would be complete without businesses to provide valuable goods and services. Be sure to look at the advertisements from many of those businesses inside this magazine, including the *Local Cravings Guide* for info on local eateries. I sincerely appreciate each business that advertised because they made this magazine possible to publish. Please be sure to tell them you saw their ad.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Vickery,

Publisher/Owner of *The People-Sentinel*

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For additional copies, call (803) 259-3501 or stop by our office at 22 Burr St., Barnwell.

To advertise in the 2025 magazine or send comments/suggestions, call (803) 259-3501.

A community rich in history, unique stories

Barnwell County is rich in history, unique stories, natural beauty, and Southern hospitality.

Originally called Winton County, it formed in 1785 when four counties were created out of the Old Orangeburg District. After six years, Winton County's name was changed to Barnwell County.

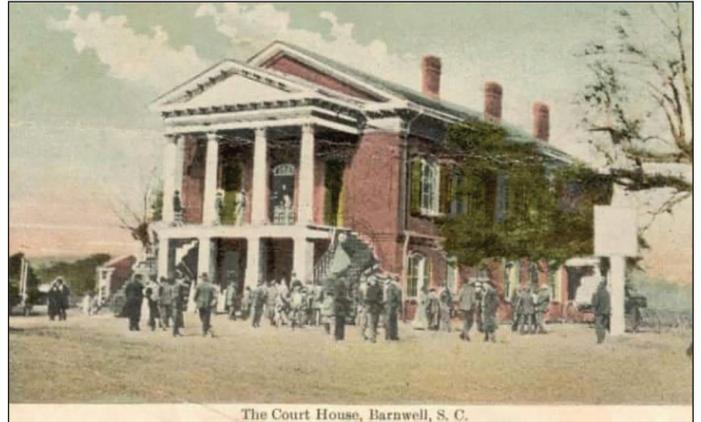
COURT'S IN SESSION

The original Barnwell (Winton) County court records, bound in a unique, shingle-bound manuscript, are preserved in the Barnwell County archives and date back to 1786.

Court was originally held in private homes on plantations. The first courthouse had been built by August 3, 1779, in the Boiling Springs section on three acres of land given by Thomas Wyld and John Mitchell. In 1791, the county seat was moved to Barnwell Village. Court was held here at the house of Benjamin Odom Sr. In 1799, Benjamin Odom donated five acres of land to the State of South Carolina for the site of a courthouse, which is the present location in downtown Barnwell.

The courthouse was built in 1800, but it was a wooden structure of poor quality. Another building was built in 1819, and the original one was torn down. A new courthouse was occupied by 1848. In February 1865, General Kilpatrick's Union Calvary burned the village and the courthouse. Immediately after destruction of the courthouse, money was allocated for a temporary jail, and court was held in the original Presbyterian Church building (now Circle Theatre) until 1869, when the county seat was changed to Blackville by an act of the Reconstruction Legislature. Court was held in Blackville 1869-1873. It was returned to Barnwell by legislative ordered referendum in 1874.

In 1879, a new courthouse was completed at a cost of \$16,719.45. The present courthouse building was the fourth building located on



The Barnwell County Courthouse is shown in its original brick façade. The brick was plastered over in the 1930s.

the grounds given by Odom.

A fire-proof repository for records was added in 1902 by John Eve, a renowned contractor and brick mason of Barnwell. Another fire-proof addition was added in 1921 for the records of the probate judge. In the 1930s, the red brick building was plastered over, which is the white building of today.

In recent years, the courthouse has undergone significant multi-million dollar renovations to maintain its historic charm while modernizing its capabilities.

Continued on page 5

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WELCOME TO 'BURNWELL'

The tranquil town of Barnwell was devastated by the Civil War. After Hugh Judson Kilpatrick, a Union general, made waste of Barnwell by burning most public buildings and businesses, some referred to it as "Burnwell."

Some of the homes, however, remain. At least a dozen houses have been identified as pre-Civil War houses. None of the town church buildings were burned and four of these buildings stand today - Bethlehem Baptist (formerly Barnwell Baptist Church), the Church of the Holy Apostles, the original Barnwell Presbyterian Church (now Circle Theatre), and St. Andrews Catholic Church.

Barnwell slowly recovered from the war's destruction.

LOCALLY GROWN

Farming has been a vital part of Barnwell County's economy since its inception.

Before the construction of manufacturing facilities, farming was a primary means of livelihood for many residents. Primary crops included cotton, corn, grain, watermelon, cantaloupes, and asparagus.

When the price of cotton dropped in the 1910s, it affected many farmers in South Carolina. Cotton was the main cash crop, and farmers had to find an alternative. Farmers began planting asparagus as a supplement to their decreasing cotton incomes. Farmers in Barnwell County started growing and shipping asparagus, most of which came from the Williston and Elko areas.

By the 1920s, the sale of asparagus yielded a profit of about four times that of cotton, and South Carolina was ranked in the top 5 producing states.

Though industries later provided new jobs and opportunities, agriculture remains very important to the community.

DISPLACED

In 1950, the federal government announced the creation of the Savannah River Site (SRS) to produce materials for nuclear or atomic bombs. Locals called it the "bomb plant."

SRS was a major economic contribution to the area as it provided



This photo, shared by Raymond Dicks, shows Main Street in Blackville around 1917. The town was bustling with activity thanks to the railroad making it a hub for businesses and travelers.

thousands of new jobs to the area, including construction jobs. However, it also meant the federal government would take a large area of Barnwell and Aiken counties, which was devastating to the many families who lost their homes, businesses, farms, and churches.

The properties were purchased by the government and with the payments many relocated in surrounding communities. Many of these buildings were moved to other towns, including Barnwell.

The Dunbarton community was a major part of Barnwell County that was affected. These residents, though now spread apart in location, have maintained a rich bond in remembering and honoring their very special place in history and their unique heritage.

An annual Dunbarton Reunion is held the first Sunday of May at Barnwell State Park. Learn more about Dunbarton at www.bcvn.org/Dunbarton.

LOCAL MUSEUMS

**Barnwell County Museum
& Effie Mae Fuller Community Center**
(617 Hagood Avenue, Barnwell)

Open Tuesday through Thursday 3 to 5:30 p.m. or by appointment by calling (803) 259-1916. Email: barnwellmuseum@gmail.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/BarnwellCountyMuseum
Admission is free. To rent the Community Center, call (803) 259-1916.

Blackville Heritage Museum
(655 Main Street, Blackville)

Please call 803-284-3267 or 803-300-0520 to schedule a convenient time to visit the museum. Admission is free.

Williston Museum
(5121 Springfield Road, Williston)

Open Tuesday and Thursday from 2 to 4 p.m. or to schedule an appointment or book an event, call Williston Town Hall at (803) 266-7015. Admission is free.

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Snelling

Barnwell

Hilda

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Allendale County

	S.C. Highways		Savannah River Site		Barnwell State Park
	U.S. Highways		Water		Barnwell Regional Airport
	Roads & Highways				

CITY OF BARNWELL

Population: 4,489 • Area: 7.99 square miles

Visitors to the City of Barnwell will quickly see its unique charm and realize it is anything but square. “The Circle” is the centerpiece of downtown and is often decorated for holidays as well as various community events. A trip around The Circle can lead you to City Hall, the Barnwell County Courthouse, or a plethora of growing downtown businesses.

The City of Barnwell’s downtown is undergoing a revitalization with increased efforts to beautify the area and new businesses cleaning up abandoned storefronts.

In the last year, two coffee shops, a boutique, *The People-Sentinel* office, and short-stay lofts all opened their doors. However, the growth doesn’t stop there; soon a diner will be serving lunch favorites in a classic atmosphere that lends to the city’s rich history.

Recreational and academic activities by educational institutions, local organizations, and municipal employees have brought numerous opportunities for youth. Fuller Park, located in the heart of the city, has a splash pad for little ones to beat the summer heat, a playground, a storywalk, basketball courts, and walking trails. The city is looking forward to adding more amenities to the park.

The City of Barnwell is home to the Warhorses - the mascot of Barnwell schools. Warhorse football games commonly attract alumni and fans all across the county.

The city is currently undergoing several water projects including

a new well and water tank to better infrastructure and industry prospects.

In 2024, the city accomplished a long-awaited task - a new fire department. This state-of-the-art station was funded partially by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money, however, the city was required to look for other avenues to afford its completion. This addition is preceded by the construction of a new police department to house the 16-member force under a new chief.

A weekend in the City of Barnwell is never boring - with twice monthly Saturday farmer’s markets and an always-updating community calendar, packed full of fun events.

The residents of the City of Barnwell are dedicated to seeing their community thrive. They cherish the small town feeling of the area, but work to make it as prosperous as possible.

‘Live Well, Barnwell’ is the city’s slogan for a reason.



Jessica Bradshaw (left) and Dawn Snead (right) sample locally made salsa at the Barnwell Farmer’s Market held at Fuller Park.

Mayor’s Must See: The annual Sundial Festival on Mother’s Day Weekend (May 11 & 12, 2024)

Important Information:

Mayor: Ron Still • Administrator: Lynn McEwen
City Council: District 1 Ricky Dixon • District 2 Peggy Kinlaw
District 3 Alicia Davis • District 4 Wanda Highsmith
District 5 Louis Claytor III • District 6 Jana Myers
City Hall: 130 Main Street, Barnwell
803-259-3266 • www.cityofbarnwell.com
Barnwell City Council meets the first Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m.



The City of Barnwell continues to provide exceptional recreational and park amenities for our residents and visitors that enhance the quality of life for all. Check out our website for all of our parks:

www.cityofbarnwell.com

Photo by Aero Photo

BARNWELL STATE PARK



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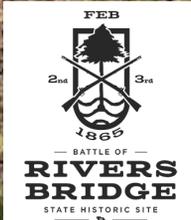


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TOWN OF BLACKVILLE

Population: 2,037 • Area: 9.03 square miles

At the merging of Highway 3 and Highway 78 sits the Town of Blackville and its many hidden gems.

One of which is the Healing Springs Country Store, which reopened under new ownership in 2022. The Healing Springs Country Store can be found near its namesake – God’s Acre Healing Springs, which attracts visitors both local and from states away to drink healing spring water, remember historical connections, and to step on land ‘deeded to God.’

Heading back toward downtown, travelers are met with locally owned restaurants along Main Street such as Famously Made Wings & Potatoes, Russell’s Pizza, Duke’s BBQ, The Scoop House, and Miller’s Bread Basket. All eateries have become staples in the community and are continually supporting town-wide events.

Activities and events in the community began growing in 2022 with the introduction of an activities coordinator and a recreation director, who both brought in innovative ideas for residents of all ages.

Aside from growth recreationally, there are efforts to revitalize downtown. The council has taken a focus on infrastructure improvement, economic development, community engagement, and improving quality of life.

The Shamrock Hotel, which stood as a testament to changing times, was located on Main Street for over a century until its demolition in October 2022. Other dilapidated or vacant buildings are being bought by the town to be torn down and replaced, or renovated and sold. In early 2023, the old theater on Solomon Blatt Avenue was demolished and the town purchased the former China Kitchen building that sat vacant on Main Street in February 2023.

Now, these buildings are taking on a new life through the town’s revitalization efforts. The town recently welcomed a new grocery store and is looking forward to cutting the ribbon to a coffee shop, antique store, and a consignment/thrift store.

The Blackville Community Center recently underwent renovations, making it more catered to events, social gatherings, and town council meetings.

In the coming year, the town will be making progress on establishing a new town hall from a previously abandoned building.

Blackville-Hilda schools are home to the Hawk’s Nest. With all-star athletic programs and a team of dedicated coaches and athletes, teams in the Hawk’s Nest grow in skill each year.

Community members are making strides to reinvigorate the pride residents have in their community, just like the pride they have in the Hawks.



Members of the Blackville Fire Department walk in the annual 9/11 remembrance parade.



Important Information:

Mayor: Ronnie Pernell
Town Administrator: Fonda Patrick
Council: Frenchie Smalls • M. Ann Pernell
Enterick Lee • Allen Harrison
Kelvin Isaac • Frederick Orr
Town Hall: 5983 Lartigue Street
(803) 284-2444 • <https://townofblackville.com>
Blackville Town Council meets on the third Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m.



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Many youth are involved in recreational initiatives, with teams often partaking in town events after the season is over.

Focused on

REVITALIZATION

KEY OBJECTIVES:

Infrastructure Improvement: Prioritizing infrastructure projects such as road maintenance, utility upgrades, and public facility renovations to ensure the safety, functionality, and attractiveness of the town's physical environment.

Economic Development: Implementing strategies to attract new businesses, support existing enterprises, and create job opportunities for residents. This may involve promoting tourism, revitalizing commercial districts, and fostering entrepreneurship.

Community Engagement: Strengthening connections between residents, local organizations, and government entities through active community engagement initiatives. This includes fostering open communication, soliciting feedback, and involving residents in decision-making processes that affect the town's future.

Environmental Sustainability: Committing to environmentally responsible practices and policies to preserve natural resources, reduce carbon emissions, and mitigate the impact of climate change. This may involve promoting recycling programs, investing in renewable energy sources, and implementing green infrastructure projects.

Quality of Life Enhancement: Enhancing the overall quality of life for residents by investing in amenities such as parks, recreational facilities, cultural events, and social services. This includes initiatives to promote health and wellness, support education, and celebrate the town's cultural heritage.

Public Safety and Security: Ensuring the safety and security of residents through effective law enforcement, emergency preparedness, and community policing initiatives. This includes investing in training and resources for first responders, as well as implementing crime prevention programs and traffic safety measures.

By focusing on these strategic objectives, the Town of Blackville aims to create a vibrant, resilient, and inclusive community where residents can thrive and prosper in 2024 and beyond.



The new playground beside the Blackville Library includes a train for children to enjoy. It's a tribute to the town's railroad past.



Yellow House Coffee will be opening in downtown Blackville in 2024. It's owned by the Olsen family who are new residents.



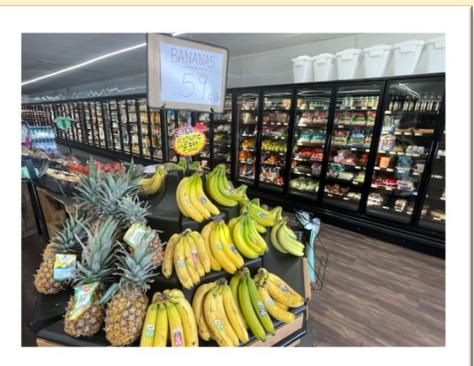
SRP Federal Credit Union is installing an ATM to serve the Blackville community. It will be located next to the ice machine at the intersection of highways 3 and 78.



The former Chinese restaurant building is being remodeled and will soon house a Mexican restaurant.



Palm Pantry Grocers (formerly Ken's Galaxy) is undergoing a complete remodel after a change in ownership. The new owners are keeping the store fully stocked, including with fresh produce and fresh meats.



TOWN OF BLACKVILLE

TOWN OF WILLISTON

Population: 2,950 - Area: 9 square miles

When the stadium lights click on to illuminate the home field of the Blue Devils football team, you can be sure to find a supportive community in the stands.

The Town of Williston rallies around the Williston-Elko High School Blue Devils, and the team supports the community right back. You can often find Blue Devils players lending a hand in collaborative food drives, smoke detector installation blitzes, and many other community endeavors.



The Williston-Elko High School Blue Devils football team played a good game at their 2023 Homecoming events.

The Ivy Garden Club is an active part of many of these events and masterminds the scarecrow contest displayed along Main Street and the Winter Wonderland Contest each year.

Williston is also the center for disc golf in the county with a tournament sanctioned 18-hole course at the town park established



2023 graduate Colby Baker was excited to accept his diploma and become a Williston-Elko alumnus.

in 2021. Disc golfers from across the Lowcountry come to Williston to compete in what are becoming annual events held by the Williston Disc Golf Club.

The Town of Williston has been working to grow their recreation program and offer more athletic opportunities for youth. The Williston Recreation & Activities Committee was established in early 2022 to do just that, and have played a major role in amping up athletics alongside an energized recreation director.

New owners recently took over the Williston Country Club and are working to return it to a local hub for not only golf, but events, fellowship, and more.

Aside from an active town park, dog park, and library, many unique eateries call the Town of Williston home such as Meeting on Main, The Sandwich Shop, Russell's Pizza, Momma Diane's, and more.

In 2023, a new manufacturer moved into a portion of Williston's former Dayco factory- Atlas, a golf cart brand.

A trip down the former Charleston and Hamburg railroad line reborn into a walking trail pays homage to the town's extensive locomotive history.

Across from the start of the rail trail is Williston-Elko High School and home of the beloved Blue Devils who also reside in Kelly Edwards Elementary School and Williston-Elko Middle School.

Residents are proud to be a part of the Town of Williston, and hope visitors see the charm the locals have loved for so long.

Important Information:

Town Hall: 310 W. Main St.

(803) 266-7015 • www.williston-sc.com

The Williston Town Council meets the second Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor's Must See: Egg Hunt in spring & DIG STEM festival in May



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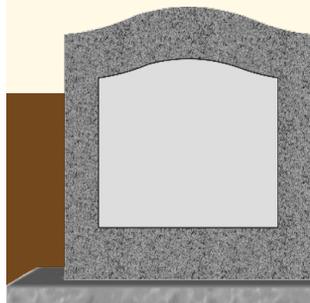
Billy A. Williams, Jr.

803-266-7454

Billy A. "Brett" Williams, III

Fax: 803-266-5400

P.O. Box 367, Williston, SC 29853



TOWN OF WILLISTON



Mayor Brett Williams
Councilwoman Annie Smalls Tyler
Councilman Eric Moody
Councilman Greg Walkup
Councilman Kurt Odermatt
Councilwoman Judy Taylor
Councilwoman Alyson Collins
Town Administrator Michael L. Beasley



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Country living in South Carolina

ELKO

Population: 242 • Area: 1 square mile

A trip down Highway 78 will keep a traveler's eye on the miles of fields growing fruits and vegetables. Once they reach the Town of Elko, a quick stop along the roadside will bring all they've pondered on the drive to fruition on the back of a farmer's truck. Crates of watermelons, squash, and a variety of produce dependent on the season are readily available for the community. This informal product stand is reminiscent of the former farmer's market that once was a staple in the area.

The Town of Elko is also the home of an active blessing box constructed and maintained by a local teen and her family. The community is welcome to donate and take food as needed.

Aside from agricultural endeavors, the Town of Elko held their inaugural Christmas Tree Lighting in December 2022 to bring the community together around the holiday season.

Although a trip through Elko is only one square mile wide, it holds a palpable history in the architecture style of its buildings and signage memorializing a brand's old style.

One thing that has not waned with time is the dedication of the Elko Fire Department. The volunteer members continue to ensure the safety of the town and surrounding communities. Another long-standing aspect of the town is its leadership. Mayor Toby Singletary was elected in 2018 after the late and former mayor Marty Schumpert who served for over 42 years. Schumpert was recognized for being one of South Carolina's longest-serving mayors before his death in early 2018. After serving as a council member and mayor pro tem for the town, Mayor Singletary took the position with the support and guidance of Schumpert before his passing.



Smiles of all ages are had at Elko's annual Christmas celebration.



Important Information:

Mayor: Toby E. Singletary

Clerk/Treasurer:

Nancy Sanders Jackson

Councilmembers:

George Carrie • Jerry Greene

Steven Michael Terry • Curtis N. Young

Town Hall: 10067 U.S. Hwy. 78, Elko

(803) 266-7996

Elko Town Council meets the third Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m.

HILDA

Population: 425 • Area: 3.1 square miles

Since its establishment in 1897, the Town of Hilda has celebrated many momentous occasions, such as their 126th anniversary in October 2023. Hilda's Hometown Festival brings country singers like Cody Webb and Warren Peay, a parade filled with unique rides and festive floats, and the night ends with a street dance.



Hilda's annual trunk-or-treat attracts hundreds to the town's depot. Families often come in themed costumes, like this one dressed as the cast of *Shrek*.

Halloween 2023 was celebrated thoroughly as well with hundreds of costumed kids collecting candy at the town's depot.

Each year, the Town of Hilda celebrates the end-of-year holidays. For the 2023 festivities, a parade of firetrucks followed by a tree lighting enamored those in attendance and brought in the holiday spirit.

The depot located in the center of town is historically rich as it dates back to the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. This focal point still serves as a town center and hub for events and gatherings.

New leadership in recent years has allowed for new ideas and growth in the town. The current council is focused on including citizen participation, transparency, and accountability.

In January 2023, the Hilda Fire Department purchased a new fire truck through a FEMA grant that was later dedicated to "The Glory of God." The Hilda Fire Department has been serving the town and county since 1973, and continues to be a staple of volunteerism and community.

Hilda is also home to beloved eatery Hilda Fryebaby's, serving burgers, fries, and hand-dipped ice cream, and the Hilda Auction that offers a variety of items at a lesser price on riveting auction nights.

The Town of Hilda may not be bustling on any average day, but on special occasions the town rallies together to celebrate and rejoice in living in a place where everyone knows your name.

Important Information:

Mayor: April N. Hutto

Councilmembers:

Timothy Burnette Black

Juan Nevarez • Guy Neal • Allie Beasley

Town Hall: 35 Railroad Avenue, Hilda

(803) 793-3818

The Hilda Town Council meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m.



Country living in South Carolina

KLINE

Population: 148 • Area: 3.1 square miles

The Town of Kline is located on the southern side of Barnwell County. Like many other towns in the region, Kline was first established after 1897 around the growth of the Carolina Midland Railway Railroad.

The depot remains in the town as a reminder of its history, and has become a staple as other businesses begin to thrive.

Chappell Farms has been picking peaches to sell at their roadside stand in Kline since 1952. Now, they have grown to handling hundreds of acres of peaches and shipping them throughout the U.S. and Canada under the brand “Pat’s Pride” named after the farm’s founder, the late H. Pat Chappell. R&C Low Country Bees opened their business this year, and are looking forward to not only pollinating the local flora but providing locally sourced honey products. Carolina Hills Farm Animal Refuge was established in 2020 during the pandemic, and has taken in numerous unwanted or displaced farm animals since its creation. Tienda Mexicana Lucero has a plethora of grocery and food items located centrally in town. After all, Kline is a “Little Town Doing Big Things.”

For over a decade the town has hosted a backpack and school supply giveaway for the benefit of students and parents. In 2023, the ribbon was cut welcoming a new blessing box where preservable food items can be taken or donated.

To better meet with the community, share ideas, and hold events like this, Kline built a new town hall building with funds from the 2016 capital project sales tax. It now serves as the hub for all things happening in Kline. Every year around the holidays, a tree lighting ceremony is held to offer another opportunity for the community to come together.



Easter fun is had every year in the Town of Kline with egg races, festive crafts, food, and fellowship.

Important Information:

Mayor: William H. Cave
Clerk: Patricia Cave
Councilmembers: Rodger Dale Arnold
Wayne Still • Robert Sanders • Vacancy
Town Hall: 1031 Kings Ave., Kline
(803) 584-4521

Kline Town Council meets the second Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor's Must See:
The annual summertime backpack giveaway

SNELLING

Population: 250 • Area: 4.085 square miles

The Town of Snelling may not be big in size, but it is big in character and history.

Residents coined the town with the slogan, “A Great Place to Call Home,” because of its small town feel.

Officials in Snelling often spend most of their careers serving the town, such as Robert “Bobby” Morris who served for over 43 years on

town council and former mayor Elbert Timothy Moore Sr. who served for 40 years.

At the July 4, 2022 celebration, a monument was erected in the town park to honor the service of former mayor Moore, who served from 1969 until his death in October 2009 at age 84. In addition to cutting the ribbon on the monument, the community enjoyed food and fun catered by the town and partners.

The town’s main goal this year is to continue to provide a safe and prosperous community and keep striving for improvement.

In 2019, a pavilion was built in the town park to allow for these types of events to take place. This pavilion was funded by the voter approved 1% Capital Sales Tax years prior to its construction.

Snelling “blends small town charm with big industry” by being home to the east entrance of the Savannah River Site, a federal nuclear plant where many county residents are employed. To reach the flooring company Swiss Krono also requires a trip through Snelling.

Snelling is also home to Miss Alda’s Inn owned by Scottie and the late Tim Moore. This bed and breakfast welcomes numerous travelers from across the country through its doors and makes them feel at home in Barnwell County.



Graydon Moore (center), the grandson of the late Tim Moore (right), cuts the ribbon alongside Mayor Paul Moore (left), honoring the memorial of his great-grandfather and former Snelling mayor, E.T. Moore.

Mayor's Must See:
Fun on the Fourth (every Independence Day)

Important Information:

Mayor: Paul Moore
Clerk/Treasurer: Lisa Still
Councilmembers: Carl S. Anderson Jr.
Annette Moore • Wiley Moore • Tim Gable
Town Hall:
71 Morris Street, Snelling
(803) 259-4980

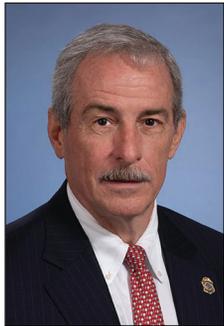
Snelling Town Council meets the second Monday of every month at 6 p.m.

3 S.C. leaders have roots in Barnwell County

Barnwell County has a history of producing leaders who have made an impact across the globe.

In 1941, Barnwell County residents occupied four of the most powerful positions of South Carolina government. The so-called “Barnwell Ring” was a grouping of influential Democratic South Carolina political leaders from Barnwell County, including state Senator Edgar A. Brown, state Representative Solomon Blatt Sr., Governor Joseph Emile Harley, and state Representative Winchester Smith Jr.

Presently, three former Barnwell County residents are serving in positions of power in state agencies. This includes Mark Keel as chief of the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED), Brian Gaines as Comptroller General, and Adair Ford Boroughs as U.S. Attorney for the District of South Carolina.



Mark Keel

Mark Keel has served as SLED chief since July 2011 when he was appointed by former Gov. Nikki Haley. This is the state’s top law enforcement position.

He credits his hometown of Barnwell with getting him to where he is today. This includes developing good character traits, particularly from his time as a volunteer with the fire department and rescue squad in Barnwell.

“There’s something about living in a small town. You see hard working people

making a living every day,” said Keel in a 2011 interview.

Keel has more than 40 years of service in law enforcement.

“Retaining Chief Keel’s leadership and law enforcement expertise is a victory for our entire state,” said current Gov. Henry McMaster after reappointing Keel for another term in 2023. “He is a true public servant.”

Keel started his career with the Orangeburg County Sheriff’s Department and later the Barnwell and Denmark police departments before joining SLED in 1979 where he rose through the ranks. Some SLED career highlights include being Chief of Staff, serving on the lieutenant governor’s executive protection detail, and working as a hostage negotiator.

He left SLED in June 2008 to become director of the S.C. Department of Public Safety. He served in this position until June 30, 2011 when he returned to SLED as chief.

“Serving as the chief of SLED has been the honor of my career. I have been blessed to be surrounded by dedicated public servants who every day strive to make South Carolina a safer place to live, work and raise a family,” he said.

When interviewed in 2011, Keel said he hoped to bring SLED back to its mission of helping sheriffs and police chiefs, especially in rural areas like Barnwell County where manpower and resources are fewer. “They should have an equal opportunity like big counties,” Keel said.

He’s the son of the late Jack and Mary Keel.



Adair Ford Boroughs

Adair Ford Boroughs was sworn in as United States Attorney for the District of South Carolina on July 26, 2022, following a nomination by President Joseph R. Biden and U.S. Senate confirmation.

She credits her upbringing in Williston with shaping her into the woman she is today.

“Small towns have a superpower, and it is our community. A community that cares about our children...I would put my teachers at Williston-Elko up against

any in the country. They provide such amazing guidance, comfort, challenges, and inspiration,” said Boroughs, who earned a law degree from Stanford University.

From growing up in a double-wide trailer and graduating as valedictorian of her high school class to getting a full ride to Furman University and later graduating from Stanford Law School, Boroughs said her life has been about beating the odds and helping others do the same. She’s done this through her time as a public school teacher, at the U.S. Department of Justice where she went after people who cheated on taxes, her work on tough cases such as the trial of Dylan Roof who shot and killed nine parishioners at a Charleston church, and launching and growing a non-profit organization that has put \$1.4 million into the pockets of ordinary South Carolinians.

Prior to her confirmation as U.S. Attorney, Boroughs was a partner at Boroughs Bryant, LLC where she handled complex litigation and provided strategic counsel to clients.

Now, as the state’s top federal prosecutor, Boroughs supervises dozens of assistant prosecutors and more than 80 support staffers. She’s only the second woman to serve as South Carolina’s U.S. attorney.

She is the daughter of Bill and Clara Ford. Her mother is a retired public school teacher and her father is a cabinet maker and former school board member.

Continued on page 17

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Brian Gaines

Brian Gaines was sworn in as South Carolina's Comptroller General on May 12, 2023.

The Barnwell native became the state's new chief accountant after the resignation of Richard Eckstrom following a \$3.5 billion reporting error. Gov. Henry McMaster appointed Gaines after the General Assembly ended their session without making an appointment.

"Mr. Gaines is highly respected by the leadership of the General Assembly, by state agency directors, and by me," said Gov. McMaster. "His expertise on the budgeting process and experience in state government will allow him to provide a fresh perspective to the Comptroller General's Office while at the same time allowing for a smooth transition."

Gaines has served in state government for over 17 years where he has held numerous leadership roles in finance at the Department of Employment and Workforce, the Budget and Control Board, and the Department of Administration. Prior to his appointment, Gaines was executive budget director where he led a team of over a dozen finance and budget analysts responsible for the development and oversight of the state budget, starting the governor's executive budget, and overseeing the annual accountability report process for state agencies.

As the state's top accountant and chief fiscal watchdog, the Comptroller General keeps the state's books and maintains accounting controls over state 115 agencies.

Gaines credits his upbringing in rural South Carolina with getting him to where he is today. This includes being involved in various activities, such as church groups, little league, and Boy Scouts, plus the values instilled by his parents and other

relatives.

"Being from the small town of Barnwell did a lot with my value system," he said of the values of honesty, faith, and transparency. "My family taught me that you are accountable for your actions. If you say you're going to do something, then you're obligated to do it."

He is the son of Oscar Gaines and Peggy Washington.

STATE CONTACTS

GOVERNOR
Henry McMaster
 (803) 734-2100, www.scgovernor.com

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
S.C. Rep. Lonnie Hosey (Dist. 91)
 (803) 734-2829, lonniehosey@schouse.gov
S.C. Rep Justin Bamberg (Dist. 90)
 (803) 734-3003, justinbamberg@schouse.gov

SENATE
S.C. Sen. C. Bradley Hutto (Dist. 40)
 (803) 534-5218, bradhutto@scsenate.gov

FEDERAL CONTACTS
U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham
 (803) 933-0112, www.lgraham.senate.gov
U.S. Senator Tim Scott
 (803) 771-6112, www.scott.senate.gov
Representative Joe Wilson (2nd District)
 (803) 939-0041, www.joewilson.house.gov

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Always smiling in Barnwell County



Students from Howard University in Washington, D.C. came to mentor students across the county in March 2023. The HU students worked closely with DIG Dreamers. The DIG (Dreams, Imagination, & Gift development) after-school program facilitated the college students' visit.

For 28 years, kids have come to hunt easter eggs at the Williston Town Park.



Second graders and their teachers brought figures of the past to the present at the Barnwell Primary School's Living History Museum.



Macedonia Elementary-Middle School students ate lunch with law enforcement officers this year part of an initiative started by the school's resource officer, Shawn Howze (not pictured).



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Northern journalists love new southern home

by Elijah de Castro

Being from New York state, people often assume I'm from the city. Although I do love the Big Apple, I grew up in Trumansburg, a small upstate town of 1,700 where Main Street was less than a mile long. That's why moving to Barnwell, a larger community than the one where I grew up, wasn't as big of an adjustment as people often think.

Yes, there are some major differences that I had to get used to. But what makes my hometown great is also present here: The rural attitude.

In front of the backdrop of radiant sunsets, warm weather and spanish moss, Barnwell has the characteristics that make rural life great. Barnwell is a community of farmers, teachers, nurses, children, immigrants, cooks, community developers, fishermen and the elderly. It's an easy place to call home.

No community is perfect, Trumansburg and Barnwell included, but a community's character is best defined by those who walk its streets. If you were to approach a random person on Main Street or on The Circle, I guarantee that they would treat you with a type of respect you can't get from citydwellers.

Our rural communities – whether in upstate New York or the Deep South – have been through so much over the past few decades. Yet, despite this, rural communities like Barnwell don't make victims of themselves; Rural means tough. The warmth and friendliness one finds in Barnwell is worth holding on to. In a world of narcissism and ego, the humility and slow pace of rural life is something special.



The People-Sentinel reporters Elijah de Castro and Alexandra Whitbeck.

by Alexandra Whitbeck

Until May 2022, my entire life had been in New York. From growing up in the upstate to attending college outside the city, I was accustomed to frigid winters and a fast-paced environment. A sense of urgency was even felt in Freehold, N.Y., the small hamlet in Greene County without a traffic light where I spent my childhood.

With the exception of cold air being swapped for sticky heat, everything turning green long before May, and the aforementioned pace of life, Barnwell County, S.C. and Greene County, N.Y. have a lot in common.

Trees shake during a storm in the rural north just like they do in the rural south, streets are quiet at night, chances are high you'll run into a former teacher at the grocery store, and everyone has their favorite gas station where they know the clerk by name.

These transferrable small town traits made the 15-hour adjustment much easier, leaving me only the generosity of southern hospitality and the wide range of insects to get used to.

Looking back on my almost two years living and working in Barnwell County, one thing that prominently stands out is the community's dedication to growth and the individuals determined to make it happen.

Although small in size, it is evident big things are happening here. Being a part of a community that emphasizes making change through collaboration and togetherness encourages me to do the same both professionally and personally.

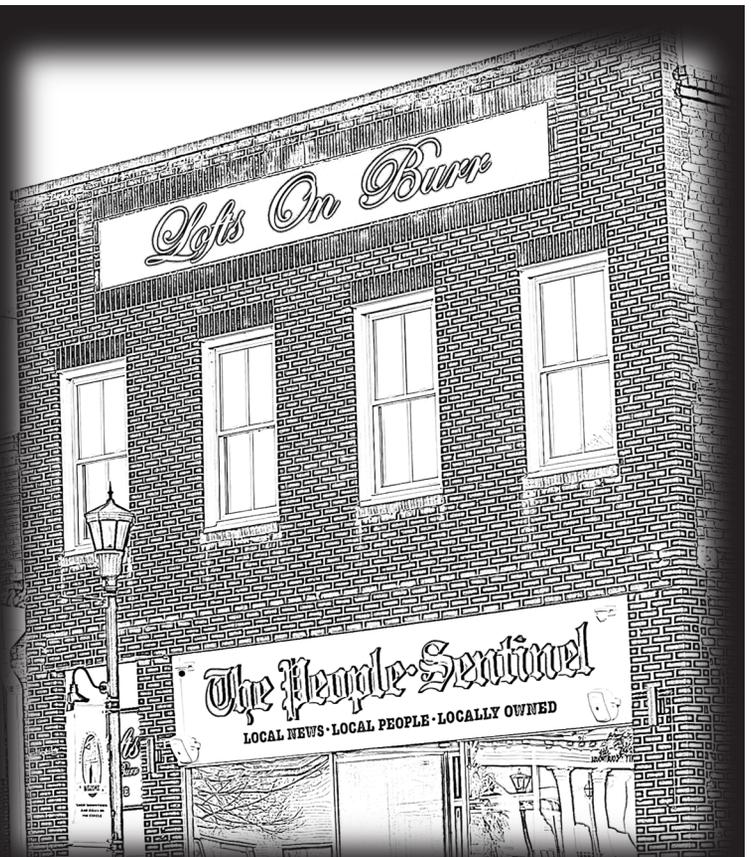
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Barnwell County's longest living legacy: Doreatha Gillis-Bishop

The Barnwell State Park community building was adorned in red and gold to celebrate Doreatha Gillis-Bishop's 109th birthday on December 20, 2023.

"I am on cloud nine. I couldn't be more happy," said her son Willie Bishop at the celebration.

A mother to many and a friend to all, Bishop has lived in Barnwell County her whole adult life. She was born in 1914 to Lucy Ellen Davis-Gillis and Daniel Alexander Gillis and grew up in Old Ellenton.

"We listen to her because her wisdom has given us strength. Her knowledge has given us the inspiration that we need. She has a special way of anointing every person she meets," said her friend, Vorise Peebles.

Having lived over a century of life, Bishop has witnessed countless historical events. She was born the year World War I began, and married amidst the Great Depression in 1936, three years before the start of World War II.

She was an adult by the time South Carolina was forced by the federal government to desegregate its schools, and was a child during a hostile time for race relations in the south.

She farmed alongside her siblings and parents, picking a variety of vegetables and tending to the family's livestock. They did not

have running water or indoor lighting.

"I admired the lady then, I still admire her now," said S.C. Representative Lonnie Hosey, a longtime friend of the Bishop family.

Many speakers at her birthday celebration spoke of her strength and resilience. In the face of adversity, Bishop always prioritized her family and faith.

"She has her strength and encouragement from day to day, she finds no time to complain," said her daughter, Maryann Frank.

Bishop and her husband Blake Bishop Sr. had seven children who all graduated from Butler High School. Bishop's son, Willie, remembers he and his six siblings always being treated and loved equally by their parents.

She is the oldest member of the local Pride of Barnwell, Order of Eastern Star, Chapter #77 (Prince Hall affiliation) having been involved over 45 years. Bishop is also the oldest member of Great Cypress Missionary Baptist Church, where she is the mother of the church.

Bishop was presented with a certificate of recognition from the St. John Benevolent Society in Barnwell where she is the oldest member.

Her birthday ceremony was led by Reverends Benjamin and Lorraine Ryans. Annie Way led a tribute to Bishop, Alicia Gaines sang a solo, and R&R Singers gave a soulful performance.



Doreatha Gillis-Bishop celebrated her 109th birthday at the Barnwell State Park surrounded by friends and family.

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Centers offer seniors fun & fellowship



Lizzie Wright (left) celebrates the 109th birthday of her friend shortly after her own century celebration.



In October, local schools often bring their students to trick-or-treat at the county's nursing home.



Students occasionally volunteer to serve meals at the senior centers.

Barnwell County thrives through the hardwork and perseverance of its 'seasoned citizens.' Anyone over the age of 60 can spend time at one of the two senior centers in the county.

The Gail Reyes Senior Center in Barnwell and the Golden Retreat Activity Center in Blackville are both operated by the county's council on aging, Generations Unlimited (GU). Ethel Faust took the position of GU director in late 2022 and began using the term 'seasoned citizens' to describe the popula-

tion of seniors these centers are designed to serve.

"Seniors today are not the seniors of yesterday," said Faust at a Blackville Town Council meeting of how she aims to resculpt the opportunities seniors are given to engage with the community.

In March 2023, the Gail Reyes Senior Center celebrated 23 years of serving the community and in January 2023 the Golden Retreat Activity Center celebrated its eighth anniversary.

Seniors can partake in social and recreational programs, arts and crafts, musical activities, wellness seminars, nutrition training, health screenings, and fitness classes focused on things like arthritis, tai chi, or balance.

Low Country Health Care also offers weekly dance classes in Barnwell and Allendale counties. These groups have become staples for many seniors looking to start their morning with some dance moves and be part of an energized group.



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 Facebook: Gail Reyes Senior Center
 Hours of operation: Mon.-Fri. 8:30am-1pm

Golden Retreat Activity Center
 59 Callahan Drive, Blackville • (803) 219-7056
 Facebook: Blackville Senior Center
 Hours of operation: Mon.-Fri. 8:30am-12:30pm

Generations Unlimited
 Executive Director: Ethel Faust
 10913 Ellenton St., Barnwell • (803) 541-1240
<https://generationsunlimited.org>

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RECYCLING CENTERS

Barnwell County operates nine recycling centers on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from 7AM-7PM.

- Longbranch- 1320 Orchard Rd., Barnwell
6640 Hwy. 3, Barnwell
- Snelling -1359 Seven Pines Rd., Barnwell
- Healing Springs -3287 Healing Springs Rd., Blackville
- Landfill Center -155 Landfill Rd., Barnwell
(also accepts farmer oil up to 55 gallons and oil/gas mixture)
- Reedy Branch Center -870 Reedy Branch Rd., Hilda
- Rosemary Center-963 Thorn Dr., Williston
- Fire Tower Center -7633 Hwy 64E, Barnwell
- Sourbranch Center - 8360 Springfield Hwy., Williston

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Food resources across the county

A handful of people and organizations have worked tirelessly to ensure healthy food is accessible in Barnwell County.



The Well opened their doors in January 2023, and has served as a one-stop-shop for community collaboration.

THE WELL COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE & PANTRY/FOOD-SHARE BAMBERG: The Well's goal is "building our community one person at a time." In addition to the variety of educational, social, and spiritual services, their partnership with FoodShare Bamberg

brings boxes of fresh produce to residents weekly.

1644 Jackson Street, Barnwell, S.C. 29812
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Monday-Thursday 11a.m. - 3 p.m.

BLESSING BOXES: Barnwell County's blessing boxes inherently have a 'take what you need, leave what you can' relationship with the community. Located in Barnwell, Williston, Elko, Kline, and Blackville, these stands serve those dealing with food scarcity and who may struggle to access necessities.

Williston: Located in front of the Williston Police Department on Main Street.

Elko: Located in front of the Elko Fire Department on Highway 78.

Blackville: Located in front of the Blackville Public Library on Solomon Blatt Avenue.

Barnwell: Located on the property of First Baptist Church of Barnwell on Allen Street in Barnwell.

Kline: Located in front of the Kline Town Hall on Kings Street.

BARNWELL COMMUNITY SOUP KITCHEN: The Barnwell Community Soup Kitchen serves anyone in need of a meal. It is run entirely by volunteers. In 2021, they served over 8,000 people and have continued to do so in the following years. The community soup kitchen also works with local businesses to recycle their used aluminum cans; the profit from this partnership goes back into feeding the community.

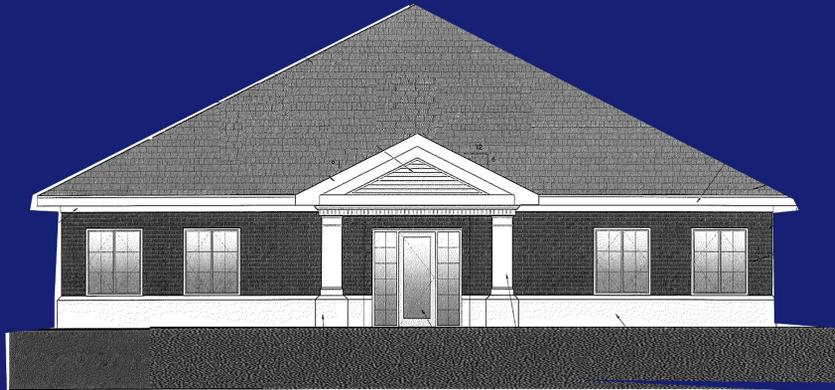
Location:

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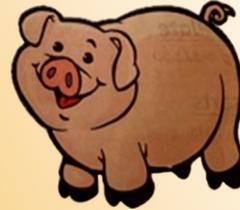
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Emergency Services



Law enforcement officers join together annually for the Barnwell County Sheriff's Office Community Worship Service.



Barnwell County Sheriff's Office School Resource Officer Richard Anderson and his son Mason Luke Anderson sit together at an annual event focused on joining youth and law enforcement.



Local fire chiefs and county department heads were recognized for their efforts in extinguishing a landfill fire.

In an emergency, always dial 911.

Barnwell County Emergency Management

Director: Roger Riley - (803) 541-1001

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COUNTY FIRE SERVICE

Barnwell County Fire Coordinator:

Wesley Gatlin

www.barnwellcounty.sc.gov



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(To report a fire, call 911)

- Barnwell City (District 1) - Chief Phillip Delk
- Blackville (District 2) - Chief Earthel Walker
- Elko (District 3) - Chief Michael Schumpert
- Hilda (District 4) - Chief Thomas Sharpe
- Kline (District 5) - Chief Patrick Felder
- Snelling (District 6) - Chief Neal Morris
- Williston (District 7) - Chief John Melton
- Red Oak (District 8) - Chief Bobby Lingard
- Friendship (District 9) - Chief Wayne Ray
- Rural (District 11) - Chief Jessie Elmore
- Long Branch (District 12) - Chief Mark Cato

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- **Barnwell Police Department**
Chief Michael Butts
105 Burr Street, Barnwell, S.C. 29812
(803) 259-1838
- **Blackville Police Department**
Chief Ray Crawford
5997 Lartigue Street, Blackville, S.C. 29817
(803) 284-2333
- **Williston Police Department**
Chief James "Jeep" Gainey
12710 Main Street, Williston, S.C. 29853
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Dedicated professionals keep community healthy

Healthcare is an important component of any community. There are a variety of medical offices in Barnwell County, including physicians, optometrists, physical therapists, pediatricians, and dentists. The Allendale County Hospital and Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center are 15 to 20 minutes from most Barnwell County residents.

"We are consistently hiring, growing and doing our best to add more providers and services when the community needs them," said Morgan Reuis, marketing coordinator and executive assistant for Low Country Health Care System, which owns multiple health care facilities.

To grow the next generation of highly-trained health care professionals, the University of South Carolina Salkehatchie has expanded learning opportunities for nurse practitioner, physician assistant, pharmacy and nursing students who are committed to underserved, rural communities. Barnwell County Career Center health science students can earn certifications as a certified nursing assistant, certified pharmacy technician, and patient care technician/assistant by the time they graduate high school.

In the event of an emergency, please dial 911.

Health care worker spotlight

CHRISTOPHER SHANE CARROLL



Shane Carroll (left), a family nurse practitioner at Barnwell Pediatrics, and a patient wore matching Ninja Turtle costumes for Halloween one year.

For the past eight years, Barnwell native Shane Carroll has been a family nurse practitioner at Barnwell Pediatrics, part of Low Country Health Care System (LCHCS).

"I assess, diagnose, and treat pediatric patients from birth to the age of 21," he said.

After earning associate degrees from the University of Salkehatchie and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of South Carolina, he graduated with honors from South University in Columbia in 2016 with a Master of Science in Nursing. He's a certified family nurse practitioner through the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners.

He resides in Barnwell with his wife, Chelsea, and 6-year-old daughter, Blakely. Outside of work, he enjoys running, hunting, fishing, and golfing.

What led you into health care?

"I had the calling to enter into the health care field many years ago when my grandmother was hospitalized and I was able to witness the care she was provided. In 2013, I began working as a nurse tech at Barnwell Pediatrics, and loved to work with children. It became clear to me what kind of population I intended to serve."

What do you love about your job?

"It's the ability to give back to the community I grew up in that I love most about my job. I'm very fond of being able to treat and help patients heal. Plus, it's a fun job to do."

How fortunate is our community in terms of health care?

"I believe our offices provide excellent care and are a major asset to our community. While we don't have direct access to larger hospital systems like in big cities, we are very fortunate to be able to provide many of the services we need in our small town. We are capable of providing a wide range of laboratory tests, evaluations, and diagnostic imaging. We have many skilled providers at Barnwell Pediatrics and across all (LCHCS) sites who have experience in all sorts of settings and many years of experience. I'm fortunate to be able to work with them and learn from them."

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Always something fun to do



Fuller Park is home to many athletic opportunities, such as a walking trail, story walk, splash pad, playground, basketball court, disc golf course, and other outdoor entertainment.



The annual Sundial Festival in downtown Barnwell draws a crowd for vendor booths, a concert series, food trucks, a car show, beauty pageant, and more.



Kilkenny Park, nestled on the corner of Wellington Road and Jackson Street, is being considered as a prospective spot for upcoming recreational opportunities such as kayaking.



Each year, Literacy and Arts in the Park brings community organizations together to hold a creative festival for youth in the Town of Blackville.

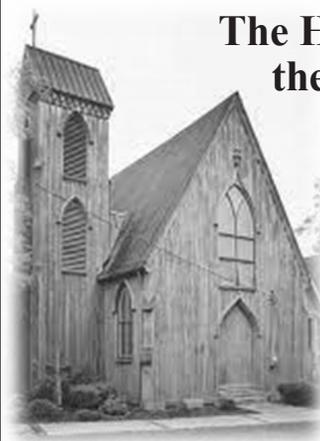
See more fun things to see and do on page 33



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 Monday-Thursday 10:00-3:00



The basketball court on the Fuller Park hill is a popular spot for players to coordinate games, practice, and have fun.



Numerous parades are held across the county celebrating or honoring holidays and events.



The Barnwell County Animal Shelter often holds adoption events and annual pictures with Santa.



The Barnwell Farmer's Market provides fresh produce and artisan crafts multiple times a month.



Barnwell's iconic and unique Sundial located on the Circle in downtown Barnwell.



Smiles are abundant at the annual Taste of Blackville food festival each March.

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Arts & Entertainment

From artisans and creators to musicians and actors, Barnwell County is full of creative people. Circle Theatre in Barnwell has been a staple for local entertainment since 1974. The all-volunteer theatre's 2023-2024 season included the magical Christmas story "All Through the Night," the comical female-led "Savannah Sipping Society," and murder-mystery "Death & Taxes." The theatre also hosts an annual youth summer camp. Circle Theatre always welcomes new talent and volunteers.

The Barnwell County Consolidated School District has an active drama club for students at Williston-Elko and Blackville-Hilda schools. This program is just one example of how local schools promote the arts to students.

The summertime Barnwell Farmer's Market, the Little Red Barn gallery, and festivals like the Blackville Music & Arts Festival are some of the places where the work of local artists and creators can be viewed and purchased.



Renee Owens, Dawn Snead, Virginia Nettles and Caroline Randall perform in the comedic production of "The Savannah Sipping Society" in February 2024 at Circle Theatre in Barnwell.



Barnwell County Consolidated School District theatre students Benjamin Adams (left) and Kort Woodley (right) perform a scene in the December 2023 production of "Hey Diddle Diddle: The Adventures of the Dish & the Spoon" at the Blackville-Hilda High School auditorium.

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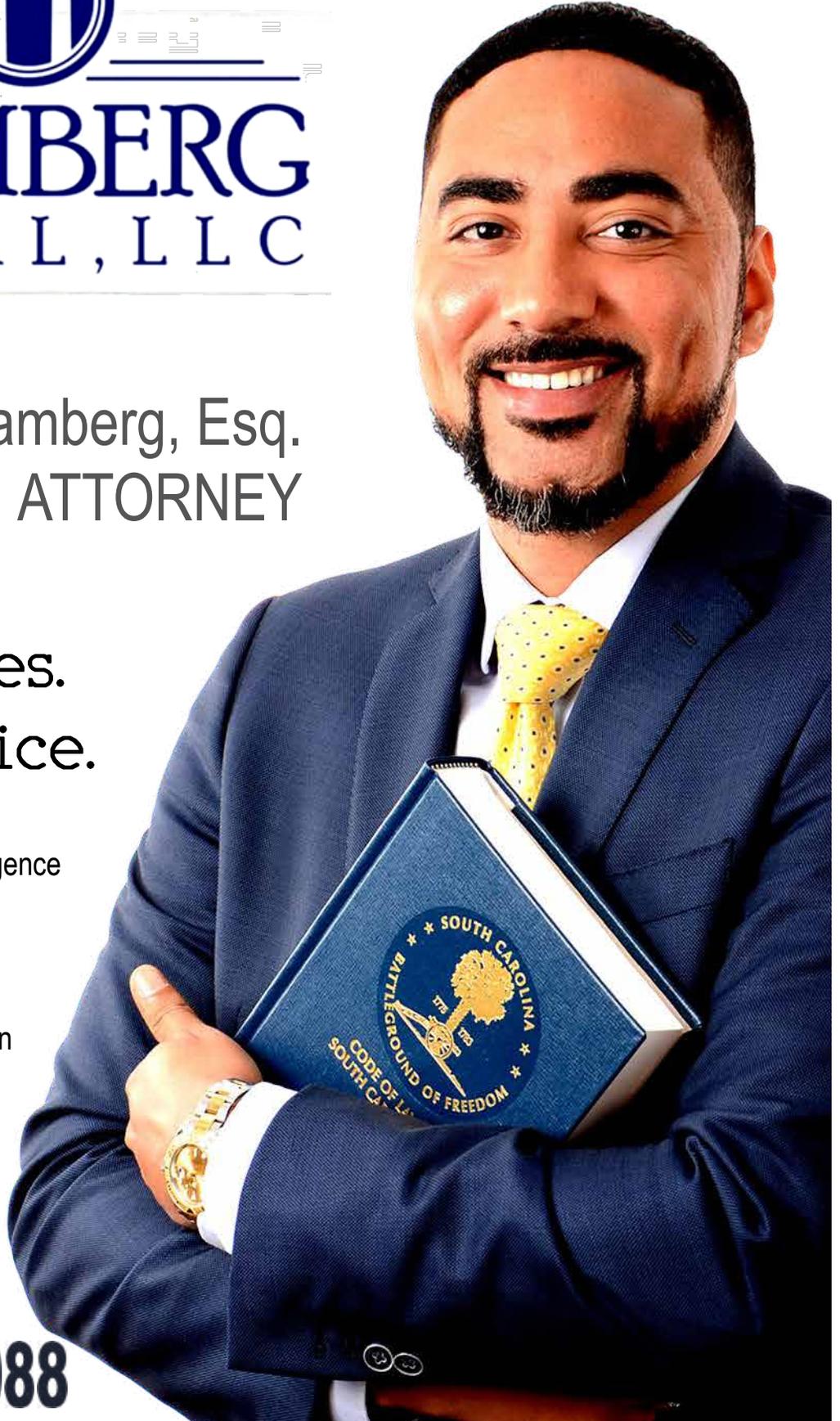
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Libraries offer more than books

A step inside one of Barnwell County's three public libraries is a step toward complete immersion in lands of fairy tales, inquiries into scientific methods, tips for learning new cooking techniques, falling captive to a new TV show, or discovering what your niche may be.

Since 2020, three new librarians have started their careers at each of the branches; Amanda Daff in Barnwell, Lil Stoltzfus in Blackville, and Stayce Inabinet Kleinholz in Williston.

Each has brought innovative ideas and captivating events to their branch through programs coordinated by the Aiken-Bamberg-Barnwell-Edgefield (ABBE) Regional Library System which operates the branches.

"The public libraries in Barnwell County offer safe spaces for all community members to gather and pursue lifelong learning as they choose, whether it's checking out a good book or DVD, researching their family history online, and attending a book club meeting with friends," said Mary Jo Dawson, Director, Aiken-Bamberg-Barnwell-Edgefield Regional Library System.

During the summer months, the summer reading program is offered to prevent the 'summer slide' in student academic retainment. It not only offers weekly activities and events, but equips parents with a correlated activity to do at home as well.

Storywalks are paths of literature found across the county and rotate the books they highlight. In Blackville, the storywalk can be found outside the library near the playground. In Barnwell, following the trail at Fuller Park will tell an intriguing tale. Williston's is along the Rail Trail and a new one was added to the Snelling Town Park in 2023.

Storytime and crafts are offered at all the branches. During the COVID pandemic, the Barnwell Branch went digital with their storytimes and began utilizing Facebook Live to share stories. Although the pandemic has lessened, the branch has continued to reach out to the community online.

At the Barnwell Branch Library's 2022 Ocean of Possibilities summer program,



Jennie Beck with the ABBE Regional Library System brought puppets and stories to the Blackville Library in July 2023 as part of the summer reading program.

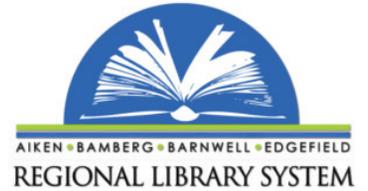
children were face to face with a bunch of South Carolina's native creepy-crawlies in an ecology lab with the Savannah River Site. On special occasions, Porkchop Productions based in Aiken performs an original play such as 'The Fisherman and His Needy Greedy Wife.'

At Williston, Kleinholz has brought unique crafts for both children and adults such as a bird themed story time where children listened to a story and created pine cone treats to keep the birds full in the winter.

The Blackville Branch recently underwent some renovations and now has a fresh look with a brand new porch. What is now the library was once the Blackville Train Depot which was built in the early 1900s and then renovated in 2005. Stoltzfus was a driving force behind these renovations and has created a hub at the library for various events like the Blackville Music and Arts Festival.

The Friends of the Libraries of Barnwell County is a non-profit group that raises money in addition to that received from local government for the three Barnwell County branches to keep bringing these sort of events to life.

Visit www.abbe-lib.org/ for more information.



LOCAL BRANCHES

Barnwell Branch

Manager: Amanda Daff

40 Burr St., Barnwell

(803) 259-3612

- Mon.-Wed., Fri.: 10am- 6pm
- Thurs.: 10am-7pm
- Sat.: 10am-2pm
- Sun.: closed

Blackville Branch

Manager: Lil Stoltzfus

19420 Solomon Blatt Ave.,
Blackville

(803) 284-2295

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday:
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.,
2 to 6 p.m.
- Wednesday: 2 to 6 p.m.
- Friday-Sunday: closed

Williston Branch

Manager:

Stayce Inabinet Kleinholz

5121 Springfield Rd., Williston
(803) 266-3027

- Mon.-Thurs.: 10am-6pm
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Faith, family & fellowship

Barnwell County is home to many churches, including the oldest original Catholic church in South Carolina.

Saint Andrew's Catholic Church, located on Madison Street in Barnwell, was built in 1831. It is the oldest religious structure in Barnwell as well as the oldest original Catholic church in the state.

The first Priest to care for the Catholics of Barnwell came from Augusta, Ga. In 1847, Father John O'Connell began a monthly Mass to the parish.

While much of Barnwell was burned by Sherman's army in the Civil War, Saint Andrew's was spared.

The church began to grow in the early 1950s with the beginning of the Savannah River Site, and some changes to the building were made. A social hall was added and stained glass windows were installed. These stained glass windows were originally in the old Ursuline convent of St. Peter's Catholic Church in Columbia.

The church building is surrounded by a cemetery in which many names rich in South Carolina history can be found, such as Adrich, Bellinger, Maher and Simms. In more recent times a home for the priest was built along with the purchase of another house and property adjoining the churchyard.

Saint Andrew's is just one of more than 30 churches in and near the City of Barnwell. There are more than 15 churches around the



Saint Andrew's Catholic Church, Barnwell.

Photo Courtesy Melissa Roberts Photography

towns of Blackville and Williston, and at least one church near each of the smaller towns of Elko, Hilda, Kline and Snelling.

The vast majority of the churches are Christian including Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Baptist, Episcopal, Catholic, Mennonite, as well as services at non-denominational congregations.

Church events are listed weekly in *The People-Sentinel*.

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Adopt a Furry Friend

Rural regions in the south are facing an uphill battle to control the overpopulation of dogs and cats. Many residents and organizations work to make a difference in the lives of the many abandoned, unwanted, or forgotten animals.

The Barnwell County Animal Shelter (BCAS) is a county-owned facility sitting on city-owned land. The shelter is often overcrowded due to a constant influx of animals. Employees work tirelessly to ensure each animal is cared for and educate the community about the importance of spay and neuter.

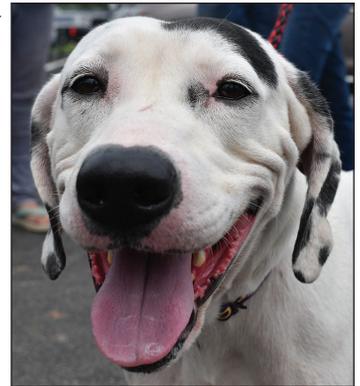
BCAS has numerous initiatives and partnerships with local rescues, foster families, and adoption centers to find the unwanted and forgotten animals in their care a loving home.

The Animal Advocates, a Barnwell County based animal rescue, operates the no-kill Friends for Life Center (F4LC) as well as the Pick of the Litter Shoppe located on The Circle in Barnwell – a consignment shop where all the proceeds go toward operation and care of the animals residing at the F4LC.

TNVR Program, or trap-neuter-vaccinate-return, is a humane, non-lethal way to control the populations of community or feral cats funded through efforts of the Barnwell County Animal Shelter Foundation. This program also lessens the obligation of law enforcement to handle feral cat complaints as it is now the responsibility of TNVR volunteers and keeps feral cats out of the county shelter- which ultimately saves taxpayer's dollars.

While adoption is the sweeter story, spaying and neutering pets is the only solution to truly reducing the population of unwanted animals.

This has been the message of the Barnwell County Animal Shelter (BCAS), the Barnwell County Animal Shelter Foundation, The Animal Advocates, the TNVR Committee, and local veterinarians for many years. All groups and individuals work together to bring a safer, happier, and healthier life to animals in need through low-cost/no-cost programs, vaccine clinics, and more.



Barnwell County Animal Shelter

Director: Marlena Ray

55 Diamond Rd., Barnwell, S.C. 29812

(803) 259-1656

Hours of operation: Mon.-Thurs., 11am- 4pm

Facebook: 'Barnwell County Animal Shelter'

The Animal Advocates

Director: Vikki Scott

F4LC: 10975 Marlboro Ave., Barnwell, S.C. 29812

POTL: 28 McDonough St., Barnwell, S.C. 29812

(803) 259-5483

Hours of operation: Mon.-Fri., 10am-6pm, Sat. 10am-3pm

Facebook: 'Animal Advocates of Barnwell County'

<https://www.theanimaladvocates.org/>

“TOGETHER, we CAN make a difference”

The Animal Advocates believe in going above and beyond to give every dog and cat the care and kindness they deserve. Until a forever home is found, we provide a haven and second chance for homeless, abandoned, abused and neglected canines and felines at our Friends for Life Center.

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A beautiful place to live



Barnwell State Park is a popular wedding venue. The park's lake provides a perfect natural backdrop for elegant wedding photos of the happy couple, including *The People-Sentinel's* publisher Jonathan Vickery and his wife Dawn.

Whether you're a hunter, fisherman, athletic enthusiast, boater or just a nature buff, Barnwell County may be just the place for you.

The county features prevalent rural settings brimming with deer, ducks, turkeys and many other species, each with their own hunting season.

Fishing is as close as a short walk for most residents. Fishermen have many choices of local waters from which to wet their hooks.

From the popular Lake Edgar Brown and many small creeks, to the expansive and beautiful Savannah River, those who love the water will find many options in Barnwell County.

Barnwell State Park is a favorite among locals and guests alike. Situated off Highway 3 near Blackville, the park offers nature trails, picnic areas, swimming area, fishing spots, boat rentals, a playground, and cabins and campgrounds to rent. The community building is a popular spot for parties, weddings and other events. The park is open from 9 a.m. to dark daily.

A few miles away from the park on Springs Court in Blackville is



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God's Acre Healing Springs. It's a great spot to enjoy a cold, refreshing glass of water. Native Americans who lived near this site believed the waters were sacred and had healing properties. People flock to the springs from all over the state to fill up jugs and bottles with the water.

PUBLIC PARKS

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- Collins Park ▪ Darnell Park
- Lemon Park ▪ Fuller Park
- Jack Phillips Park ▪ Lake Edgar Brown
- Veterans Memorial Park ▪ Kilkenny Park

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BLACKVILLE

- Barnwell State Park

For reservations, call (803) 284-2212.

- Healing Springs

HILDA

- Park centrally located between Hilda's 1-mile walking track, Gopher Tortoise enclosure, and Hilda basketball court. Picnic shelter can be reserved for events by calling Hilda Town Hall (803) 793-3818.

SNELLING

- Snelling Town Park

For reservations, call 259-1464.

WILLISTON

- Williston Town Park

For reservations, Town Hall at (803) 266-7015.

- Library Park ▪ Academy Street Park

Recreational opportunities expand

Recreation is not just being physically active but an activity done for enjoyment, and Barnwell County is full of plenty of things to enjoy. The county has been growing its recreational opportunities in recent years with some exciting additions building toward the ultimate goal of a healthier community.

A splash pad was installed at the City of Barnwell's Fuller Park in August 2021 and quickly became a summer favorite for children and parents looking to escape the heat. Fuller Park is also home to a walking path, a basketball court, a playground, a storywalk, and has fishing access to Turkey Creek.

Summer 2022 brought an aquatic center to the Barnwell County Family YMCA through a joint public-private partnership that fund-raised for the \$1 million project. It includes a large pool with a slide, a kiddie pool with water features, and a large deck area for picnics and shade.

If water activities are not your thing, Williston is home to a professionally sanctioned 18-hole disc golf course located at the Williston Town Park. The Williston Disc Golf Club frequently holds tournaments that draw players from across the region.

The fastest-growing sport in America has already taken hold in Barnwell County. Pickleball courts have been constructed at the YMCA and in Blackville for players across the county.

Hilary Hindman started as the county's recreation director in October 2023 and has been hard at work changing the culture of how the community views and participates in recreational activities.

"I really wanted to focus on loving Barnwell County again," she said.

Hindman is embarking on numerous projects that emphasize the county's natural resources and beauty, such as bringing kayak rentals to be used on Lake Edgar Brown and popularizing the county's 13 walking trails.



The splash pad at Fuller Park is a popular summer attraction for families looking to beat the heat.

Most towns in the county are home to a playground or park. In Blackville, the Crystal Jenkins Memorial walking trail is stocked with outdoor exercise equipment and Hilda's park features a walking trail in addition to a decommissioned helicopter and fire truck in their playground.

Walking groups have popped up to take advantage of these tracks

Continued on the next page

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Disc golf has become a prominent recreational activity in the county with courses in Barnwell and Williston. The Williston Disc Golf Club regularly holds tournaments drawing players from all over the south.



Local dance groups showcase their talents at many community parades and events.

and trails in both Barnwell and Blackville and further foster community togetherness.

The Barnwell State Park offers hiking trails, fishing, boating, and much more to be explored. The state park also regularly holds events such as kayaking with a ranger.

Lake Edgar Brown in the City of Barnwell has become a focal point for recreational collaboration, with both the city and the county looking for ways to increase resident use and tourism at the lake through prospective kayak and amphitheater projects.

Hindman, alongside other directors and committees, is unifying recreation efforts and seeking out new opportunities across the county to remind residents why they love to live here.



Pickleball is growing rapidly in Barnwell County with eight courts constructed in the last year.

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Sports options abound for all ages



Top left: Sportsmanship is important to Barnwell County athletes. A Barnwell High JV football player is shown helping an opponent. Top middle: A Jefferson Davis Academy player kisses the trophy after the Raiders won the SCISA 8-Man Football State Championship in November 2023.

Top right: Two players on the B&B Ford recreation baseball team shake hands.

Middle left: Recreation league sports through local towns are very popular with youth. Pictured is a softball player from AgSouth's 2024 team preparing to bat.

Middle right: Barnwell Warhorse cheerleaders Journee Ford and Cayson Austin leap into the air during a 2023 football game.

Bottom left: Basketball players from in-county rivals Williston-Elko and Blackville-Hilda high schools compete for the ball during a 2024 season game.



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School district consolidation will bring new opportunities

Though Barnwell County's public school districts are consolidating in 2024, opportunities are expanding.

Effective July 1, Barnwell School District 45, the Barnwell County Consolidated School District, and the Barnwell County Career Center will become the Barnwell County School District (BCSD).

"I am excited about the wonderful things happening throughout the schools across our county and coming together as one district will be a wonderful occasion to embrace the opportunities before us, to celebrate our strengths and accomplishments, as well as identify challenges and create action steps towards addressing them. I look forward to continuing the work our districts strive to do every day in providing our students and families with what they need to be successful," said District 45 Superintendent Dr. Crissie Stapleton, who will lead the new BCSD.

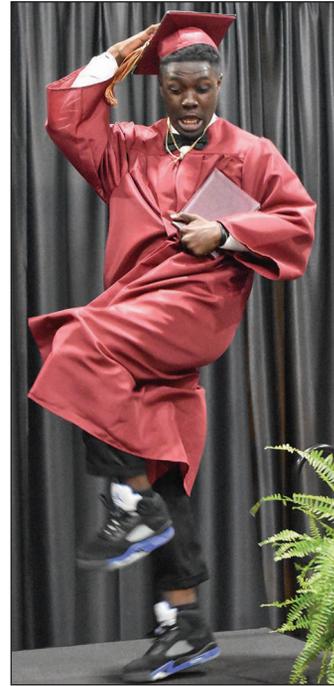
She is excited to work with all stakeholders to create a unified team and to provide the best opportunities for students.

"When we come together with a shared passion and commitment for our county's children, anything is possible! It is not 'what' we do, but 'why' we do it, and I know we see our 'why' in the face of each child whose life we touch," said Stapleton.

The top priority is to ensure every student - regardless of zip code - has access to a high-quality education.

"It is our priority to develop a foundation for lifelong learning built upon integrity, perseverance, fairness, respect, and pride. We currently have teams who are analyzing and addressing resource allocation by ensuring equal access to funding, technology, and educational materials," said Stapleton.

The BCSD is evaluating the programs and opportunities currently in place for students across all of the county's schools while seeking opportunities to expand.



Left: A 2023 Blackville-Hilda High School graduate dances across the stage after receiving his diploma. Right: The annual Dreams Imagination & Gifts (DIG) STEM festival brings out countless opportunities for learning each summer.

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The advertisement features a blue background with a white diamond-shaped logo at the top left. Below the logo, the text "DENMARK TECHNICAL COLLEGE" is written in white. The main headline "FAST TRACK YOUR FUTURE" is in large, bold, yellow and white letters. Below this, there are three small images: a group of students in a classroom, a student in a graduation cap, and a student in a graduation cap. At the bottom, the text "AS LITTLE AS \$0 OUT OF POCKET" is written in white, and "DENMARKTECH.EDU" is written in large, bold, white letters.

"Over the next several months, we will continue to work together across our county to collaborate, plan, and combine resources in order to provide better educational opportunities for our students throughout Barnwell County. No one anticipates it being an easy task, but the rewards will be great in the outcome. I have said many times that education is a work of the heart, and I truly believe that everyone who sees education as his or her calling believes this to be true. We must believe in the future, believe in the process, and believe in each other as we move forward," said Stapleton.

The previous consolidation of the former Blackville and Williston districts a couple of years ago led to many new opportunities for students, including theatre class and wrestling. For the 2024-25 school year, the BCSD is adding two pathways for high school students at the career center by offering barbering and early childhood programs. These will join the 12 other programs already offered at the career center, which is shared by the three public high schools.

"We have many dedicated and talented employees who have been and will be instrumental in this endeavor. I look forward to working alongside each of them to ensure success. We have strong communities throughout our county who wholeheartedly support our schools. As we face this unique opportunity of consolidating our school systems, not only will we rely on the support of our communities, but we will also work towards forming stronger partnerships throughout Barnwell County," said Stapleton.

Private Schools

Parents looking for an alternative to public schools have several private schools to choose from, as well as the homeschooling option. Jefferson Davis Academy, located in Blackville, is the largest private school in the county. There are also several other private schools run by churches.

Adult Education

Bamberg/Barnwell Adult Education serves hundreds of students in Barnwell and Bamberg counties through a variety of courses and programs, including GED preparation, high school diploma, adult

Continued on page 44

NEW OPPORTUNITIES: *Continued*

reading/writing/math, WorkKeys preparation and testing, and much more.

Their ultimate goal is to connect students to post-secondary education/training and/or employment.

Free transportation and childcare vouchers are available.

Higher Education

When students earn their high school diploma, they don't have to go very far to further their education and gain the skills needed for a career. Denmark Technical College has a facility in Barnwell, though several colleges, universities and technical colleges are within an hour of Barnwell County, including the University of South Carolina's Salkehatchie campus in Allendale.



Educators are recognized by each district at the end of the year for their dedication to their students and profession.



The Original Six Foundation held a book drive for students, who were excited to take home their own mini-library.



Blackville-Hilda's graduates are met with smiling family members as they exit the auditorium and head into their futures.



Students across Barnwell County are all smiles.



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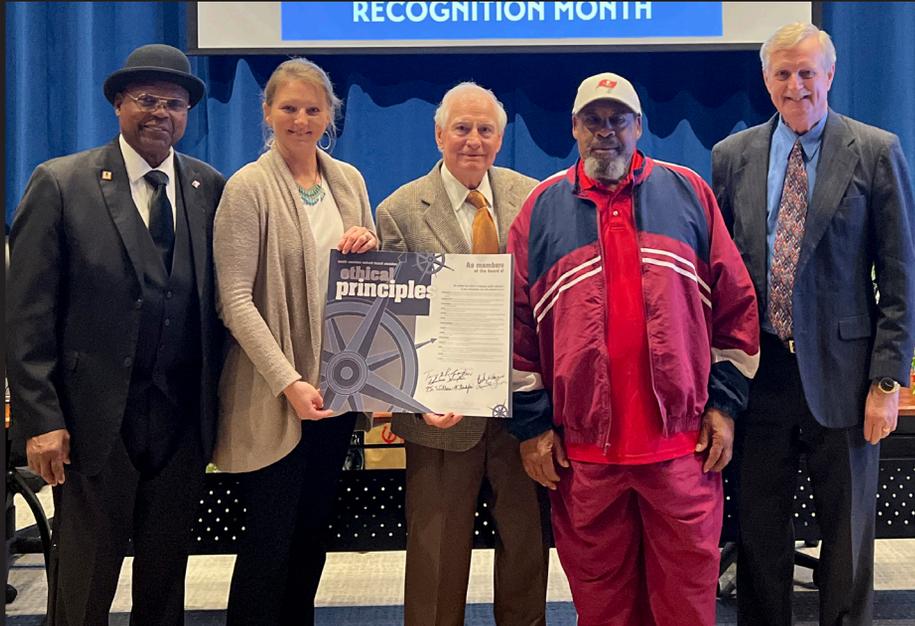
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 Dr. Andy Sandifer
 SGM Abraham Sexton

Superintendent-Elect
 Dr. Crystal F. Stapleton
 770 Hagood Avenue, Barnwell, SC 29812
 Phone: 803-541-1300
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 Phone: 803-541-1300
 Fax: 803-541-1348

Barnwell High School
 474 Jackson Street
 Barnwell, SC 29812
 Principal: Mr. Franklin McCormack



Guinyard-Butler Middle School
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 Principal: Ms. Henrietta Williams



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Businesses of all sizes propel economy

Businesses of all sizes help propel the Barnwell County economy.

The Barnwell County Economic Development Commission (EDC) and Southern Carolina Alliance, a seven-county regional economic development organization, work together to attract new industries and spur growth in existing ones. This partnership has led to millions of dollars in investment and hundreds of jobs in recent years.

“The state of economic development in this county is strong, as strong as I’ve ever seen it,” said Tommy Boyleston, executive director of the Barnwell County EDC.

In addition to big industries, the community’s small businesses provide many jobs, in addition to investment and valuable services and products.

The Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber of Commerce & Foundation works to “build a thriving economic ecosystem” by helping businesses of all sizes, said CEO/president Bob Snead. Their Palmetto Innovation Center in downtown Barnwell offers resources, such as video/audio equipment and a variety of printers, along with training to businesses.

The innovation center’s Propel Business Lab helps entrepreneurs launch new businesses, from creating a business plan and developing a budget to marketing and legal paperwork.

“We work with them daily to support and keep them moving forward,” said Snead.

The 12-week course ends with a pitch competition where the entrepreneurs present their business proposals before a panel of judges. Prizes of \$10,000 are awarded to the winners - one from Allendale County and one from Barnwell County.

“Their dedication, creativity, and hard work really shone through in their pitches, and we couldn’t be prouder to continue to support their work in helping our region thrive,” said Snead of the latest winners.



The April 2024 graduating class of the Propel Business Lab included 13 entrepreneurs from Barnwell and Allendale counties. They are pictured at the pitch competition where three of them won cash prizes to kickstart their businesses.

Since the program started in 2023, 60 small businesses have graduated and more than \$60,000 in prize money has been awarded. Kinard’s Kitchen, a new catering business owned by Felicia Kinard and Tonja Alexander, is one of those winners.

“It’s helping people like us to believe in ourselves. It lets us know that we can do it and live right here in Barnwell County and not have to move away to Columbia or Greenville. Right here in our small community we have big things happening,” said Kinard, who has seen her business grow.

Regardless of any prize or program, every business needs the support of customers in the community.

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 - ♦ **Supervised Living** provides support for independent living, such as access to the community, pay bills, shop for groceries, access medical care, and other personal assistance as needed.
 - ♦ **Job Coach** provides assistance to obtain and sustain employment. This service enables people to earn wages and opportunities to interact with non-disabled workers. Employment services include job coaching, work enclaves, and mobile work crew opportunities.
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 - ♦ **Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF) Models** are residences for individuals needing maximum support for their high levels of need. 24-hour care, supervision, training, recreation and other activities are provided in this structured environment.

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“Barnwelling” is our community’s best feature

Contributed by Jonathan Vickery/ Owner & Publisher of The People-Sentinel

Time after time, Barnwell County has come together to help those in need.

There’s now a word for this act. It’s called “BARNWELLING”. You won’t find it in the dictionary, but it should be. I’ll even provide *Merriam-Webster* with a ready-to-print dictionary entry for its next edition.

BARNWELLING (verb) - *The act of a community coming together during a time of need without being asked. Especially true in small towns like Barnwell, South Carolina.*

If that’s not clear enough, let me use it in a sentence: “The Barnwell community was busy Barnwelling after the August 2023 fire at Hagood Avenue Baptist Church by making sure firefighters and the congregation had the supplies and support they needed.”

Experiencing a fire - or any type of disaster - is a tragedy. That was evident after lightning struck Hagood Avenue Baptist Church, causing a devastating fire that has heavily damaged or possibly destroyed the building.

Though this was a tough loss for the congregation, especially those watching the scene unfold from the sidelines, our amazing community immediately stepped into action by:

- Dropping off coolers, bottled water, Gatorade, food, and tents for the exhausted firefighters and devastated church members.
- Offering space for the congregation to meet temporarily.
- Stopping to hug and pray with church leaders and members.
- Offering monetary donations.

• Let’s not forget the prayers, calls, texts, messages, and well wishes. This fire is just the latest example of Barnwell “Barnwelling.”

Remember how we came together to help one another after the 2014 ice storm, including neighbors helping neighbors and strangers helping strangers? There have also been several hurricanes where

our community helped evacuees staying here or collected supplies for disaster relief elsewhere. Don’t forget the countless times this community has helped those battling health issues, the loss of a loved one, or other trying situations where someone needed help.

The list goes on with example after example of our community coming together.

Some people mock small-town living, including in our lovely community. I’ve seen people comment on Facebook over the years with negative comments about our community, saying, “Why would anyone want to live there? There’s nothing to do in Barnwell.”

While Barnwell lacks the amenities and choices of larger cities, we have something that isn’t prevalent in the Aikens, Columbias, Greenvilles, and other bigger cities. We have caring people who come together in the good times and bad times. It doesn’t matter if we know you or not. We have a true sense of community.

Having a close-knit community of loving people is more valuable than movie theaters, bowling alleys, and expanded shopping and eating options.

Maybe one day our small-town spirit will be recognized in the dictionary.

Until then, let’s keep “Barnwelling” so we can make our community a better place.

BARNWELLING

Barn·well·ing *verb*

The act of a community coming together during a time of need.

Especially true in small towns like Barnwell, SC.

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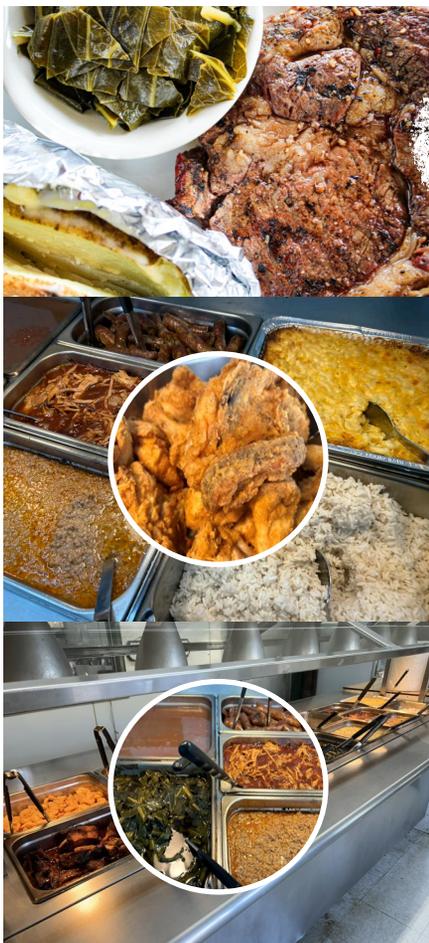


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Peggy Kirkland: A legacy of selfless service

Even after her death, Peggy Kirkland remains a household name in Barnwell and surrounding counties.

Kirkland is remembered fondly for many moments within her lifetime of service; constantly extending her hand to those in need, being a support system to all she encountered, dutifully serving God, and countless more.

In regions served by Southeastern Housing and Community Development, the housing organization Kirkland poured her heart into. March 13 is known as Peggy Kirkland Community Service Day in Barnwell and surrounding counties. She is pictured above at the 2023 ceremony following the day of service.

In March 2022, Kirkland was awarded the Order of the Palmetto - the highest civilian honor granted by Governor Henry McMaster.

These are only a few of the accolades Kirkland was awarded during her over 35 years with Southeastern, and 80 years of having a genuine, caring heart.

Kirkland worked around the clock and often on her own dime to ensure those facing housing insecurities knew they were valued, supported, respected, and loved.

On countless occasions, Kirkland would stop to make sure someone walking alongside the road had a place to go home to. If she did not have an immediate solution, she would contact her wide network of community



March 13 is known as Peggy Kirkland Community Service Day in Barnwell and surrounding counties. She is pictured above at the 2023 ceremony following the day of service.

partners to solve the problem at hand, and even pray with the individual in the meantime.

She did all of this with God being at the forefront of her life - allowing her faith to guide her every step of the way and leading her to individuals in need of help.

Kirkland exemplified strength, tenacity, and the mantra of doing good when no one is watching. Many described her as a 'Godsent angel' with a goal of alleviating human suffering wherever she saw it.

A true public servant, Kirkland inspired everyone she met to be a better version of themselves. Barnwell County will forever mourn the loss of such a tremendous woman, while cherishing the wisdom and generosity she imparted.



Peggy Kirkland hugs her son, Eric, at her namesake day of service.



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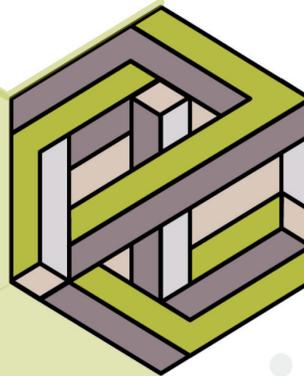
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