

D. Paul Sommerville, Chairman  
August 2013  
SCAC Annual Conference

Good morning. On behalf of Beaufort County Council and all elected officials in Beaufort County, I am delighted to welcome you to our community and the South Carolina Association of Counties 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. It is a privilege and an honor to be the host county for this event.

Please allow me to begin by thanking the Association for selecting Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County as the location for the annual conference for the past 25 years in a row.

We take that to mean you love our beautiful corner of the Lowcountry as much as we do! I am sure I speak for all County elected officials, staff, and residents of Beaufort County when I tell you that we are extremely pleased to have been chosen as the destination for this important annual event.

As a 5<sup>th</sup> generation Beaufortonian, I speak from the heart when telling you that this beautiful County is full of treasures for you to explore and experience and I encourage each of you to take advantage of the many opportunities to enjoy yourselves during your stay here. When you do, it will be easy to see why Beaufort County attracts more than one million visitors each year.

Here in the Hilton Head Island area, you can enjoy offshore and Gulf Stream fishing, white sand beaches, championship golf courses, tennis, shopping outlets, and top restaurants. There is also the Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge, with 115 prehistoric and historic sites identified and more than 4,000 acres of our natural habitat at its finest and wildest.

Further north, we have Hunting Island State Park, which has more than four miles of beach, one of the state's best examples of semi-tropical maritime forest, and the only lighthouse in South Carolina that is publicly accessible. The northern portion of the County is also home to two of South Carolina's National Historic Landmark Districts: Beaufort's historic district of antebellum mansions and moss-draped live oaks and Penn Center, one of the South's first schools for blacks and later a sanctuary for Dr. Martin Luther King Junior and other Civil Rights leaders during the 1960s.

But, people are not just attracted to our beautiful scenery and recreation amenities. Beaufort County is home to preeminent military installations and offers top healthcare facilities, expansive educational opportunities, vibrant arts and cultural community, and a strong business environment, all of which help us to be a strong county.

Our gathering represents an opportunity to come together and share in a matter that is important to us all—Building **Stronger Counties for Tomorrow**. As county leaders, we must continue to support one another, find ways to solve our mutual problems, and face the challenges presented to us with a united front as partners. It is my wish that during our time here together, we will renew our enthusiasm for the tasks and responsibilities we have chosen to shoulder and find the inspiration necessary for furthering our commitment to serving our respective constituencies.

Again, welcome to Paradise. I hope this conference will prove to be an inspiring and truly transformative experience for you, with results that will show in your good work for all the counties and citizens of South Carolina.