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2005 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

KERSHAW COUNTY FOCUS

The General Assembly provided financial support to help preserve the Battle of Camden site. This historic Revolutionary battle was fought approximately eight miles north of Camden and is considered pivotal to turning the tide towards the eventual patriot victory.

County residents and visitors welcomed the debut of the Kershaw County Farmers Market this spring. This open-air market supports local farmers by providing an outlet to sell directly to consumers, who, in turn, value the fresh, local produce and garden items. The market has been a success thanks to the patronage of the community and the support of local and state governments, the Bank of Camden, Clemson Extension, and several key individuals.



2005 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

REPRESENTATIVE LAURIE SLADE FUNDERBURK
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Thank you for the privilege and opportunity to serve as your Representative in the South Carolina House of Representatives. This newsletter is a brief update on some of the major issues considered by the House of Representatives and the General Assembly during the 2005 session.

Helping improve your community and assisting you with individual constituent problems are important aspects of my job. I depend upon your input. If you have ideas on any of the issues discussed in this newsletter, or other issues, or if you would like more information, please feel free to contact me.

Major Laws From The 2005 Legislative Year

State Budget

- ❖ Highlights of the \$5.8 billion state budget include restoring the General Reserve Fund to the amount required by law; fully funding the Base Student Cost for the public schools; and fully funding the Medicaid health care fund, which pays the cost for approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of the patients residing in nursing homes.

Education

- ❖ Public schools - Base Student Cost fully funded at \$2,290, an additional \$400 per student more than the Base Student Cost for the 2004-2005 school year.
- ❖ Teachers' salaries funded at \$300 above the South-eastern average.
- ❖ Expanded eligibility pool for Palmetto & Life Scholarships.

Health

- ❖ Medicaid growth - fully funded.
- ❖ Department of Mental Health - may get \$14 million from a law that allows the agency to keep half of the profit from Bull Street property sale. This comes after a series of budget cuts since 2000. Hospital officials have complained that emergency rooms have become dumping grounds for persons who are mentally ill.

Buckle Up

- ❖ The primary enforcement seat belt law goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2006. Primary enforcement allows a driver to be pulled over for no reason other than an occupant of the vehicle is not wearing a seat belt. Maximum fine is \$25.00. The violation would not go on driving records and could not be used in civil court.

Free Pour

- ❖ Liquor drinks via free pour will be available Jan. 1, 2006. Mini-bottle drinks will continue to be authorized.

State Law Enforcement

- ❖ 100 more state troopers funded as well as 100 new vehicles.
- ❖ 242 new officers funded for state prisons.
- ❖ State law enforcement personnel will receive a ten percent (10%) raise.

Safety

- ❖ Contact lenses dispensed only by a licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist.
- ❖ Doctors in training/residents must wear ID's identifying them as such. (This law is the Lewis Blackman Hospital Patient Safety Act).
- ❖ Boiler inspections will be required annually.

Tougher Penalties for Crimes

- ❖ Stalking - Mary Lynn's Law increases penalties for existing harassment and stalking offenses. Judges can order mental health evaluations before setting bail.
- ❖ Criminal Domestic Violence - Sentences and fines increased. Third offense becomes a felony.

Please let me know when I can assist or cooperate with you in any way.

*Thank you,
Laurie Slade Funderburk*

The entire session's printed budget/laws are several inches thick; therefore this newsletter provides only an overview of some of the General Assembly's highlights for 2005. If you are interested in the specifics of the budget or the law, you can go to www.scstatehouse.net and click on legislation.