

Codes Enforcement



The University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research's **Organizational Performance Management Project** is an outgrowth of the South Carolina Municipal and County Benchmarking Projects. The primary focus of the project is to provide training, technical assistance, research and publications designed to foster the application of results-based management in government organizations. One of the services of the project is the *Local Government Service Delivery Forums*. The goal of these forums is to provide an opportunity for local government managers to share best practices and innovative techniques for service delivery issues and challenges.

During the project's first year, service delivery forums were held to address municipal court administration and codes enforcement issues. The purpose of this document is to share best practices identified during the codes enforcement forums. If your jurisdiction was not represented at the forums and your organization has found an innovative solution to these issues, please contact Anna Berger or Bill Tomes to include your program information. Contact information is located at the end of this bulletin.

Housing Issues

Dilapidated housing was identified as the most pressing codes enforcement issue by the forum participants. Several methods have been successful in addressing this issue, ranging from strict code enforcement to collaborative efforts with community groups. Several cities have rental property ordinances, which may include a rental property registry. This registry is helpful in locating absentee owners, which is the most common cause of derelict structures. Specific descriptions of these best practices are listed below.

Neighborhood Team Concept

City of Rock Hill

In 2005, the City of Rock Hill developed an innovative and comprehensive approach for urban blight with the Proactive Codes Enforcement Program (PACE) program. In addition to the city departments that are involved (i.e., Housing and Neighborhood division, Neighborhood Empowerment division, zoning and police departments, etc.), the City has included key partners, such as the local beautification board, neighborhood associations, and non-profits that assist in repairing and painting low-income housing.

non-adversarial manner. Though PACE is still in its infancy stage, the City has received 100% compliance without taking any legal action. Other outcomes have been increased litter abatement and yard refuse removal. The City also expects to see a decrease in crime rate in the area.

For additional information, contact Ray Koterba, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Services, City of Rock Hill, at (803) 325-2528 or at rkoterba@ci.rock-hill.sc.us

One of the main goals of the program is to address blight and code violations in a

Neighborhood Team Concept

City of North Charleston

In the spring of 2004, the City coordinated a neighborhood enhancement team (N.E.T.). The goal of the team was to identify and respond to community safety issues with an emphasis on long-term solutions through the collaboration of police, fire, public works, planning and community development, building inspections, parks and recreation, code enforcement and various community groups within the neighborhoods.

Strategies employed by the N.E.T. include improving living conditions, encouraging citizen participation, sharing crime prevention information, and providing social service resources.

One of the outcomes of the N.E.T.'s efforts has been a 31% reduction in crime and improved quality of life in one of the neighborhoods targeted.

Contact Gary Whitehead, Director of Code Enforcement, City of North Charleston, at (843) 740-2670 or at gwhitehead@northcharleston.org

Housing Advisory Committees

City of Greenwood

The City of Greenwood created a Housing Advisory Committee in 2003 to identify and resolve neighborhood problems in residential districts. Representation is comprised of the City Manager's designee from the Administration Department, Building Inspection Department, Planning Department, Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works Department, in addition to council appointed representatives of Greenwood Property Association, Greenwood Property Manager's Association, the Neighborhood Association Council, tenants and City Council.

This committee has allowed the City to informally meet and communicate with the various parties involved with neighborhood issues in an effort to address problems on an on-going basis.

For additional information, contact Charlie Barrineau, Assistant City Manager, City of Greenwood, at (864) 942-8412 or at charlie.barrineau@cityofgreenwoodsc.com

City of North Charleston

In 2000, the City created the Public Safety and Housing Committee. This committee consists of three citizens with construction background appointed by the Mayor and council to hear complaints brought before them by the Director of Code Enforcement and/or the Building Official. The City files a complaint and issues an order for the property owner to appear before the committee. On the day of the hearing, the City presents the case to the committee. The property owner also has the option to present his case and his intent with the property. The committee makes a decision if the property is to be demolished or repaired. The property owner has 30 days to comply with the order.

Contact Gary Whitehead, Director of Code Enforcement, City of North Charleston, at (843) 740-2670 or at gwhitehead@northcharleston.org for additional information.

Abandoned Vehicles

City of Anderson

Abandoned vehicles are an issue in every community. The City of Anderson has an incentive program for removing abandoned vehicles, which are defined as unlicensed and/or inoperable. The city-owned rollback or wrecker is used to move the vehicle to the city lot where the cars are stored until they are sold to junk lots. Citizens participating in the program are

given \$25 per vehicle. Since the program began in July 2003, approximately 900 cars have been moved and the City has netted \$12,500 from the sale of the cars.

For additional information, contact John Parnell, Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer, City of Anderson, at (864) 231-5228.

Locating Absentee Owners

City of Greenwood

In an effort to respond more quickly to the abatement of property maintenance violations, Greenwood began registering residential rental property in 2003. Every year, an owner of residential rental property is required to register their property with the City of Greenwood and designate the owner's name, address, and telephone number, the residential unit address, and the name of the person, firm, or corporation located within a 75-mile radius of the City of Greenwood responsible for the care and maintenance of the building. A fee is not required.

The properties that local management companies handle are also included in the database. In addition to mailing notification to the property owner, the City faxes a copy of violations to the management company. This results in violations being addressed more promptly. The maintenance of the database requires that the City mail an annual registration renewal reminder.

For additional information, contact Charlie Barrineau, Assistant City Manager, City of Greenwood, at (864) 942-8412 or at charlie.barrineau@cityofgreenwoodsc.com

City of Clemson

The City of Clemson is one city that has a rental-housing ordinance that requires rental property owners to obtain an annual business license. As part of the licensing process, properties are required to have an annual inspection. Although the ordinance was enacted in 2000, the City recently hired a full-time codes enforcement officer to proactively enforce the ordinance. The officer works closely with the rental property managers on addressing violations. Off-duty firefighters assist the codes enforcement officer with annual property inspections. Other efforts being pursued by the City to address rental-housing issues are a rental housing committee with cross-departmental representation, as well as a specialized-docket court to hear code enforcement cases.

For additional information, contact Bob Vecchio, Building and Code Official, City of Clemson, at (864) 653-2050 or at bvecchio@cityofclemson.com

Mobile Homes

Spartanburg County

Disposal of dilapidated mobile homes is a critical issue in South Carolina. Spartanburg County has an amnesty program where the county landfill will accept mobile homes that are delivered to the landfill and have a clear title. The County recoups a portion of the disposal costs by recycling the steel and

aluminum. Since the program began five years ago, the county has demolished approximately 300 mobile homes.

For additional information, contact Mike Padgett, Building Official, Spartanburg County, (864) 596-3182 or mpadgett@spartanburgcounty.org

Other Issues

Animal Control

York County has been using an Extech Instruments Sound Level Meter to monitor the excessive barking of dogs for approximately 12 months. The cost of the meter averages between \$350.00 - \$400.00. In the past year, code enforcement has responded to approximately ten (10) calls involving barking dogs. The violators/property owners were notified in person, if possible, and with a written notice of violation by mail upon confirmation that the noise exceeded the 60-decibel mark. To date, the violations have been resolved without the issuance of a citation.

For additional information, contact Sandy Smith, Code Enforcement Officer, York County, at (803) 909-7472 or at

sandy.smith@yorkcountygov.com

Temporary Storage Units

Another issue discussed during the forums was temporary storage units (PODS, Big Red Box). The Town of Irmo and City of Greer have ordinances requiring these units be stored in the side or back yard, and for no more than 30 days. Contact Ed Driggers, City Administrator, City of Greer at (864) 848-5387, or at edriggers@cityofgreer.org, or John Hanson, Town Administrator, Town of Irmo, at (803) 781-7050 or JHanson@TownofIrmoSC.com, to learn more about their ordinances.



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To Learn More

To obtain a copy of the summaries from the forums, please visit: <http://www.ipspr.sc.edu/grs/forums.asp> For additional information on the Organizational Performance Management Project or the Local Government Service Delivery Forums, please contact:

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